

# 101 Ideas to Make a Good School GREAT!

by

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Every school can be improved; no matter how good it may be. The following is an accumulation of ideas that can help an institution become even better, perhaps even GREAT. Few of these ideas are original and including them here is a tribute to the many educational entrepreneurs in the career school and college sector of higher education who have developed them. Some are unique and unusual, but all of them are designed to help an institution reach its fullest potential.

Private career colleges and schools are quite different from other institutions in higher education. Classes are generally smaller; students get more personalized attention and support; the mission of the institution is narrowly focused on job-training and employment goals; all of the resources of the institution can be harnessed in one direction. To be fully effective, an institution must be alert to the entire presentation as seen by the student and all others who visit the campus. This requires the use of a lot of different ideas like the ones that follow that work in combination to fulfill the institution's mission.

None of these ideas will make a school GREAT if it isn't already good. Slapping a series of "things" on or over a mediocre school will not create change. Most of these ideas would be lost on such an institution and could make things worse because they would be so inconsistent with the general operating philosophy of the school.

The majority of the ideas presented here are inexpensive or cost-free; however, they all require an attitude on the part of the management or ownership of the institution that is consistent with the first three ideas in the series. Without a firm and ever-present dedication to these three ideas or principles, the institution is doomed to failure through a series of mediocre years.

Your review of the list will give testimony to the fact that little things can mean a lot. Attention to detail and consistency in presentation are essential qualities of a GREAT institution.

Are there only 101 ways to make a good school GREAT? Of course not, there are thousands. Many schools are GREAT and are doing other things than are listed here. When you see one that is successful at your school and not included in this list, would you fax it to us? We'd like to be able to continue to accumulate and share the many useful ideas that make schools successful.

# THE 101 IDEAS

The ideas have been arranged in a “user-friendly” style to allow each institution to easily evaluate the individual idea, determine if it “fits” the institution, assign responsibility for implementation, and implement.

It is suggested that this listing makes a good agenda for a full staff and faculty meeting, allowing for discussion on the ideas that may result in the recognition of other ideas that could and should be implemented.

Although the successful operation of any institution is a reflection of the ability of the employees to work together toward a common goal, the ideas have been divided into individual categories reflecting the general area of responsibility. It should be remembered that everyone has something to contribute somewhere in the institution and the staff and faculty should never be restricted to the one area in which they work; there is too much to gain from synergism.

The idea groupings are: 1 Fundamentals; 2. Admissions; 3. Student Relations; 4. Public Relations; 5. Facilities; 6. Career Services; 7. Administration; 8. Faculty & Staff; 9. Financial Aid

## 1. FUNDAMENTALS

- Instill a “Students Come First!” attitude as the first commandment in day-to-day operations. Make every single decision respond to this principle: Will my decision be in the best interest of the student? This principle must permeate the entire institution starting with the appearance of the physical plant through and including a decision to give a raise to your staff, your faculty, and yourself. The entire staff and faculty must demonstrate an “I Care” attitude in dealing with the students. Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- The true and primary customer of your school is the employer, followed closely by the student. But the satisfaction of the ultimate customer (employer) with your product (student) will be the difference between a flourishing institution and a floundering one. Employers must play a key role in your plans for continuous improvement. They must be seen by your students, their parents, your staff and faculty, and everyone who comes in contact with the institution as of primary importance to you.
- Make your staff and faculty a part of the decision-making team for the institution. Include them in the decision on everything that the institution does. Hold regular, agenda-driven meetings including all members of the staff and faculty. Encourage them to get involved in the development of the mission. Review the mission regularly to make sure it still fits with the goals of the institution. Once these three principles are firmly in place and functioning effectively, the rest of these ideas can be considered for adoption.

## 2. ADMISSIONS

- Recruit students cautiously. Every institution is not right for every student. This is true for your institution as it is for the state university. Carefully analyze the characteristics of the students who

succeed in class, graduate, and work well on the job following graduation. Target your marketing effort to get students like these.

- Make every member of your staff and faculty a member of your admissions team. Urge them to be on the lookout for prospective students wherever they go: church, social clubs, community activities, etc. Even relatives might know someone who could benefit from your program.
- Provide your staff with special cards that solicit an interest in your institution for them to use as inserts in the monthly bills they pay. This inexpensive way to advertise the programs and services of the school could reach a prospect or a friend of a prospective student. (See Page A at the end of this article).
- Centralize the telephone contact at the school for in-coming prospective student calls. This allows for a centralized control of lead assignments, making the person answering the calls the sole party responsible for setting appointments--selling the school.
- Display a Cap and Gown in each admission office as a reminder of what the prospective student's ultimate goal is. Having this displayed on the wall is another reminder of the goal and the school's determination to see that that goal is achieved.
- Have the admissions staff prepare a checklist of various personal characteristics of students enrolled so that the staff and faculty will be alerted and prepared to provide the necessary assistance for those students to succeed in your program. These characteristics or "dents" are things that have caused problems or have been troublesome for previous students. For example, "dents" would include having gone through a recent divorce, having lost a parent or child, having lost a job, having been ill or having an ill parent or spouse, having recently been discharged from the military, spouse having lost his/her job, having moved out on his/her own, having recently moved to town, having been a recent victim of a crime of a physical nature. Without advanced notice of things the admissions staff discovers during the course of the interview, the faculty is unprepared to understand or appreciate the unique things that may trouble a student and make it difficult for him/her to progress satisfactorily through your program. (See Page B at the end of this article).
- Encourage graduates to write letters to the school describing how the skills they learned in class have been put to work in their job. Frame these letters for display in the hallways. Also put a collection of them in a scrapbook in the reception or admissions area for prospects to review while waiting to be interviewed.
- Put pictures of graduation or commencement ceremonies in a scrapbook for display in the reception area. Get as many informal shots as possible of families celebrating with the graduates. These scenes of achievement will help to instill in the student a positive image of the ultimate goal--graduation.
- Carefully review the script the admissions staff uses in touring prospective students. Periodically review this to ensure that it correctly reflects any changes in curriculum or equipment that may have occurred. Have particular points of interest on the tour where prospects are to be given specific information.

- Begin the tour with a review of the Placement Board where pictures of recent graduates are shown along with his/her place of employment. Helping the prospect envision his/her excitement on getting the job of their dreams early in the tour is an important step in the admissions-development process.
- When giving a tour always have the admissions staff introduce faculty, staff, or administrators they encounter along the tour by saying something like, "I'd like you to meet (so-and-so prospect) who is considering attending our school." This allows an opportunity for the prospect to see how friendly the staff and faculty are in this informal setting before he/she decides to enroll. Train the faculty and staff on the proper comments and questions to use in this setting.
- Invite members of your new students' family support group to come to a special orientation session soon before or after a major start date. The purpose of this session is to let the support group understand the course of study that the student will be experiencing. All students can use help and encouragement from members of their support group. By calling this meeting, you will have an opportunity to tell the support group how important they can be in helping the student succeed and graduate.
- Assign one member of the staff or faculty the responsibility to contact students who have dropped out or been suspended for academic or attendance reasons, to facilitate and encourage the student's return to school. Preferably, give this assignment to someone who was not involved in the initial enrollment. An ideal person would be a telemarketer or assistant dean, who can serve as a new contact for the student. This person should be knowledgeable of the re-entry process and system so that the student can be eased back into school with the least amount of hassle. This person should become the mentor for all re-entering students, meeting them regularly, particularly during the first weeks when returning students are most vulnerable.
- Hire your currently enrolled students to take prospects, parents, and spouses on admissions tours of the school after class periods or on Saturday. Prospects can relate best to someone who appears to be a peer.
- Have currently enrolled students call pre-enrolled students before their start date to answer questions and welcome them to the institution.
- Have your admissions representatives send a card to each prospect they interview who does not enroll that says "Time Well Spent" on the cover, to indicate that it was good to spend some time with the prospect and that the school is looking forward to his/her decision about enrolling
- Have your admissions representatives send copies of the letters you receive from graduates as a follow-up to interviews with a note that says, "Here is another example of someone who graduated from our program and is now successfully working in the field. When can we arrange to have you back for a further interview about your plans for your future?" Remember that a lead is never, never dead. Things change in peoples' lives. What made it impossible for a prospect to enroll yesterday may be solved tomorrow, making them prime for enrollment.
- Make a list of all the reasons a student should enroll in your institution. After a prospect has made an initial tour of the institution but has not yet enrolled, send him/her a mailing that features "Two more reasons to enroll in...." These can be sent out every couple of weeks or so until the prospect

becomes an enrollee.

- For those who do enroll, have your admissions staff send them a birthday card that says, "I know that this isn't really your birthday; but in a sense your decision to enroll in our school is a new beginning, a new start for you, a new birthday, if you will--Good Luck!!"
- Have the admissions staff monitor student attendance and contact those who miss classes or are regularly tardy. During this contact the admissions person should remind the student of earlier conversations during the enrollment process when the prospect committed to a set of objectives which included regular attendance in order to graduate on time.
- Encourage the admissions staff to stay in touch with the students that they enroll. Have them mingle with them during break or after school to show a continuing interest in them. As the first official contact with the institution, the admissions person can have a continuing persuasive relationship with those students that they enroll. The admissions job isn't done until the student graduates and is placed.

### 3. STUDENT RELATIONS

- During the orientation session for new students, issue blank business cards with the name and address of the school on them and a line for the student to put his/her name. Under the name line, give the student the title of Professional-In-Training. Encourage the students to use these just like business cards they might receive when they go to work. Students appreciate having this kind of identity card, and the school benefits by having the name of the school spread around among his/her friends and associates. (Don't forget to print your branding tag on the back.) (See Page A at the end of this article).
- Issue picture identity cards to all students. This will allow them to benefit from special discounts local merchants give to college students. It is another way to spread the name of the school around.
- Take lots of candid pictures during student activities: Christmas parties, picnics, summer events, etc., and display them on a special bulletin board. Students love to see themselves in such pictures, and this display is a good "talking spot" to stop when taking prospective students and their parents on school tours. It shows that the school is a friendly place to learn. Most career colleges don't have sororities or athletic teams to build school spirit, so whatever activities you can document the better.
- Institute an appropriate working-condition dress code and make it a requirement for the students, as well as the faculty and staff. Students should be encouraged to use the time with the institution to develop good work habits, one of which is a concern for what they will wear on the job when they go to work. One way to help students appreciate the value of this requirement is by noting that employers visit the school on a regular basis, and they are impressed when they see students dressed, as they will be expected to dress when they go to work following graduation. Regular relief from this requirement is also useful by allowing one "casual" day per week and during final exams. Surveying the employers in your area concerning their company policies about dress code, including what is acceptable to wear on casual days, is a good way to develop information that will help students better appreciate the value of your dress code.
- Invite graduates to return to address students on a regular basis. This gives students the opportunity to gain a "real world" perspective of what life will be like following graduation. A recent graduate is a very believable witness with a creditable story to tell to current students. Bring your graduates who were "problem" students back as speakers. Too often schools only bring back the over achievers--the model students. Reformed students tell the best, most believable, stories.
- Provide students with a locked SUGGESTION BOX. Put it in a prominent place. Encourage students to give the school ideas that will help the institution improve. Stipulate that the only suggestions that will be given consideration will be those that are signed and present a positive solution to a problem. This is not to become a "gripe box."
- Establish a Student Advisory Committee of individuals who are elected by their peers. The role of this committee is to provide the institution with an opportunity to have an official group of students who can be called upon to give advice to the institution on behalf of the student body. This group should discuss such topics as curriculum changes; schedule modifications; proposed advertising; or institutional disciplinary policies.

- Use members of the Student Advisory Committee during orientation to help the new students adapt to school life. This group can also serve as the host or hostesses during special events like Christmas parties, summer picnics, and at graduation or commencement ceremonies.
- Let the Student Advisory Committee undertake fund-raising projects to support student activities, such as raising money by selling donuts during break with the receipts being used to buy a television or refrigerator for the student lounge or something else the students would like to have in the school. An effective way to encourage a continuation of this kind of support is to put a plaque on the item indicating it was "Contributed by the class of 2005."
- Collect business attire clothes from the staff and faculty to have on hand as "loaners" in case some student needs to wear them to make a good impression during their job interviews. Some schools annually have a "clothing drive" in which the staff and faculty contribute clothes that students are allowed to "buy" for a small amount, something less than a dollar. Display the clothes in a classroom; allow classes to visit the room and "buy" on a rotating basis with the class order determined by the best overall grade-point average or attendance. Allow each student to buy one garment at a time until all of the contributed clothes have been acquired.
- Create a STAR student award to be given periodically to the student who has demonstrated an ability to overcome the most disadvantaged circumstances that might have prevented him/her from remaining in school. This student should be selected by the faculty based upon the nomination of teachers who know the students well enough to be aware of how courageous it is for a particular student to remain in school, considering all of the student's circumstances. The student who is selected probably would not ever qualify for any other kind of an award such as perfect attendance or high academic achievement. The award, presented before a student body assembly, might include an opportunity to park in a special location for a period with his/her name on the parking place; movie passes; coupons for hamburgers, haircuts, or a shoeshine; cookies baked by one of the faculty or staff; flowers contributed by a florist; a school T-shirt; or book bag, etc.
- Give academic and attendance awards on a monthly basis during a required student assembly. This will help reinforce the importance of making good grades and attending class every day. The awards for these accomplishments can be Certificates of Achievement or a marking or ballpoint pen with the institution's name on it.
- Give each graduating student a batch of school business cards with a blank line for the student to fill in. The title under the line is the word, "Graduate." Students should be encouraged to use these business cards when they go out on interviews in their search for a job. Students like them, and the school gets some valuable attention each time the card is used. (See Page A at the end of this article).
- Conduct annual surveys with your graduates to determine what changes they would recommend should be built into the curriculum. These surveys can also serve as a way to develop new leads by asking graduates to suggest someone who should be contacted about enrolling.
- If you enroll students from out of town, form a special committee of faculty and students to design an informational program about possible weekend activities in your area. This will help overcome

the usual homesickness that occurs early in the program.

- Start a student organization affiliated with one of the national student groups to give students an opportunity to be involved in this type of organizational activity. This group can be encouraged to meet either before or after school, or during the lunch period to conduct their business and plan their activities.
- Give all of your graduating students a Rolodex card listing the name, address, phone number, and e-mail address for the school with a list of all the reasons to stay in touch with the institution, i.e., placement assistance, continuing education, change of address, to recommend someone for admission, etc.
- Reserve the parking places closest to the institution for use by the students and those interested in enrolling. Put up appropriate signs to reserve these spots. This idea provides a clear indication that “students come first” at the institution instead of the faculty or staff.
- Select a group of students to review the copy for school advertising or radio/television commercials to make sure that the audience for which they were intended can easily understand them. Likewise, student-oriented publications or brochures should be reviewed by this special focus group before they are printed.
- If your institution holds “cap and gown graduations” have those students that are just beginning their program attend and serve in some official capacity; i.e., handing out programs, serving refreshments, ushering, etc. This will help them envision the experience that awaits them when they graduate. (Unfortunately, those who usually attend cap and gown ceremonies are the graduates--currently enrolled students don't have an opportunity to feel the excitement and energy that develops in these events.)
- Use your graduation ceremony as an opportunity to promote the institution to those attending. Comment on the excitement of the day, the accomplishment of the students to reach their goals, and encourage those attending to think about someone they know who could benefit from this experience; a relative, a neighbor, a fellow-worker, etc. Have members of your admissions staff on hand to pass out your literature, answer questions, and arrange interviews.
- Establish an alumni association. Have workshops to update your graduates' skills and provide activities that tie the alumni to the institution.
- Don't name a tutoring program—“tutoring.” Think of a positive expression such as PI--Private Instruction.
- Have a reception for new students during the first week to meet all the faculty and staff. Make it a fun-filled reception with games, refreshments, and get together activities.
- Don't do all of the work yourself. Engage your students to encourage leadership skills. Make them responsible for activities around the school.
- Allow your best students to serve as PI's. Set up a method of assigning tutor-students to needy students. Reward the PI's with a luncheon certificate, or recognition on their resumes.

#### 4. PUBLIC RELATIONS:

- Provide every member of the staff and faculty with business cards to be used to spread the name of the institution. If your institution has a brand expression – print it on the back of the card.
- Send a listing of newly enrolled students to the local paper in a news release that also describes the institution and the programs offered. Many small town daily and weekly papers appreciate having this kind of “local flavor” opportunity to put peoples’ names in the paper. Most major metropolitan papers will not use it.
- Plan a special celebration every year around the institution=s anniversary or some other special day that ties into the curriculum. Find an ideal time to schedule a series of events at the school; inviting alumni and employers to return to the campus for a reception; having a day when employers hold interviews during the lunch hour, or speak to a class about job opportunities; having a special assembly with guest speakers to encourage the students to complete their educational program.
- Send your news releases to the business editor of your local paper. While you would think that your story would have appeal to the education editor because you are an educational institution, you are in the business of putting people to work, of satisfying businesses’ need for quality applicants, and improving the economic health of your community – that’s a business story. Invite him/her to tour your campus and see your students learning; or invite them to career day when you have employer representatives on campus.
- Offer your institution to clubs and civic groups as a place to hold meetings or special events. This will enable many people to see the school who might not have any other reason to do so. These visitors might know someone who would be interested in or needs the training offered by the institution.
- Provide student assistance to conventions that come to town. The volunteering students can list this activity on their resumes. Such groups are always looking for people to work at registration desks or other convention-related activities. Generally these groups are so happy to get this kind of support that they will provide parking, lunch, or dinner for such volunteer assistance. This is a good opportunity for students to make valuable contacts, some of which might lead to a job following graduation. It is also excellent public relations for the school.
- Volunteer to serve as a member of an accreditation team on a school visit for the agency that accredits your institution. This may require some training, which is usually provided by the agency. Being a member of such a team can be a very rewarding experience. In addition, you will inevitably learn something useful during the visit that can be taken back to your institution. Encourage members of your staff and faculty to participate in these activities also.
- Invite high school vocational educators and guidance counselors to use your institution for meetings, luncheons, or receptions. These groups meet regularly in most cities. Having them meet in your institution will help encourage them to recommend your school to seniors as one of the places students can receive postsecondary instruction.

- Produce a newsletter on a regular basis to be distributed to currently enrolled students, students scheduled to start in the future, alumni, and employers. This should feature important activities being planned, listing of graduates, a listing of recent placements, and other information that creates an image of a productive institution. This is a good place to publish copies of letters that graduates send the school about their jobs.
- Put up an announcement board in the reception area to welcome special visitors to the campus. This helps to keep students alert to the fact that they are always “on display” and should look and act their best.
- Survey the staff and faculty to determine what social, civic, or religious organizations are represented through the school's employees. From this list see what services or activities the school could offer to the various groups; i.e., serving as a meeting site, providing a special speaker for an event, offering voluntary support as a student after-school activity, etc.
- Contact local retirement homes and offer to provide some special complimentary training consistent with the school's curriculum; i.e., business school offer an introduction to computers, an automotive school offer an introduction to auto mechanics trouble-shooting, or offer to fix a retiree's car for a nominal fee, etc.
- Give each student who is parking on the school lot or in the garage a window sticker to be displayed on the inside of the back window as an indication of the right to a parking space. Decals placed on the inside of the back window retain their attractiveness much longer than bumper stickers.
- Get students politically activated by having them write to members of Congress in envelopes that you provide to express appreciation for the federal financial aid programs. (Proofread the letters before sending them.)
- Look for ways to be the best, most community-involved school in your area. Participate in local contests, contribute time and students to special drives, collect food and clothing for a needy shelter, etc. Be an institution dedicated to making a difference in the world.
- Send a list of students who are graduating and their placements to your state senators and representatives, to your city and county officials; so that they can identify with your institution and the outstanding job you are doing for your students.
- Recognize students' birthdays by sending them birthday cards and wishing them a happy birthday over the public address system on their birthday.
- Develop a special news release announcing the graduation of a student that includes the student's employer and job title. Send the news release to: high school principal, guidance counselor, favorite teacher, pastor/minister, parents, grandparents, as well as the local papers. (See Page C for an example of such a news release).

## 5. FACILITIES:

- Pay close attention to the bulletin boards in your school. Police them regularly; ensure that they are neat and represent an orderly presentation; remove all out-dated notes or messages.
- Decorate hallways with posters and pictures that convey positive messages, slogans, or recommendations. Everything that is displayed should contribute to building the positive self-image of the student or should direct his/her attention toward the development of good habits that will be beneficial when the student graduates and goes to work.
- Make sure the school is neat and clean at all times. Students and the faculty should be encouraged to leave their classrooms as organized as possible when they leave: chairs under the tables, boards clean of classroom notes, paper picked up from the tables and under them; blinds in a uniform position, etc. This will make the schools as presentable as possible whenever a prospective student or future employer happens to tour.
- Carefully review the appearance of the reception area and the admissions offices to ensure that they represent an image appropriate to the institution. Are the desks clean and neat? Does the office look organized? Are the credenzas or shelves tidy and clear of clutter? Have them checked regularly. Reception areas can become messy very quickly after several prospects have used them, waiting to be interviewed. Be sure that any magazines left on the table are recent and in good condition. Have only a few magazines on the tables, which will encourage prospects to look at the graduation pictures and the letters from graduates.
- Collect letters from employers that commend the institution on the quality of the graduates and put them in a special book to be displayed in the reception area.
- Honor long-term service of faculty and staff by creating a plaque for display that shows employee tenure. Begin with a five-year category and then each five-to ten-year period thereafter. This demonstrates to parents and employees the stability of the institution's staff.
- Display the American flag and your state flag prominently in the school's 'hallways to help encourage a sense of pride in our country and your state. An American flag that has been flown over the Nation's capitol specifically for your institution can be ordered from your Congressman relatively inexpensively. Similarly, it may be possible to order a state flag from your state legislator. These flags come with a special certificate that can be framed and displayed with the flag. (Let the Sons of the American Revolution know about your display and your institution might receive a special Flag Day Award from them.)
- Prohibit eating and drinking in the classrooms. This makes the institution look more professional and saves carpets or flooring from spills.
- Collect all the awards and citations the school or administrators have received and display them all in one place, along with pictures of dignitaries who may have visited the school, such as members of Congress or local politicians.
- Inspect rest rooms on a regular basis to check for and eliminate graffiti. The appearance of writings on the walls may be an indication of some serious problems that have not surfaced elsewhere.

## 6. CAREER SERVICES:

- Set up a bulletin board to announce where graduates have gone to work. Some schools call this the BRAVO board, showing the student's name, a picture, and the name of the company. This board is a very effective way to begin the school tour, showing the prospect how well the school's graduates are doing.
- Ask employers to volunteers to conduct mock interviews with students before video cameras so that the students can see how they present themselves. Following the taping, have the employer critique the performance of the student and make suggestions on ways the interview could have been improved.
- Conduct career fairs on campus by inviting employers to set up booths or tables where they can meet with students to tell them about the jobs that they can expect when they graduate.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION:

- Call your school and see how the phone is answered. Is the voice clear and understandable? Is it friendly? How often and for how long are calling parties put on hold? How many times does the phone ring before it is answered? This is the first contact people have with your school. The impression set by your telephone technique could be the difference between an enrollment and a "No, thank you."
- If you have incoming calls screened before being forwarded, stop it. Today, with more and more automated phone systems being installed, customers are being forced into an impersonal method of communication. Screening calls is another to insult the caller because it says, "The party you want to talk to doesn't speak to everyone. I'm supposed to screen his/her calls to make sure only the right calls get through." Customers have become so irritated with the automated approach that some companies have now taken to advertise that they have "No automated phone system-- When you call us, you deal with real people!"
- Require that office doors be left open except when something confidential needs to be screened with a closed door.
- Develop articulation agreements with other institutions of higher education provided your institution has an appropriate curriculum. Articulation agreements serve to facilitate opportunities for graduates to continue their education at another postsecondary institution. While transfer credit can never be guaranteed, many students are interested in going on for more education at some point after they graduate from a career college. This activity is usually easier to achieve if the institution is degree granting. However, even when the courses conclude with a certificate or diploma, articulation is worth exploring with the local community colleges and private colleges.
- Manage the institution in a very visible way. Tom Peters, well-known management guru, advocates the M.B.W.A. technique: Management by Walking Around. It is good advice for a school administrator to be seen on a regular basis touring the school, chatting with students

between classes or in the lounge. Seeing the administrators on a regular basis gives the students a sense of the leadership's concern. Students should get used to having the administrator on the scene and being comfortable talking with them.

- Encourage continuous improvement by soliciting positive ideas from the staff and faculty on ways that the institution can be enhanced. Assure them that every idea will be given consideration. Once a year, have the employees provide a written idea on "One thing I would change if I were president/director for a day..."
- Consider developing some custom-published texts with the following objectives: one, to reduce the costs of texts to the student; two, to make the texts more consistent and supportive of the curriculum and the needs of the student; three, to provide author visibility for members of the faculty; four, to give the institution name recognition on the cover of the publication. Regularly check to see that faculty cover all of a text. If not, students are dissatisfied. Look for another text or consider custom publishing.
- Visit other schools whenever the opportunity presents itself. Every school owner is pleased to "show off" his/her facility--and there are always things to learn from how other schools present themselves.
- Study the characteristics of students who drop out to determine if there is something the institution should or could do to prevent it. Some studies indicate that those students who are chronically absent or who take a leave early in their program are most likely to be candidates to drop. Other studies show that students with a GED are more likely to drop than those with a high school diploma. Other studies show that having a car improves the potential for graduating. Such data regarding your students could point to modifications in your marketing.
- Consider joining or forming a "think tank" group of career college administrators to meet on a regular basis to share ideas and concepts. The group should be as homogeneous as possible to allow for the most productive exchange of successful achievements. There are no secrets in this field; and administrators love to share--the good, as well as, the bad ideas!
- Write articles for *Career Education Review* or have members of your staff and faculty do it so that you can share your great ideas with the rest of us.

## 8. FACULTY & STAFF:

- Create a mentoring program by dividing up the entire student body and assigning them in groups to each member of the staff and faculty. All members of the staff and faculty must be involved in this exercise. Have the students meet as a group with their personal mentor sometime every six weeks. Students should be encouraged to seek out their mentor should they encounter any personal or academic problems or difficulties that need attention. Design the program to provide each student with one more "connection" to the school in the hope that one or another connection will be called into action before the student drops out.
- Have the faculty notify the appropriate mentor when a student has missed classes more than once with no explanation so that the mentor can become involved in encouraging the student to attend

class regularly. Meeting with the student at this point may provide an opportunity to discover what problems the student is facing that perhaps can be solved.

- Have all members of the faculty spend at least one day in the field each year, shadowing a graduate on the job. This exercise is designed to provide the teachers with some up-to-date knowledge about how the job is being performed today. This information will be invaluable to enhance the classroom presentations of the teacher. It will also serve to impress the students with the currency of the curriculum, as well as to demonstrate the concern of the institution to give the students the most useful information possible. During the shadowing, have the faculty member conduct a brief interview with both the employer and employee to evaluate how well the institution did in preparing the graduate for the job.
- Schedule a quarterly retreat to be attended by all members of the staff and faculty. Saturday mornings or Friday--if your institution is on a 4-day school week--are effective dates for such events. The purpose of the retreat is to share the progress of the institution in reaching the annual goals and objectives; to share areas of concern and to develop solutions to problems; and to agree upon the objectives for the next quarter. These meetings can be varied from time-to-time with an outside speaker or a small group planning session. Serve a continental breakfast and release the group at noon. Keep detailed minutes to be shared following the meeting. This can serve as an excellent part of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP).
- Have the full-time faculty meet together each day at some designated time to review students' attendance and to share any important information about things the faculty should know, such as reminders about class time schedule modifications during finals, need for student volunteers for a school activity, etc. Morning break is an ideal time for this activity.
- Have all members of the staff and faculty wear name badges during the first week of each new term (if not all of the time) to help new students learn peoples' names and titles more easily.
- Assign one member of the faculty the responsibility of reviewing handouts on a regular basis to insure that they are attractive, legible, and reflective of a caring institution. Make him or her the handout "Guru." Clear, clean originals should replace copies of copies.
- Have the educational dean review the course syllabus with each teacher on a regular basis to insure that no inappropriate deviations have been made in what is being presented in the classroom.
- Have the faculty monitor and report retention rates on a class-by-class basis for each term. This is an excellent way to learn if you have a "killer curriculum," which is one that is too tough for your student body.
- Adjust the rotation or sequencing of courses to avoid overloaded terms.
- Provide cards to faculty members that are red on one side and green on the other. Have the faculty give each student a card at the beginning of each class and request that it be placed green side up and visible. Then if the faculty member says anything that is not understood, ask the student to simply turn the card over. This enables the faculty member to know immediately when a lecture is not understood so that he/she can make the necessary adjustments. It is a non-

threatening method of communication for the students.

- Schedule faculty very carefully, taking into consideration which members of the faculty deal better with the new, less mature students. Assign those faculty members with the greatest patience, the most “intestinal fortitude” the responsibility of teaching the earliest courses. Use other members of the faculty who have a lower tolerance for immaturity for the later courses after students have become more adjusted to college life. Let teachers teach to their strength.

#### 9. FINANCIAL AID:

- Conduct financial aid quizzes during surprise visits to classrooms and award prizes for the correct answers. For example, have the financial aid administrator go visit the classrooms, select students at random, and have them draw slips from a box of questions. Give them simple prizes like a pad of paper, a computer disk, etc. Questions should be about things that they should know, like, “What is the interest rate on your Stafford loan?” “When will you have to begin repaying your loan?”

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