

the leading edge

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Improved Engagement MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Carrington College in Tucson achieves "gold status" on the DeVry Insights Survey following a challenging year.

Colleagues across the organization can share their thoughts about working at DeVry on the DeVry Insights Survey from May 13 to 28. Leadership teams use the results from the survey, which measures colleague engagement, to create an action plan for improving the work culture and team effectiveness at a local level.

That's exactly what's happened at the Carrington College Tucson, Ariz., campus, where the engagement score improved dramatically to "gold status" following a challenging year.

"The morale was low," said Joy Meoak, director of career services, "and yes, students could tell. Before, they would hear instructors make comments such as 'The equipment here is not up to speed.' We don't hear those types of comments anymore."

If there are issues, students and Carrington colleagues now know where they can find an answer.

"My door is always open," said Antonio Thompson, who was appointed campus executive director in November 2011 after working as a project manager, Central Services and a business instructor for DeVry University in Downers Grove, Ill. "From the time students or colleagues first step on campus, they are welcomed to come into my office.

"People know they can also just stop by and say hello," he added. "I want to get to know people on a personal level. You can't motivate a team until you know something about each and every person."

Thompson does this by walking the halls and interacting with as many colleagues as possible.

"I want to see instructors tutoring and teaching, financial aid advisors helping students and students happy about getting jobs," he said. "This is exciting to me."

That's filtered down through all department leaders, who are now working together more efficiently. An example of this team collaboration is the sharing and documenting of all student interactions so everyone has more complete information to better serve students.

"This exemplifies the 'I am Carrington' guiding principle that lets our student know they are important and we will always provide world-class customer service and assist them in achieving their educational goals," Thompson said.

"Everyone works well together now," Meoak added. "Everyone is excited about the students. We've built bridges between departments. That didn't exist before."

Neither did regular one-on-one meetings. Thompson also conducts departmental "get together" lunches, 15-minute morning huddles with the campus management team on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and an hour meeting with that group on Monday afternoons.

There is also an all-campus meeting each month. These took place before Thompson's arrival, but now there is better communication, more time for feedback and engagement and a student success story is shared. Thompson demands accountability. His "I'm tough, but I'm fair" approach means colleagues must complete their assigned tasks, be there for students and be on time.

"Respect and trust are huge," said Thompson, a U.S. Air Force Veteran. "There's a right way to do things and a wrong way. Taking the easy way out and doing something wrong will not get you far."

Thompson admits that not everyone has bought into the changes at Tucson, and some have moved on, but the results speak for themselves. Colleagues are more engaged, and as a result, students are more successful.

"There are many choices out there for students," Thompson said. "They want the best for themselves, so it's our job to deliver that."



The Rewards of Volunteering

Three Leaders See Personal and Professional Benefits

Tina Diggs has been busy. She's the director, Student Services at Carrington College, a recent graduate of the 18-month Catalyst ASPIRE program and a soon-to-be education doctoral graduate.

Yet she also makes time to serve on the board of Jobs for Arizona's Graduates (JAG), an organization that helps young people stay in high school to acquire the academic, personal, leadership and vocational skills they will need to be successful upon graduation.

Like many leaders across DeVry, Diggs finds that Doing Well by Doing Good is not only rewarding, it helps her gain skills and experience that she can apply to her work.

"It feels great to give back and make sure people have the support, tools and resources to have a better future," said Diggs, a 2011 PRIDE recipient. "It's also a great way to network, build strong relations, spread the Carrington message and sharpen my own skills."

There have been many touch points involved with her volunteer work at JAG. Diggs joined the finance committee to get her first real exposure to fundraising and enhance her operation skills, and with the approval of the JAG president, she conducted the research for her dissertation at a local high school that offers JAG.

Also, with Diggs' introduction, Carrington's director of community partnerships has connected with JAG, which has opened the door for Carrington to showcase program offerings, meet potential students and participate in workshops educating students on the transition to college.

Another benefit of working with JAG is that Diggs has learned about other volunteer opportunities and has stepped out of her comfort zone to help build a home with Habitat for Humanity.

"I'm not from Phoenix, so volunteering has really helped me get to know my community," she said.

Another leader, **Joan Bates**, senior director, Investor and Media Relations at DeVry, also finds volunteering beneficial. She has lived in the Chicago suburbs since 1987, but serving as the secretary of the board at Family Shelter Service, an advocacy group for those affected by domestic violence, has helped her better understand the place she calls home.

"These clients are being tormented and abused both physically and emotionally," Bates said. "It's a great feeling when you see how you've helped empower them to build a new life through the counseling and shelter assistance provided by the organization."

This has been a mutually beneficial experience for the organization and Bates, who serves on the organization's marketing and governance committees. She has had the opportunity to improve her professional skills by reviewing candidates for positions and creating a strategic plan.

Volunteering takes time, but with all the good the organization is doing, Bates, a 2010 PRIDE recipient, couldn't think of a better way to spend 15 hours each month.

"Assisting victims of domestic violence makes it easy to give up a television show or another activity, especially when you see the impact you're making on someone's life," she said.

Bates will soon see this from a new perspective when she gets trained to work on the organization's hotline.

"It's a little nerve-wracking to be assisting people in very serious situations, but trying to help them make the right decisions for themselves and their families is pretty exciting," she said.

Jesus Fernandez, associate provost, curriculum at DeVry University, understands Bates' sentiment. Before pursuing a career in education, he was a volunteer coordinator at a crisis center while in grad school to become a clinical psychologist.

Fernandez has volunteered for other organizations too, including the National Society of Hispanic MBAs. One of the early founders of that organization, and eventually the national president, Fernandez saw it grow from its infancy to one that established a scholarship fund that has provided more than a million dollars to help students finance their MBA educations.

"It feels good to build something from scratch and give back to the community," said Fernandez, who also previously chaired the City of Pembroke Pines Charter Review Committee and the School to Work Advisory Committee of the Dade County Public Schools, both in Florida. "I've also learned all kinds of things that I could bring back to work, such as planning, event planning and working with remote teams."

Taking the time to volunteer is truly a win-win for everyone.



LEADER PROFILE

Susan Fletcher

*Professor, International Studies, Chamberlain College of Nursing, St. Louis campus
2012 Doing Well by Doing Good Award Winner*

What volunteer projects have you been involved with?

As a student, I was involved in protests regarding handicap accessibility. I would go to restaurants and measure bathrooms and then ask the owners how they were planning on accommodating me if I was in a wheelchair.

As an adult, I have worked with food pantries, voter registration and Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure; and serve on boards for Hanson's Disease, keeping the elderly in their homes, keeping families together and the Rotary. With regard to medical trips, I have led groups of students to Mexico, Brazil, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines and India.

When did you start leading international mission trips for nursing students and why did you think it was important to do?

I began more than 16 years ago after I wrote our first course on cultural diversity. As part of the course, students had to go out to different areas of our community and explore different cultures and then give the class a two-to-four minute recap of what they learned from the experience.

I realized how important it was to expose our students to cultures different from our own. We live in a global society so our patients may be from all over the world. To give the best care, we need to appreciate and understand cultures that are unique from ours. Even if a student only visits one other country, the result is a heightened awareness of cultural differences in a more pervasive sense.

How do you apply mission-trip experiences in the classroom?

I think the International trips give me

a better understanding of the unique qualities in others, especially our students. They have helped open my eyes to the importance of subtle cultural differences that we tend to brush over or fail to recognize. The trips inspire me.

I once had an older woman get down on her knees and kiss my feet because I spent time talking with her about her health problems. I didn't offer her any medicines--only time. The realization of how important listening to our patients can be has perhaps made me a better person and a better nurse.

What do students gain from the mission-trip experience?

The experience can be transformative for students, staff and the patients we serve. We come home with not only a greater appreciation of all of our gifts (home, family, clean water), but of the rich relationship we ignite between client and nurse. The trip gives us greater insight into the role of the medical professional. It is an opportunity to grow in awareness of unique cultural perspectives related to health. It is an opportunity to develop close inter-professional relationships that are often a challenge to develop back in the U.S. I think the trip enhances our critical thinking ability because we are forced to think beyond the classroom. We are faced with real life situations. How do you instruct people to take their medicine with meals when they may only eat every other day?

Chamberlain has partnered with Ross and DeVry Brasil on mission trips. How has that enriched the experience for students and the patients?

First and foremost, we saw better patient outcomes because of the collaborative efforts and inter-

professional partnerships. Secondly it was amazing to see, especially for the students, how each profession enriched the other profession. For example, when we paired a nursing student with a medical student, we could see them building on each other's questions to the people we treated.

How do you think volunteer opportunities can benefit other campus colleagues?

You feel good when you do well. It's such a simple concept. Just try it! Even though we provide a valuable service to the patients we see on our medical trips, the consensus among returning students is that we receive more than we give. The same holds true for on-campus volunteering.

What advice would you like to give to aspiring leaders?

Never give up! Always remain honest and true to yourself. Ask yourself if what you are doing will benefit others, is fair and is just. If you can say yes, then strive for it. As Mother Theresa has said, "We may make no great changes, but we can make small changes with great love."

How do you live the TEACH values?

Teamwork is a big part of the international program, especially during the clinics. The entire operation depends upon each of us being willing to fulfill our role. It's amazing to see how the nursing students, nurses, doctors and medical students adapt so well to the team. They are so willing to do whatever it takes to serve the people. As far as I can see, we have some great future doctors and nurses among us.