

LEAP Solution Team #4

Business Plan:

Create an Idea Incubator Process



LEAP Team Members:

Patrick Backes
Bruce Getzan
Cindy Grandgeorge
Dr. Ram Manvi
John Makevich
Mike Sanders

Leap Team Mentors:

Dr. Mitjl Capet
Sharlene Coleal

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Executive Summary

Project Overview

Currently, College of the Canyons has a New Idea Form that employees can use to submit their ideas for consideration by Executive Cabinet. Also, the College has a Business Incubator program that helps small businesses in our community to grow their entrepreneurial ideas into profitable, viable companies. The new Idea Incubator Program (i.i.p.) combines the best parts of these two current programs to form a comprehensive approach to:

- Encouraging new ideas
- Developing new ideas into well thought out plans
- Implementing new ideas to improve College of the Canyons
- Celebrating and recognizing staff who take the initiative to propose and follow through on new ideas

Objectives

1. Provide individuals an open, safe, and efficient way to explore and incubate their ideas with timely assistance from Idea Incubator Coaches and Idea Incubator Resource Team members.
2. Provide help in developing the needed resources for the fruition of new ideas.
3. Provide a process to revise and mold ideas to match the College's needs.
4. Facilitate a systematic approach to implementing promising new ideas and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Mission

California Community Colleges that encourage innovation and embrace change benefit from growing enrollments, increased success rates for students, and employees that are engaged and motivated. Our campus community consists of experts on campus who work to provide relevant academic education and high quality services to the students and the community. The i.i.p. will engage the valuable resource of this campus community to develop and implement new ideas that can improve existing processes, add innovative new programs, and implement visionary ideas in order to be better prepared and readily accommodate the ever-changing world around us. After all, if our programs and services are not flexible and agile enough to handle challenges who will want to be associated with our institution!

Project Details

Description

The Idea Incubator Project will provide College of the Canyons with a systematic approach to the implementation of an idea. It will provide an open, easy way for all employees to share their ideas with others. Ideas affecting all areas of the campus, from instruction to budgeting to

student services to facilities can be submitted. Ideas will be incubated with the help of campus experts (Idea Incubator coaches and Idea Incubator Resource Team members) and Executive Cabinet. The system will help avoid duplication of effort by creating a central repository for ideas.

First, the Idea Incubator Program will provide guidance for those who need assistance in developing their idea before they submit the simple New Idea Form. This guidance will be available through meeting with an Idea Incubator Program coach, attending a quarterly Idea Think-Tank Workshop, or participating in an online discussion/examine FAQ's available on the Idea Incubator Program website. Coaches will receive training through Professional Development so they are prepared to initially evaluate ideas and begin the valuation process. Idea submitters will be asked to consider a few general purpose questions:

1. Is the idea sound?
2. Does it benefit students?
3. Is it a good use of taxpayer funds?
4. Does it produce a valuable return on investment (not necessarily dollars)?

Those not requiring initial guidance with their idea may simply submit the New Idea Form. (See sample Idea Incubator Submission form, Exhibit B).

The New Idea Form should be submitted via the website to be routed to the Professional Development Office and the employee's immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor should communicate the idea to the appropriate Executive Cabinet report. If feasible, the employee should involve his/her supervisor and Executive Cabinet report early in the idea's development to start "selling" the idea and gaining feedback and buy-in.

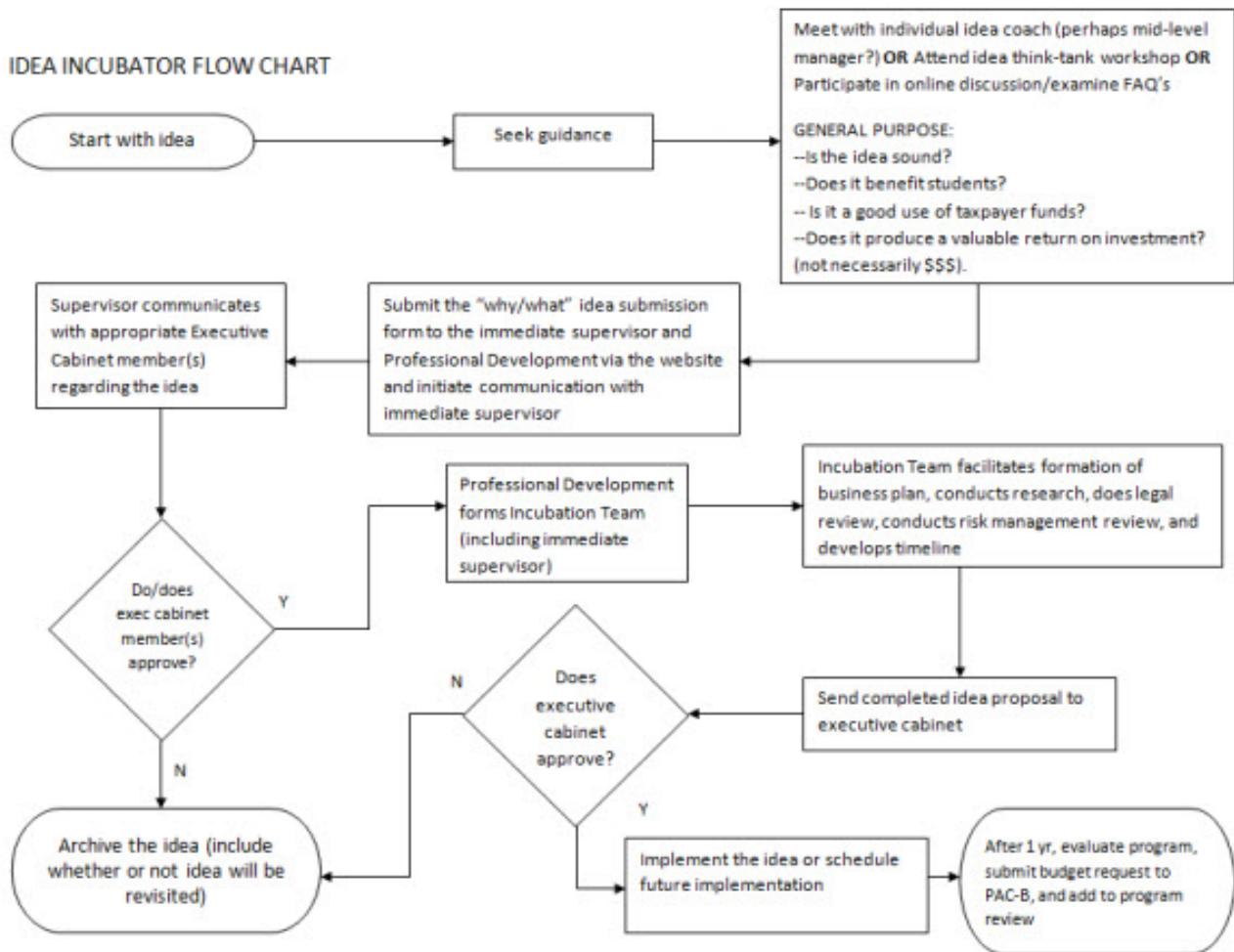
Once the New Idea Form is submitted, Executive Cabinet will receive a summary of the idea/vision from Professional Development and decide if the idea should go forward for development, be sent back for modifications, or be archived. Executive Cabinet will provide feedback as to why an idea is archived, and include whether or not the idea will be revisited.

When an idea is advanced by Executive Cabinet for development, an Idea Incubator Program Resource Team is convened by Professional Development to assist in the formation of a business plan, conduct research, do a legal review, conduct a risk management review, and develop a timeline for the project. The Idea Incubator Resource Team will consist of employees from key campus areas that have expertise related to the new idea being proposed.

Once the business plan/idea proposal materials are complete, they will be forwarded by Professional Development to Executive Cabinet for review. If Executive Cabinet supports the idea, an Executive Cabinet member will be assigned oversight of the idea, and implementation will be calendared!

Ideas will be implemented for a beta test the first year, using new idea funding (if needed and available). In subsequent years, if the idea is evaluated and deemed successful, it should be funded through the Program Review/Budget process.

IDEA INCUBATOR FLOW CHART



Marketing

Our new Idea Incubator Program will not produce the desired results unless the campus community knows about it and takes advantage of it by participating in the process. Educating the campus community about the incubator can be done in a variety of ways:

- COC E-mail messages
- CD case calendar promoting the incubator process, providing tips on developing ideas, and celebrating past ideas
- MAC presentation
- Slide at All-College meetings
- Idea Incubator Program Website (linked to the Professional Development Page)
- A Mention at Opening Day and information included on Opening Day resource CD
- Word of mouth
- Electronic bulletin board postings

Personnel Involved

Employees

All employees are encouraged to submit ideas and will be recognized and celebrated for their efforts and creative thinking. Idea incubation is a win-win situation regardless if your idea is implemented. All participants will benefit from the experience and information sharing that will occur during the development of an idea.

Executive Cabinet

Executive Cabinet members will play a key role in this process. They will act as the evaluators of promising ideas, make available the needed resources for the development of ideas, approve their implementation plans, and oversee implementation efforts.

Idea Incubator Program Coaches

Idea Incubator Program coaches will assist employees in the successful development of an idea by acting as individual idea coaches, facilitating Idea Think-Tank Workshops and on-line discussions, and forming and participating in Idea Incubator Resource Teams. Idea Incubator Program Coaches will be trained on basic College of the Canyons information.

Idea Incubator Resource Team

The Idea Incubator Resource Team will be an ad hoc appointed team of experts pulled together specifically for the idea that requires incubation. Key players invited to participate in these custom tailored teams will come from areas such as:

- Instruction Office
- Student Services
- Business Services
 - Budget Development
 - Fiscal Services
 - Contracts and Procurement
 - Grants Accounting
 - Risk Management
- Human Resources
- MIS/Computer Support Services
- Facilities
- Grants Development Office
- Institutional Research
- Public Information Office

Professional Development Department

The Professional Development Department will provide the Idea Incubator Program “oversight” by providing idea tracking and routing, training for coaches, scheduling of quarterly meetings, and development and coordination of resource teams.

Financial Resources

Idea Incubator Program Funding

The Idea Incubator Program will require annual funding for its **infrastructure and operation:**

Full Time Professional Development Specialist (Cost to upgrade existing PPT Position to FT)	\$22,461
Fringe Benefits (Cost to upgrade existing PPT Position to FT)	12,401
Consultant – Website Development	1,500 (one-time)
Refreshments- Quarterly Meetings	400
Marketing Materials	500
Award Certificates	<u>100</u>
Total Operational Funding- Year 1	\$37,362
Offset by	

With oversight from the Director of Professional Development, the Professional Development Specialist will:

- Monitor and maintain the web site, including notifying experts their assistance is needed via the on-line discussion board
- Coordinating with the Chancellor's Office regarding ideas ready for Executive Cabinet consideration
- Develop and send out marketing information on the Idea Incubator Program
- Schedule quarterly Think-Tank Workshops, to be held in the University Center
- Coordinate training for new Idea Incubator Program coaches
- Coordinate Idea Incubator Program Resource Team members and meetings
- Keep an up to date list of ideas on the website sorted by status:
 - Recently submitted
 - In progress
 - Beta Testing (first year implementation)
 - Implemented (long term)
 - In archive
 - Future implementation
 - Unable to implement

Idea Funding

It is obvious that each new idea may have a unique funding need, from no funds needed to a substantial financial investment for operating expenses, salaries, equipment or other costs associated with the new project. As part of the incubation process, the team will identify what funding is required and if the program will generate any offsetting revenue. Funding sources that will be considered by the incubation team will include:

- Partnerships
- Donations of cash or in-kind services

- Foundation Mini-Grants
- Grant or categorical funds
- New Idea Fund Budget augmentation, if feasible based on 2009-10 State Budget Act (Line item for new idea implementation costs allocated to each Executive Cabinet Member during 2009-10 Budget Development)
- Existing department budgets and resources
- Measure M funding (capital outlay expenditures only)

In addition, as budgeting permits, each Executive Cabinet Member should have a New Idea Implementation Budget of approximately \$25,000 for each of the following nine Executive Cabinet members, for a total cost of \$225,000:

- Dr. Dianne Van Hook
- Sue Bozman
- Dr. Mitjl Capet
- Dr. Michael Wilding
- Sharlene Coleal
- Jim Schrage
- Diane Fiero
- Dr. Barry Gribbons
- Dr. Dena Maloney

Other Considerations

When it comes to evaluating the financial needs of a project, the initial funding is not the only thing to consider. Employees will be asked to think about long term costs for a project. For instance, if an idea is being funded by applying for a grant for the initial cost of an employee or operating expense, considers how that expense will be funded after the grant funding expires? If a piece of equipment is obtained via Measure M funding, will there be on-going maintenance charges that will need to be paid with District resources in future years? The Idea Incubator Resource Team will help identify these issues and plan for ongoing costs.

Recognition and Celebrating Success

The unique and talented employees at COC thrive in a changing environment and embrace new concepts. It will be motivating to share new idea successes at the All College Informational Meetings our Chancellor holds several times a year. Also, an annual award to the “best new idea” brought forward through the new incubation process could be given out during the Opening Day Luncheon. A personalized award could be presented and the idea described and successes highlighted by our Chancellor during the presentation. Certificates could also be handed out to all employees who submitted an idea to the Idea Incubator Program.

Also, the Idea Incubator website will contain a list of ideas submitted and their status, providing the campus community the ability to view the list and celebrate all the creative ideas and innovative employees who took the time to submit an idea.

Project Evaluation and Expansion

With the help of the Institutional Development Office, ideas that are successfully implemented can be evaluated. If necessary, the Idea Incubator Resource Team can be called upon to re-visit an idea in need of adjustment if the evaluation process identifies the need to adjust the idea to be more effective. If a project proves to be very successful it can be expanded based on the data collected.

In addition to evaluating successfully implemented incubated ideas, the Idea Incubator itself should be evaluated for its effectiveness after a year. Areas to consider when evaluating the success of the Idea Incubator include:

- Number of ideas successfully incubated.
- Number of times multiple employees submitted the same idea and the Idea Incubator was able to bring them together to work as one group to work on the idea.
- Number of ideas identified early on as not feasible, thus transferring the resources that would have worked on the idea to another feasible project.
- Number of ideas that were “saved” and successfully incubated due to the many resources now available to help employees develop their ideas.

The Idea Incubator Leap Solution Team recommends evaluating this project at the end of the first year to determine if it should be expanded to include ideas submitted by students, or if a parallel Student Idea Incubator should be implemented.

Exhibit A

Implementation Plan

Action	Responsibility	Target Date
Modify new idea form Simplify form to What/Why format	LEAP Team #4	5/29/09
Allocate funds for Idea Incubator Program infrastructure and operation	Executive Cabinet/PAC-B	9/30/09
Hire adult hourly staff	Professional Development Director	10/31/09
Design website (with assistance of consultant) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background information• Guidelines and submission instructions• Links to resources• Link to new idea form• Online discussion tab	Consultant	10/31/09
Identify and train Idea Incubator Coaches and Resource Team Members	Professional Development/Executive Cabinet	10/31/09
Market the idea incubator	Adult Hourly Staff	11/15/09
Establish liaison relationship with Executive Cabinet	Adult Hourly Staff	11/15/09
Design and coordinate quarterly Think-Tank Workshops	Workgroup*	11/30/09
Formulate a business plan template	Workgroup*	11/30/09
Test run an idea before opening process to campus community	Workgroup*	12/31/09
Implementation of the Idea Incubator Program	Professional Development Office	January 2010

*Workgroup to consist of Idea Incubator Coaches, Resource Team Members, Professional Development Director, Executive Cabinet and other members as determined.

Exhibit B

Idea Incubator Submission

What is your idea?

Why is your idea important to College of the Canyons?

Idea Approved

Yes

No

Cabinet Member Signature

Date