

the leading edge

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Mary Yoho of Chamberlain



Giving Carrington Colleagues a Voice Leads to High Engagement

When an organization goes through a transformational change, it can be challenging to maintain colleague engagement. By executing a strong change management plan that involves all colleagues in the decision-making process, it can build their motivation to contribute, passion for their work and a drive to help the organization succeed.

A great example of a transformational change that led to improved engagement is Project One Carrington (P1C), the initiative to bring all Carrington College and Carrington College California campuses under one regional accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC-WASC).

Jeff Akens, a 20-year leader and recently appointed president of Carrington, admits that the challenges the colleges faced in recent years had taken a toll on colleague engagement. Enrollments had decreased in a difficult economic environment. There were many leadership changes. The organization's vision and direction were not always well communicated in all locations.

"Colleagues wanted to know what was going on and why certain decisions were being made. They also wanted to be involved in Carrington's turnaround," Akens said.

When Carrington leaders launched P1C, it brought about a noticeable change in communications and collaboration. Leaders didn't just send a memo about the organization's vision and plan of action. They visited the campuses to speak directly with colleagues and formed committees to ensure colleagues had a voice in strategic planning, operations, budgeting, resource allocation, staffing, standard setting—essentially, in all major decisions. To take colleague involvement a step further, each committee had a delegate who served on the leadership council.

"We ensured everyone—maintenance personnel, faculty, staff, administrators, campus directors—had input on what needed to change to achieve One Carrington," Akens said.

"Carrington is a great place to work, we're creating a place where people want to spend their whole career."

Numerous projects were recommended by committees and approved for implementation. Examples include:

- Building the continuing education plan and expanding faculty in-service trainings to help faculty advance their teaching opportunities and improve the learning experience for students.
- Upgrading computer systems that would bring process improvements and ultimately improve student service.
- Redesigning recognition programs so colleagues in academics and those in administration had equal opportunities to be acknowledged for exemplary work.
- Enhancing security at all campuses.

During the implementation of P1C, Carrington's engagement score increased significantly from 63 to 68, which is considered a best-practice level.

"Colleagues are engaged in our mission. They are jazzed to be a part of decisions that will help our students—many who are struggling academically and in life—to succeed and get a good job," Akens said.

"Carrington is a great place to work," he added. "We're creating a place where people want to spend their whole career."



LEADER PROFILE

Mary Yoho

President, Houston Campus, Chamberlain College of Nursing
 2014 Leadership Excellence Award Winner

What professional development opportunities have you taken advantage of?

Most recently, I attended the Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Research Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, and presented a research study on remediation strategies and success on NCLEX-RN®, the national licensing exam for registered nurses. It is very exciting for Chamberlain to collaborate with this leading agency in nursing education to develop centers dedicated to the advancement of scholarship for nursing faculty.

What professional development opportunity made the biggest impact on your career?

My first faculty development experience as a new nurse educator in 1999 made a huge impact on my career in nursing academia. It was a six-hour workshop on nursing testing, testing analysis, and exam development. Since then, I have grown my expertise in these areas and taught numerous workshops nationwide, including for Chamberlain faculty.

You have mentored a number of leaders at Chamberlain, including a new campus president. Why is mentoring important to you?

DeVry Group Care is an underpinning of our culture. As a mentor, I have the opportunity to guide upcoming leaders in the art of being a caring leader. It's often said that people leave their employers, not their positions, so it is important to develop a team of caring and collaborative colleagues who support the students, and likewise, each other.

How do you encourage your team to spend time on their professional development?

We discuss professional development when we are preparing the fiscal year budget and stress that it is both an expectation and a privilege. We connect professional development with the Chamberlain goals, and likewise, our team member's IDP goals. It's very

effective. In fact, the campus has nine team members pursuing their doctorate degrees and several who are completing the Chamberlain MSN and the Keller MBA programs.

In addition, we have worked closely with faculty to develop poster presentations on master instruction and other innovative teaching modalities. In FY14, the Houston campus had seven faculty poster presentations at local and national nursing conferences.

What advice do you have for aspiring leaders?

Know your passion and your expertise, and use those as your foundation. Ask for challenging assignments that take you to a new opportunity. Network and meet other leaders. Identify mentors to provide guidance, support and critical feedback.

What is the best career advice you have received?

A career coach encouraged me to look for a career that combined my strength, which is my leadership skills, with my passion, which is academia, to drive productivity and find fulfillment. That career advice led me to Chamberlain because I was attracted to its mission, growth, innovative three-year BSN curriculum and passion for student success.

What are your career aspirations?

Currently, I enjoy helping Chamberlain grow in Texas. I hope to leverage my many years in nursing and academia in Texas to support our initiatives and goals. As Chamberlain grows, I feel my options will as well.

What is the most difficult work challenge you have faced and what did you learn from it?

In the mid-2000s, a big corporation acquired the hospital where I worked, and as a nurse executive, I needed to help my staff change their perspective of "doing things the same way we always did them." I worked closely with my managers and a team of 200 nurses and health care providers during the transition.

I learned that people want reassurance during a time when their future and work environments are unknown. We worked together and focused on the areas we could control: patient care, covering the hospital shifts, and practicing safe care delivery. Staff members understood they had major roles in patient outcomes and satisfaction. Though several staff members did leave the hospital during the transition, many stayed and were rewarded with more benefits and the leadership of a caring and visionary CEO.

How do you build a culture that is focused on our TEACH values?

I joined the Chamberlain Houston campus when it had only been open for six months, so I had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lead a team that would decide our norms, and we used the TEACH values as our foundation.

At our monthly team meetings, we have two colleague recognitions: the I TEACH medals, and several 212 Degree Service Awards, which are based on the premise that at 211 degrees, water is hot and at 212 degrees, it boils. With boiling water, comes steam and steam can power a locomotive. One extra degree makes all the difference! We recognize team members who demonstrate that one extra degree of service. Essentially, we hold each other accountable to uphold the TEACH values and we recognize exceptional service.

Time in current role: 2.5 years

Education: PhD in Nursing from Texas Woman's University in Houston; master's and bachelor's in Nursing from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston; and a diploma in Nursing from the Ohio Valley General Hospital School of Nursing, Wheeling, WV.

Activities: I volunteer at TOMAGWA Community Clinic in my hometown of Tomball, Texas, which cares for the medically underserved in a three-county area. I serve on the Nursing Scholarship Advisory Board of Harris Health System in Houston.