

B.9.1 (Policy) Educational Philosophy – The Alamo Way: Always Inspire, Always Improve

Responsible Department: Office of the Chancellor

Board Adoption: 7-26-11

Last Board Action: 1-17-17

Purpose

The Alamo Way is designed to be the theoretical framework for improvement to be used throughout the Alamo Colleges District. The purpose of this policy is to describe the three dynamic models that together drive increased employee and student performance, greater organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and leadership at the Alamo Colleges District. These models are intended to be fully integrated into the culture of the Alamo Colleges District, its students and employees.

The Board holds that the Baldrige Excellence Framework, the principles of Achieving the Dream and the Principle-Centered Leadership concepts (AlamoLEADS) provide the foundation for the Alamo Way: Always Inspire, Always Improve. By integrating leadership competencies and experiences into the curriculum and in organizational learning opportunities for employees, the Alamo Colleges District empowers all students and employees to explore and realize their learning, professional, and civic potential. The result is the organization achieving its full potential and our diverse communities achieving theirs.

To this end, the Board adopts the Alamo Way: “Always Inspire, Always Improve” as its improvement theory, providing a framework to advance and align goals, strategic plans, policies, budgets, and administrative actions to improve the Alamo Colleges District.

Student Success

The success of the Alamo Colleges District will be measured by the success of its students. The organizational structures, policies, and practices that support our student success values and priorities are based on research from Achieving the Dream, the Community College Research Center, Lumina Foundation, Complete College America, Jobs for the Future, Texas Completes, internal Alamo Colleges District data and other educational strategies identified as promoting increased success for all students. In addition, the Texas Legislature has adopted laws and rules that enhance these principles including HB5 83(R), HB 2628 84(R), HB 298 84(R) and SB1189 84(R), and the THECB’s 60x30 TX 2015-2030 Higher Education Strategic Plan for Texas specifically calls for pathways and marketable skills in every program. Plus at the local level, the SA-TEC (Talent for Economic Competitiveness) calls for increasing student completion and employment readiness. The Alamo Colleges District is focused on guiding each student’s college experience to include clear, stackable academic guides toward the student’s goals while providing continuing and intrusive advising, milestone progress monitoring, feedback and broad, academic support. This deliberate, systematic framework will increase the likelihood that every student will complete a certificate and/or degree. The Alamo Colleges District will rely upon evidence of student progress to make strategic decisions and to allocate resources. Our mission, vision and values reflect convictions about the importance of success and equity for all students, particularly those who have traditionally faced significant barriers.

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Achieving the Dream

The Alamo Colleges District will promote collaboration by achieving consensus on the measures of student success and by stressing that student success is everyone's business.

The five principles of Achieving the Dream are:

- Committed Leadership
- Use of Evidence
- Broad Engagement
- Systemic Institutional Improvement
- Equity

Achieving the Dream's Goal: Success for more community college students, especially students of color and low-income students. Success is defined by the rates at which students:

- Successfully complete remedial or developmental instruction and advance to credit-bearing courses
- Enroll in and successfully complete the initial college-level or gateway courses in subjects such as math and English
- Complete the courses they take with a grade of "C" or better
- Persistence from one term to the next
- Attain a certificate or degree

The Alamo Colleges District will strive to eliminate achievement gaps among student groups by analyzing disaggregated data. Any identified gaps will be addressed to provide programs and services whereby all students have the best opportunities to succeed.

MyMAP Pathways for Success

The Alamo Colleges District has a systematic framework that describes the student experience. The framework includes two models to guide and support students as they enter and progress through the student's desired program to completion and transfer and/or employment consistent with the research cited above and best practices/policies.

The MyMAP framework encompasses the Alamo Colleges District's student journey from the point of first contact, to attainment of a degree or certificate, and through transition to employment and/or achievement of the baccalaureate degree. Individualized educational pathways, strategies, and interventions envelop students in a systematic educational employment preparation structure that provides affirmative experiences that promote successful matriculation and completion in an accelerated time frame.

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AlamoADVISE

The Alamo Colleges District will provide every student with a deliberate, effective and personalized academic and career pathway to success emphasizing completion and transfer or employment. Based on an intrusive case management system, Academic and Career Advising is a series of integrated practices and milestones and ongoing, intentional conversations among students, faculty and staff that define a pathway to the realization of education, career and life goals.

AlamoINSTITUTES

The AlamoINSTITUTES is the innovative and evidence-based academic design of the Alamo Colleges District: the organization of career pathways with clusters of related programs that also incorporate academic support and co-curricular learning. Each Institute comprises stackable maps of curriculum sequences: the AA, AS, AAT, and AAS degrees and certificates. Through a series of strategic supports and the student's informed choices, the Institutes ensure each student across the Alamo Colleges District has a clear, stackable guided pathway to achieve her/his career and academic goals.

Leadership

The Alamo Colleges District incorporates a leadership model into the curriculum of its employee leadership enrichment program.

The Board of Trustees, in responding to the requirements of area employers for “soft skills”, what we now call “leadership skills,” which are increasingly in demand for both new employees as well as incumbent workers to help employers compete more effectively, provides the following policy guidance for student leadership skills attainment.

A recent report from Deloitte University Press: Global Human Capital Trends 2016. The New Organization: Different by Design, identifies leadership skills as among the most important skills required by all organizations in today's globally competitive economy. Further, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's new strategic plan, 60X30TX, calls specifically for every college and university to stipulate the marketable skills that students will achieve upon completing their program of study. Leadership skills must be incorporated within the marketable skills of every program in order to ensure that our students are well prepared and competitive for the high demand, high wage, and highly technical nature of jobs and careers in the 21st Century.

The Alamo Colleges District's Board of Trustees policy regarding Principle Centered Leadership requires that every program contain marketable skills to be achieved upon completion of a certificate and/or associate degree and that the marketable skills for every program contain a subset of leadership-specific skills. The Alamo

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Colleges District’s Board expects the faculty and administration to collaborate with employers and ISD/university partners to determine their leadership program needs.

Since leadership is a common requirement for every program and every student, the Board expects the faculty and administration to recommend a single, District-wide leadership program that meets the needs of employers and ISD/university partners and to outline how this model will be taught to students at scale across the Alamo Colleges District, thereby achieving economies of scale, especially regarding materials, and achieving a leadership standard our external community embraces. Further, the Board expects the administration and faculty to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this action and recommend improvements and/or modifications over time to best meet the needs of our students and community.

Continuous Improvement as a Theory of Action

The Baldrige Excellence Framework provides a comprehensive, integrated systems perspective of overall organizational performance management to promote organizational and student success. The organization responds to self-assessment questions in seven categories:

- Criteria 1 Leadership
- Criteria 2 Strategy
- Criteria 3 Students
- Criteria 4 Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
- Criteria 5 Workforce
- Criteria 6 Operations
- Criteria 7 Results

The Criteria brings together an integrated leadership and management system that drives success across the Alamo Colleges District, providing a strategic focus on overall organizational competitiveness and sustainability.

Role of the Board and Administration

The Board is committed to the use of the Alamo Way: Always Inspire, Always Improve as a means to provide a sustainable framework for improving student achievement, as well as organizational performance. Board members shall inform stakeholder groups of the underlying philosophy for all Alamo Colleges District initiatives. The theory of continuous improvement shall be established in Alamo Colleges District’s publications and on the District and Colleges web sites. Staff members shall receive training on this policy as part of staff orientation.

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The Chancellor shall monitor continuous improvement throughout the Alamo Colleges District. The Chancellor and administrative staff shall provide regular (fall and spring semester) progress reports on academic results and other performance data. These reports shall provide data necessary to identify gaps and make mid-course corrections.

Reference:

B.5.1 (Policy) Board Responsibilities