

Southeast Tech
Strategy Forum HLC Presentation
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose:

To present Southeast Tech's upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Annual Conference Presentation on "Hosting a Successful On-Campus Strategy Forum."

As part of Southeast Tech's accreditation requirements, institute employees and a Board member must attend an HLC-hosted strategy forum twice in every eight year accreditation cycle. After attending one of these forums, Southeast Tech recognized their value and two of the faculty participants, Jean Rose and Debi Nowak, facilitated our first internal strategy forum. Southeast Tech has now held three internal forums, each on a different topic area.

This April Southeast Tech has been invited by the Higher Learning Commission to share our experiences on hosting internal strategy forums at the HLC Annual Conference in Chicago.

Today's presentation is a glimpse of what will be presented at the conference later this month. The three presenters, Jean Rose, Karen Winter, and Ruby Castardo have all played significant roles in assuring that our internal strategy forums have been a success. The presentation provides concrete steps colleges and universities can use to implement and assure the success of their own internal strategy forums.

Administrative Recommendation to School Board:

Acknowledge the Strategy Forum HLC Presentation Report.

Hosting a Successful Strategy Forum

Tips and Tricks

Southeast Technical Institute – Sioux Falls, SD

Ruby Castardo

Karen Winter

Jean Rose

Strategy *noun* strat·e·gy \-jē\

-- a careful **plan** or **method** for **achieving a particular goal** usually over a long period of time

-- the skill of making or carrying out plans to **achieve a goal**

FORUM -- *noun* fo·rum \'fɔr-əm\

-- a **meeting** at which **a subject** can be **discussed**

-- a place or **opportunity for discussing a subject**

Strategy Forum

A safe place / format where people can discuss a common goal.



Why have a strategy Forum?

- Admin can't know it all – ask the front line people – they are the face, eyes and ears of the institution.
- Motivational to employees – suggests employees are valued
- Team building with employees across campus. Different viewpoint shared depending on job and department.
- Creates an environment of open communication.



One More Reason -- AQIP --

(Academic Quality Improvement Pathway – HLC)

- Student Survey results
- Internal Staff/Faculty Survey results
- Strategy Forum



Southeast Technical Institute Strategy Forum Themes



- Embrace a culture that enhances student success.
- Embrace a culture that promotes individual contributions.
- Embrace a culture of communication that values people.

Trust the Process



Creating the Environment

- Create a safe environment where individuals are free to speak.





E. L. M. O.

Role of Facilitators – choose wisely

- Encourage participation
- Keep teams on track (caution – do not direct their subject)
- Manage conflict if needed
- Help create an environment of open, respectful and professional communication
- Watch the time



How is it Done?

- The Prep and the Invitation
 - Tables of 6-8 people
 - Approximately 6 tables
 - Mix people from departments/job titles
- Create an atmosphere that is warm and welcoming
- Make attendees feel important, special and safe



Items to Include

- Table Assignments and Name Tags
- Snacks
- Exercise Supply Table Items



The Booklet

- Agenda
- Team Roles
- Team Exercises
- Final Presentations



REPORTER

RECORDER

EXPLORER

Southwest Technical Institute
Strategy Forum
April 16, 2025
8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

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What do you want – End result

Take from it –

1. Groups choose most important items/problems
2. Identify solutions

Video - record keeping (not the collaborations but the end result)

Follow up- Crucial to finalize results

1. 30 day deadline for Admin for feedback
- Admin present- can hinder process- dependent on subject matter

Did it work for Southeast?

Problem area- Communication between Faculty, Staff & administration

1. Improvements seen
2. Southeast Tech Cares – campus wide faculty and student success software used for communication.
3. Weekly communication email from administration.
4. Mindful attention to positive communication.

Mini Forum -- Let's give it a try!



(Paper Elmo's on a stick? Take with them for evening fun)

5 Whys

Presenters

- Karen Winter -- Karen.winter@southeasttech.edu
- Ruby Castardo -- ruby.castardo@southeasttech.edu
- Jean Rose -- jean.rose@southeasttech.edu