



National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness

Illinois Valley Community College Oglesby, Illinois

Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE)

by

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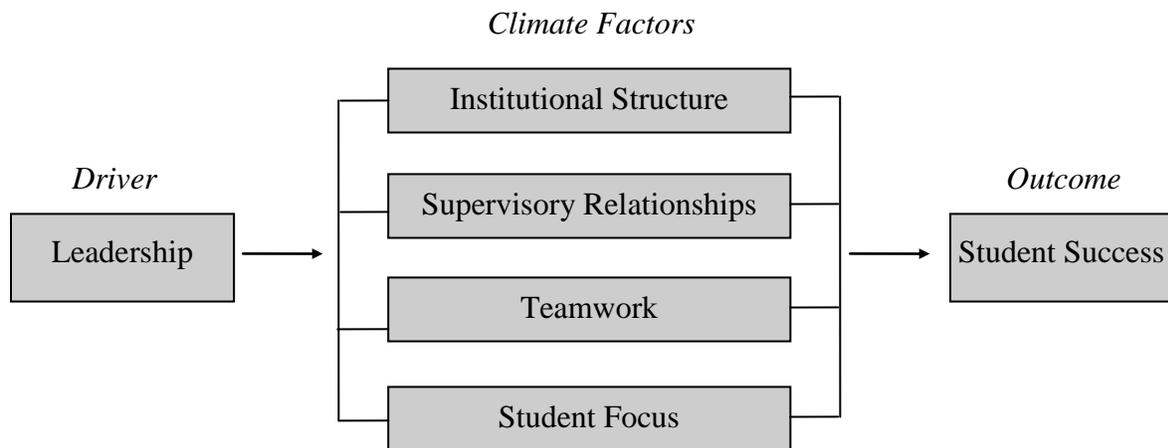
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2012, the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey was administered to 422 employees at Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC). Of those 422 employees, 218 (51.7%) completed and returned the instrument for analysis. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the perceptions of personnel concerning the college climate and to provide data to assist IVCC in promoting more open and constructive communication among faculty, staff, and administrators. Researchers at the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) and representatives of IVCC collaborated to administer a survey that would capture the opinions of personnel throughout the college.

In the PACE model, the leadership of an institution motivates the Institutional Structure, Supervisory Relationships, Teamwork, and Student Focus climate factors toward an outcome of student success and institutional effectiveness.

Figure 1. The PACE Model



NILIE has synthesized from the literature four leadership or organizational systems ranging from coercive to collaborative. According to Likert (1967), the Collaborative System, which he termed System 4, generally produced better results in terms of productivity, job satisfaction, communication, and overall organizational climate. The other systems were Consultative (System 3), Competitive (System 2) and Coercive (System 1). In agreement with Likert, NILIE has concluded that Collaborative (System 4) is the climate to be sought as opposed to existing naturally in the environment. Likert discovered that most of the organizations he studied functioned at the Competitive or Consultative levels. This has been NILIE's experience as well, with most college climates falling into the Consultative system across the four factors of the climate instrument.

Of the more than 120 studies completed by NILIE, few institutions have been found to achieve a fully Collaborative (System 4) environment, although scores in some categories may fall in this range for some classifications of employees. Thus, if the Collaborative System is the ideal, then this environment is the one to be sought through planning, collaboration, and organizational development.

Employees completed a 46-item PACE instrument organized into four climate factors as follows: Institutional Structure, Supervisory Relationships, Teamwork, and Student Focus. They also completed a Customized section designed specifically for Illinois Valley Community College. Respondents were asked to rate the four factors on a five-point Likert-type scale. The instrument was specifically designed to compare the existing climate at IVCC to a range of four managerial systems found to exist in colleges and to a Norm Base of 60 community colleges across North America. The information generated from the instrument has been developed into a research report that can be used for planning and decision-making in order to improve the existing college climate.

The PACE instrument administered at IVCC included 56 total items. Respondents were asked to rate items on a five-point satisfaction scale from a low of “1” to a high of “5.” Of the 56 items, none fell within the least favorable category identified as the Coercive range (rated between 1 and 2). One fell within the Competitive range (rated between 2 and 3). Forty three fell within the Consultative range (rated between 3 and 4), and 12 composite ratings fell within the Collaborative range (rated between 4 and 5).

At IVCC, the overall results from the PACE instrument indicate a healthy campus climate, yielding an overall 3.80 mean score or high Consultative system. The Student Focus category received the highest mean score (4.04), whereas the Institutional Structure category received the lowest mean score (3.47). When respondents were classified according to Personnel Classification at IVCC, the composite ratings were as follows: Administration (3.47), Faculty (3.86), and Support Staff (3.81).

Of the 46 standard PACE questions, the top mean scores have been identified at Illinois Valley Community College.

- The extent to which my supervisor expresses confidence in my work, 4.32 (#2)
- The extent to which I feel my job is relevant to this institution's mission, 4.30 (#8)
- The extent to which students receive an excellent education at this institution, 4.26 (#31)
- The extent to which this institution prepares students for further learning, 4.21 (#37)
- The extent to which this institution prepares students for a career, 4.20 (#35)
- The extent to which my supervisor is open to the ideas, opinions, and beliefs of everyone, 4.19 (#9)
- The extent to which my supervisor seriously considers my ideas, 4.10 (#27)
- The extent to which non-teaching professional personnel meet the needs of the students, 4.08 (#23)
- The extent to which there is a spirit of cooperation within my work team, 4.08 (#3)
- The extent to which faculty meet the needs of the students, 4.08 (#17)

Of the 46 standard PACE questions, the bottom mean scores have been identified as areas in need of improvement at Illinois Valley Community College.

- The extent to which I have the opportunity for advancement within this institution, 2.99 (#38)
- The extent to which I am able to appropriately influence the direction of this institution, 3.06 (#15)
- The extent to which professional development and training opportunities are available, 3.22 (#46)
- The extent to which information is shared within this institution, 3.24 (#10)
- The extent to which open and ethical communication is practiced at this institution, 3.27 (#16)
- The extent to which this institution is appropriately organized, 3.30 (#32)
- The extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution, 3.32 (#4)
- The extent to which a spirit of cooperation exists at this institution, 3.44 (#25)
- The extent to which institutional teams use problem-solving techniques, 3.49 (#11)
- The extent to which this institution has been successful in positively motivating my performance, 3.56 (#22)

Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide comments about the most favorable aspects and the least favorable aspects of IVCC. The responses provide insight and anecdotal evidence that support the survey questions.