Employees’ Evaluation of PIE: 2010-11
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In spring 2011, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) asked Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) employees to complete an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate their perspectives on the college’s program review model that is used for planning purposes – Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE). A similar survey was also done in spring 2010.

Of the college’s 1,812 full and part-time employees, 195 employees (too few to make policy decisions or recommendations) completed the anonymous survey (approximately 100 less than last year). Employees were asked a number of demographic questions. Their responses indicated the following:

- 34.4% were classified; 51.8% were faculty, 9.7 were managers, with the rest being unidentified
- 67.7% work at the college full-time (71.6% in 2010)
- 28.2% have worked at the college less than 6 years; 27.7% from 6-10 years; 25.1% for 11-20 years; and 17.4% more than 20 years

UNDERSTANDING PIE
When asked if employees understood the PIE process at Mt. SAC some 48.4% (43.1% in 2010) said yes; however, when looking at the responses by employee groups, there are some differences:

- Classified Employees: 19.4% said no, while 49.3% (35.8% in 2010), said yes, some 22.4% were neutral, and 6.0% didn’t know
- Faculty Members: 34.0% said no, while 43.0% (44.8%, in 2010) said yes, some 14.0% were neutral, and 7.0% didn’t know
• Managers: 11.1% said no, while 72.2% (78.3% in 2010) said yes and some 11.1% were neutral.

When asked if others in their unit or department understand the PIE process, 19.7% (20.3% in 2010) said no and 34.7% (20.5% in 2010) said yes while 22.3% were neutral and 21.8% didn’t know.

Overall, the results indicated the following:

✓ 48.4% understood the college’s program review and planning model known as Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) (43.1% in 2010)
✓ 44.9% were aware of how PIE affects their departments (40.2% in 2010)
✓ 37.0% wanted to be involved in the PIE process (35.5% in 2010)
✓ 50.0% were invited by their department/unit to be part of the PIE process (44.1% in 2010)
✓ 42.0% said that their unit/department encouraged them to take an active role in PIE (40.1% in 2010)
✓ 30.8% of employees received a copy of their final group’s PIE report (33.8% in 2010)
✓ Of those who wanted to be involved in PIE, 90.1% were able to do so (74.5% in 2010)
✓ Of those who wanted to be involved in PIE, 73.2% said that the PIE process was done in a collaborative environment (60% in 2010)
✓ Of those who wanted to be involved in PIE, 65.7% thought that their unit/department met often enough to discuss PIE (54.4% in 2010)
✓ Some narrative statements from the employees included:
  • Overall, classified are now more aware of PIE and felt more involved than last year.
  • Part-time faculty are not able to easily participate in PIE.
  • There were a few comments about not being able to participate in PIE because the managers did it all or they didn’t know how to be involved
  • Involvement in the PIE process included writing alone or in a group the report, being part of the objectives/outcomes work, doing the ePIE inputting, providing input to managers/team, as well as being involved in all aspects of data collection and analyses.
While most teams completed the PIE process using various means of face-to-face meetings, and emails, some employees still didn’t understand how their departments did the process.

The PIE process requires time and effort for collaboration and reflection.

The ePIE (electronic version of PIE) is cumbersome.

To make PIE more meaningful, employees would like to have the knowledge that their PIE work is used for something worthwhile and that others are reading and using the information for planning and resource requests. It would also be good to have feedback about the objectives/outcomes work and how it can be used for improving student learning. Starting earlier in the year and using that information strategically next year would also be helpful.

There is a need to educate employees on PIE and ePIE and why it is important to the college.

Those who are involved in student learning outcomes were asked what could be done to help them use the results. They responded as follows:

- Implementing the project
- Doing it for the benefit of the students
- Having discussions about next steps (having time and people)
- There are numerous roadblocks to implementing changes based on the results from outcomes assessment.
- The results of the assessment could be used to change the way we teach (format or presentation) and re-assess outcomes to evaluate if the changes worked.
- Seeing the results across the department
- Resources: funding for student workers, equipment, budget for supplies, and classroom space.
- If it was a statistically valid assessment. It isn't.
- Having fewer and more meaningful SLOs
- Clarity and consistency on what SLO's are. SLO's have been a moving target since we first started doing them. It's very difficult to integrate SLO's into PIE if SLO's are not linked to the curriculum Measurable
Objectives. At the beginning we were told that we were not to use Measurable Objectives as our SLO's, nor were we to link them. Now we are hearing that the two should be linked. If Measurable Objectives are to be integrated into SLO's, it's hard to view SLO's as anything but redundant. If they are not to be linked, then SLO's are a distraction.

- Active, not symbolic or political, linking to program processes in a meaningful way at the faculty level; and not applied in the current top-down, autocratic management style-used to assess compliance and conformance.
- A common goal or project or a clear communication that the SLO is tied to improvement of courses, services and that there will be a result

- Surprises about the PIE process included how complicated ePIE was, how hard it was to understand the big picture, that not everyone was involved in the process, and that planning was really part of every department meeting.

- Lessons learned from doing PIE ranged from not much to how complicated the process is, how planning is integral to resource allocation (although it is difficult at times to do that connection), that some classified were not involved in the process, and to do it early and do it often.

- Employees’ involvement in PIE could be improved by having more communications about it, enabling them to see the connection to the campus-wide processes, having administration show their buy-in to the PIE process, streamline it, provide more time to work on it (especially with part-time faculty), have more monthly meetings, have more trainings, change the name of it to something employees’ can identify with, and having IEC work with employees to structure the forms.

- When asked if PIE was used to improve student learning (a new question in 2011), the affirmative responses (34.9%) indicated that the results were used for improving instructional effectiveness (and are connected to planning) and those who answered “sometimes” (21.0%) indicated that there were sometimes anterior motives for the actions such as to get resources while others indicated that sometimes the way the outcomes was worded or measured did not align well with
improving student learning. Some 17.4% indicated that PIE was not used for improving student learning because the process is not understood by faculty, students are not taking responsibility for their actions, external licensure programs require other activities, and others don’t see the connection between PIE and what they do in the classroom (i.e., calling students who haven’t shown up for class). A final quote from a faculty member:

*Although SLOs are tracked in PIE, the PIE process is not what improves the student learning. It's what faculty use the information for (or whether they actually use it at all) that improves student learning.*

It is clear from the findings that there is room for improvement in both the processes and structure of the college’s program review system known as PIE. The information provided by employees concerning their understanding of and satisfaction with the PIE process provides IEC with a wealth of information about their perspectives as well as suggestions for further improvement. It is hoped that a similar survey will be conducted at the conclusion of the next cycle or two of PIE to gage any change in the employees’ perspectives based on implemented improvements.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks to those employees who took their precious time to participate in this survey – your perspectives are of value and will be used to make improvements as they were last year.