

## Richland Community College's Quality Journey



By Teena Zindel-McWilliams  
Coordinator, Curriculum & Grants  
CQIN Rep  
Richland Community College, IL

**“Do we have the right people in the right seats on the bus?”**

- Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*  
(CQIN 2006)

**“Either you will manage your culture, or it will manage you.”**

- Roger Connors and Tom Smith,  
authors of *Change the Culture, Change the Game*  
(CQIN 2012)

**“I have a job; I understand my job; I love my job.”**

- The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company  
(CQIN 2014)

While sound bites don't tell the whole story, the lessons we've learned at CQIN's Summer Institute have been the touch points for our quality journey, which has transformed Richland Community College.

### Our First Summer Institute

President Gayle Saunders joined CQIN in 2004. That year, she selected a team and brought them to their first Summer Institute in Tucson, AZ. The learning theme was "Preparing For Our Future—Developing a Student-Centered Learning System", and the team's experience was so powerful that it marked the beginning of a long, proud tradition.

Through subsequent Summer Institutes, we immersed ourselves in CQIN's learning themes—strategic planning, employee engagement, customer service, and systems thinking. Over the years, our teams have included faculty, staff, and administrators from across the College who implemented key concepts gleaned from CQIN's Learning Partners and best practices sessions they attended with other community colleges.

## Performance Excellence

While the integration of these concepts into the College culture has varied from year to year, I believe Richland benefitted most from the 2010 Summer Institute ("Achieving Performance Excellence: Accountability, Alignment and Integration") in Fort Collins, CO, and the 2014 Summer Institute ("Creating a Culture of Engagement to Optimize Organizational Systems and Performance") in St. Louis, MO.

The 2010 Summer Institute came at the right moment to reinforce our work on a Balanced Scorecard. That year, Poudre Valley Healthcare System, a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient, offered stories, processes, and advice about integrating a Balanced Scorecard into its culture. The Richland Team brought home samples of documentation and format for adaptation and integration into the development process. While the College's current Balanced Scorecard has evolved since that time, without Poudre Valley's modeling Richland's journey would have been much different.

*"There hasn't been a CQIN Summer Institute that I attended and did not come away with ideas that I still incorporate into my work."*

The team that attended the 2014 Summer Institute was one of the most diverse in representing services across the College. With the Ritz-Carlton, Headwinds Ltd., and Nestle Purina PetCare serving as the Learning Partners, our team member immersed themselves in the theme "Creating a Culture of Engagement to Optimize Organizational Systems & Performance." The lively conversation among our team members generated ideas that have had immediate and long-term impact on Richland's culture. Since returning, that team has been involved in the following initiatives:

- Presentation at a leadership retreat in fall 2014
- Revision of questions in the Employee Engagement Survey conducted every two years and was last administered in spring 2015
- Convening of a Continuous Improvement Process Team to review and revise new employee orientation—a final report and recommendations will be presented in fall 2015
- Revision of customer service training, which will be implemented in spring 2016

## A Lasting Effect

Even more significant was Summer Institute's impact on individual members of the 2014 team.

*From a team member who has attended several Summer Institutes:*

“There hasn’t been a CQIN Summer Institute that I attended and did not come away with ideas that I still incorporate into my work.”

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*From College employees who participated for the first time:*

“I have implemented several lessons I learned there.”

“I learned so much and was able to get to know [other participants] better in the process.”

“CQIN at the Ritz is a great memory and was probably the most unique professional development experience I have ever had.”

Institutions cannot predict when the information learned at Summer Institute will benefit systems, processes, and individuals. It may happen immediately after returning home, or it may happen years later, resurrecting materials from previous Summer Institutes to use in presentations, training, and initiatives.

From our experience, CQIN offers one of the most comprehensive professional and personal development opportunities available for higher education institutions and their employees. CQIN supports us in our quality journeys, and the yearly Summer Institutes offer participants the opportunity for a “deep dive” that will exceed their expectations.