



AQIP PROFILES 2018



AQIP Criterion 1: Mission

Tri-C's Employee Orientation Program Reinforces the College's Mission to New Hires

Joanne Baranovic is often the first person you meet as a Cuyahoga Community College employee.

On the first day of employment, before new hires head to their campuses or report to their departments, they report to Baranovic. That's because Baranovic, a training and development specialist, is in charge of the College's new employee orientation.

"Orientation is very important," Baranovic said. "There are really two sides to orientation—compliance and culture. In addition to informing new employees about essential things like rules, regulations, policies and benefits, it's also the first chance to align them with our mission."



Orientation takes place in two half-day sessions held during an employee's first week on the job. The first half-day serves as a primer on the College's rules regarding conduct and personal leave, payroll scheduling, identification cards and other essentials. The second half-day focuses primarily on insurance and benefits.

It's in the first session that Baranovic and the Tri-C human resources staff lay much of the groundwork for alignment with the College's mission and values.

"One of the first things new employees do in orientation is watch a video called 'The Community's College,'" Baranovic said. "It shows how we began and how we evolved as a College. It illustrates our mission, which is to provide the people of this community with education that leads to sustainable employment and a living wage."

The video is designed to lead into a discussion about how each employee—regardless of department or location—has a role in helping the College achieve the end goal of its mission: graduating students who go on to find gainful employment.

And that applies to employees who are student-facing as well as those who work behind the scenes.

"If you work for the College police, you help maintain our campuses as a safe, secure learning environment," Baranovic said. "If you work for buildings and grounds, you help

ensure that our facilities stay operational so our educators can do their jobs. Every person at Tri-C impacts student success, even if they don't have regular contact with students."

The aim and timing of the initial orientation session is deliberate. Before employees are "on the job," before they sit down at their desks or meet their departmental coworkers, the College assembles them and teaches them. New employees report to their campuses or departments with an understanding that they are a part of a College-wide community—a specialized community that, in turn, serves the community at large.

But that's not the end. In the weeks and months after orientation, Baranovic and the HR staff survey new hires, compiling data that helps the College revise its orientation program to better communicate its mission.

"We now have locations all over the area, which we didn't have 40 and 50 years ago," Baranovic said. "As we continue to expand and hire more people, that question of communicating the College's mission and aligning people with it becomes more challenging.

"We're always trying to stay ahead of the curve there. We are constantly working to make orientation better and more impactful, so that no matter how large we grow, we can still unify all of our people with the understanding that we are a single College with a single mission."

This is the second article in a seven-part series that examines how various programs and people throughout Tri-C each play an important role in meeting the AQIP criteria and, by extension, assist the College in remaining accredited. Keep an eye on your email Inbox for the next five stories, running through Feb. 15.

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