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Student Services

ISSUE 5

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The Best of Continuous Improvement— Ideas from Penn State

Submitted by Martha Kelley

As we continue to discuss providing top notch customer service, it pays to think about what that means in higher education.

Penn State has long been heralded as a leader in quality improvement and teamwork. Although they are a huge multiple campus institution, there are ideas in any innovation which are adaptable and applicable. Hey, why re-invent the wheel?

Each year they hold a **Quality Issues Forum**, where the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment recognize improvement and innovation teams formed during the past year. In 1907, 509 members of 63 teams are being invited to the Forum and the latest updates are continually added to the data base.

Information about over 800 innovation and improvement teams at Penn State can be found at <http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/database/index.htm>

Now Open to the Public

In order to facilitate communication and address questions regarding the re-engineering initiative, the monthly joint meeting of the Steering Team and Facilitators will be open to the campus community. Meetings will be planned in advance, agenda items will be solicited and completed agendas circulated by the meeting leader. Time will be devoted at the end of each meeting for Q & A.

All meetings will be held in the Orgill Room from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. on the following Wednesdays:

April 30

May 28

June 25

July 23

August 20

September 17

**Submit your
Hub
updates
weekly
by Friday
to Martha
or Marci**

It's All About the System

Submitted by Martha Kelley

As we develop new and better ways of serving our constituents, no amount of smiling, pleasantries, and friendliness (although appreciated) can compensate for a less-than-optimal service system. No one knows this better than Disney, known for developing, executing, and teaching world-class service principles backed by world-class service systems.

- ◇ Every year the anticipation and excitement of the park contributes to a rash of keys locked in cars throughout the Disney parking lot ... some 19,000 per year. This is a problem, especially for dad, whose mistake is delaying entry to the Magic Kingdom. A parking attendant (cast member in Disney language) spots the problem, walks up to dad, and intentionally makes it into no big deal. And it's not. Within 4 minutes, the attendant had radioed the key people, they have arrived, unlocked the car with one swift move of an uncommon, purpose-specific tool (where do they get these people?), handed dad the keys, turned down a tip, and preserved dad's dignity. "I'm sorry your keys were locked in the car." Invariably dad replies "that's OK."
- ◇ A guest asks a Magic Kingdom cast member "How many gallons of water are there in the 20,000 Leagues under the Sea tank?" Now, the cast member wants to ask why in the world the guest wants to know that but suppresses the urge. It is unimportant why, just find out. She dials 4500 on her conveniently located company phone which connects her to the data base (11.5 million gallons). Now the guest knows, she knows, we all know. In customer service, if you don't have the information on the tip of your tongue, the next best thing is to find out.
- ◇ It's the end of the day and we're back in the parking lot. The ever-present cast member spots the guest with the "deer in the headlights look" and asks if he/she needs help finding the car. If the guest is asked the obvious ... what the car looks like, invariably the reply is something like "it's the white rental." Instead the cast member asks "What time did you arrive?" Then the next response can be "Oh, if it was 9:30 a.m., that must be Goofy 21." Of course, the entire family has been told they parked in Goofy 21 at least five times on the way but it still happens ... a lot. The parking crew has a system that enables them to record the time they parked every row.

The cast members aggressively try to help people, but what would happen if they didn't have the system? They would try to avoid people and run. Having the radios, the parking system, and the databases make cast members confident they can help.

At Rhodes, we have an opportunity to build world class service systems for our students, our parents, and each other. How can we arm our front line service pros to be able to aggressively reach out to help? How can we make life easier for ourselves by thinking of proactive ways to help students before they have a chance to miss a deadline or an opportunity? How do we find out what's important to the people we serve, both external customers (students, parents, etc.) and internal customers (each other)?

"Ironically, the customer group most often ignored is the one that is easiest to communicate with: fellow employees." – Patrick Townsend, *Quality in Action*.

In higher education, we are all so interdependent. The beautiful thing about stellar customer service is that a great system is not only customer-friendly but provider-friendly. And that's a goal we can all buy into.

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Frequently Asked Questions

The call information group of Carrie McAdon, Joye Myers, Margaret Plunket, and Katie Zisson are working collaboratively to gather and organize information that will serve as resource information for Burrow Center for Student Opportunity. The group has asked that every hub team provide FAQs and responses for your team that will serve everyone responding to questions by phone.

Keeping in mind that an important goal of the Rhodes Center for Student opportunity is to serve as a single point of contact for students, families and the Rhodes community, **the more information you are willing to share, the closer we get to successfully attaining our goal.**

Below is a sample of the process E & F used to record FAQs. **Please make a concerted effort to have your questions and responses to Katie Zisson by the end of April.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ◇ E & F first came up with an extensive list of questions that are asked of the staff.
- ◇ Next, they assigned the questions to members of the hub to be answered.
- ◇ A standard template was used to answer the question that includes:

- The date the question was answered
- The individual who answered the question
- Who would be the expert to whom this question would be referred
- Key “search” words applicable to the question

- ◇ An example from Admissions:

Do you use the Common Application?

Yes. You can find the Common Application online at <https://www.commonapp.org>. Rhodes requires a short supplement to the Common Application which can be found on the Common App website or on the Apply to Rhodes page of the Rhodes Admissions site. (<http://www.rhodes.edu/admissions/69.asp>)

Date: 12.18.07

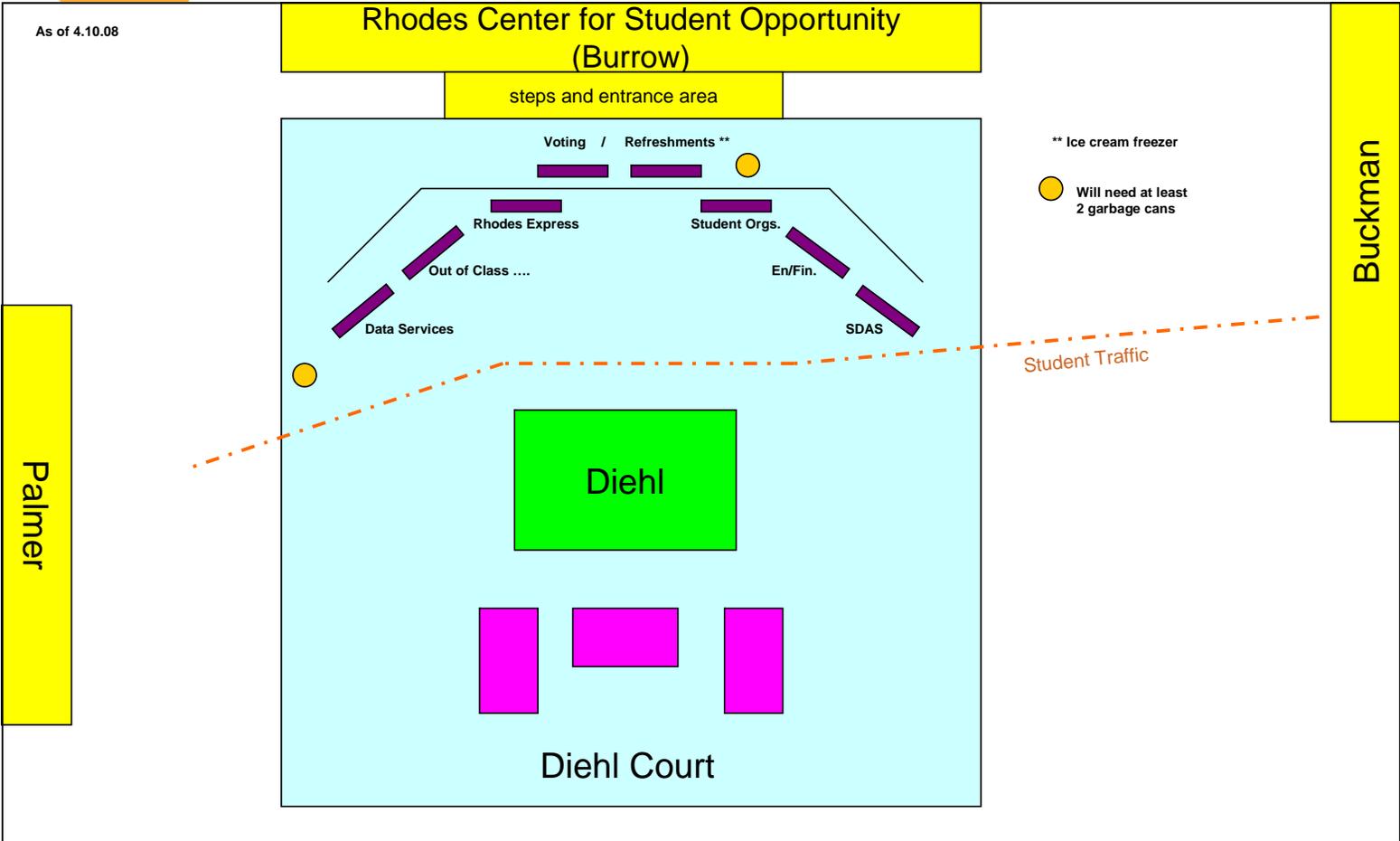
Answered by: Caroline King

Expert: All Admissions Counselors

Key words: common application, supplement, applying to Rhodes

EXPO

We're just **ONE** week away! Tuesday, April 15, 2:30-4:00 p.m. Below is the set-up



Rhodes Express and Data Services Update

Rhodes Express and Data Services (REDS) have spent the past two weeks working on crafting a shared leadership structure for REDS. We began by brainstorming functions that the team viewed as tasks that are currently or traditionally performed by various types of managers as well as any functions they would like to see a leader handle. We then sorted these functions based on whether they would best be performed by an individual versus a group and where they made the most sense to reside (within the team, outside of the team, or in a blended environment). Once this was done, affinities among certain types of tasks were easy to see, and members of REDS were able to identify those areas where their strengths and interests would best allow them to participate in various aspects of leadership.

RMT Update

The team split up and met individually with eight different people on campus in order to gain feedback on the student life cycle phases. Helpful input was received. Additionally, further interest was expressed in a Student Relationship Management system, which will provide a better way to monitor and control the relationship of the institution to the student. Thus, increasing the ability to provide individual and personal communication and service to all students. A project report, which recommends the implementation of such as system, is being finalized in order to include it in the overall report of recommendations in April.