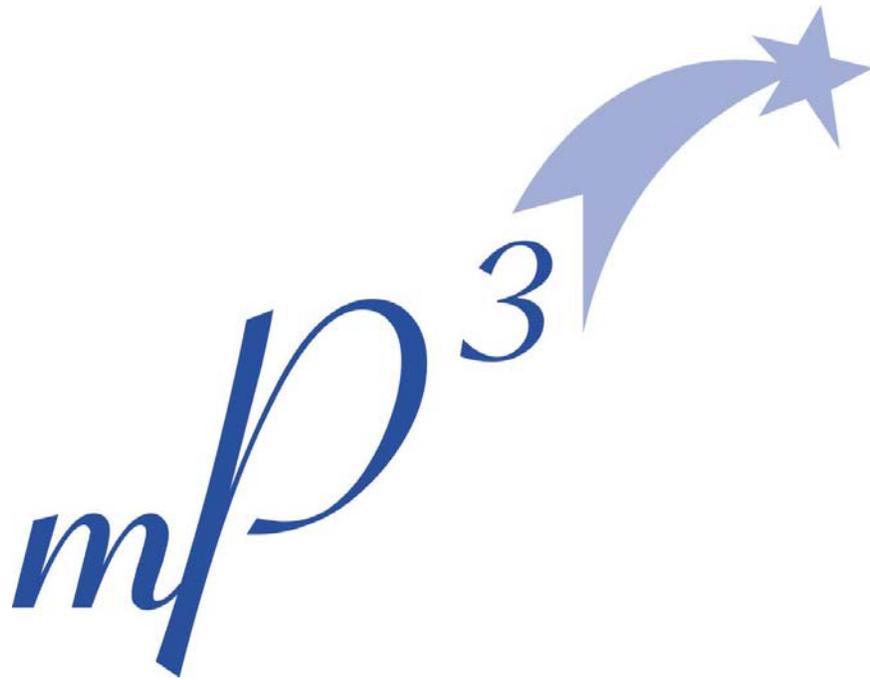


Management Preparation Program of Plano



**“Enhancement for today . . .
...empowerment for the future”**



FLOW CHART

A preparatory program for executive advancement for the positions of City Manager, Executive Director, and Department Director in the City of Plano.

Application Phase

Minimum Qualifications:

- Current employee
- Bachelor's degree or any work related experience resulting in acceptable proficiency levels is an acceptable substitute for the specified education requirement
- 5 years of supervisor/management experience with the City of Plano

Assessment Phase

Succession Planning Team (SPT)

- Composed of Executive Managers and Consultant
- Will review candidates for placement in the program
- The SPT will review nominations from Department Directors for selection of candidates to be assessed
- Tony Picchioni, Ph.D. will direct the program

Assessment Center

- Assessment results will be presented to SPT for final review and decisions to select the final participants

Development Phase

- Preparation Period – 12 months
- Candidates will meet with coaches, attend seminars, learn experientially, complete a group project
- Evaluations of candidates will be given by coaches
- SPT and coaches meet periodically to discuss evaluations, program process and any problems (with emphasis on continuous improvement)
- Graduation leading to a Certificate in Executive Development

ACTION GOALS FOR MANAGEMENT PREPARATION

(To be completed jointly by Participant and Coach)

Please use the attached list of essential KSAs for the Management Preparation Program of Plano to outline a detailed, itemized plan for successful development of the areas indicated below.

Areas where development emphasis should be more highly concentrated:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dependability | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interpersonal Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Customer Service/Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Judgment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work Ethic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Self Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Results Orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teamwork | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Decision Making | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conflict Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Presentation Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Budget Preparation/Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Planning/Organizing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Essential KSAs for MP³ Participants

Dependability – Consistently provides services in a timely manner and is relied upon and trusted by others to follow through on verbal and written agreements

Interpersonal Skills – Effectively exhibits the behavior, actions, and verbal exchange that reflect consideration for the feelings and needs of others without compromising the needs of the organization

Customer Service/Communication – Provides direct and/or indirect service to the public, co-workers, and citizens and effectively shares information verbally and in writing in a way that produces optimum results and trust

Innovation – Accepts and responds to opportunities for improvement and modification of existing practices by considering alternate approaches and recommending viable solutions

Leadership – Effectively gathers ideas and presents them in such a way that is receptive to others—also models behaviors which cause others to want to follow directions and plans

Judgment – Assesses situations objectively and actively seeks facts to make reasonable, fair, and impartial conclusions

Work Ethic – Maintains the integrity of services and fosters the trust of citizens by practicing honesty, respect, and professionalism in all transactions, conversations, and situations while representing the City of Plano

Self Development – Initiates personal and professional growth by accessing training opportunities through secondary education, in-house courses, certifications, written publications, subscribing to professional magazines, and participating in professional organizations with an emphasis on using the information learned for the benefit of the organization as well as self

Results Orientation – Completes assigned tasks accurately and in accordance with established deadlines while using City resources wisely, safely, and ethically

Teamwork – Works effectively with others to support and reach departmental and City goals

Decision Making – Effectively analyzes situations and develops alternative solutions while logically considering facts and constraints to reach meaningful and useful conclusions

Conflict Resolution – Understands and practices the concept of recognizing conflict, identifying the source of conflict, and working cooperatively to resolve the conflict in the interest of preventing future, related problems and “curing” the work environment

Presentation Skills – Effectively develops, organizes, and expresses ideas, issues, and/or details to an individual or group

Budget Preparation – Understands and has experience with reviewing departmental needs and available resources to develop and submit a budget with appropriate justifications

Planning/Organizing – Establishes goals, develops procedures, and coordinates appropriate resources to accomplish a course of action for self and others to reach stated goals

Flexibility – Maintains a position from which one can successfully negotiate; is open to the reasonable influence of others; and is adaptable to the demands of a changing environment

MP³ Curriculum

Course	Hours
Orientation to the Program	2
Communication Styles & Relationship Building: How do I come across? Bonding or Bullying	3
Group Project Assignment	2
Leadership: What is it? Do I Have it?	3
Budgeting, Purchasing, Finance: The Nuts and Bolts – What every manager needs to know	4
Personal Financial Planning	3
Teaming	6
Presentation Skill Workshop	6
Pluralism: Bringing the Community Together	3
The Media: What every city employee needs to know	3
Department Tours	8
Legal Do's and Don'ts	3
Ethics: ICMA Code of Conduct and Review of Case Study	3
Stress: Friend or Foe?	3
Mentoring and Coaching: The passing of the Torch	3
Emotional Intelligence	3
Group Project Presentation	3
Recognition by Mayor & City Council	1
Dispute Resolution Class	40
Key City Decision Makers	3
Meeting with Coach – 8 hours/month	96
Strategic Goals	3
Total	204*

*This total does not include the hours that are devoted to the Group Project. The number of Group Project hours is one that is dependent on the particular class and how their approach in completing the project.

MP³ Participant and Coach/Mentor Outline

Discussion Topics

(Determined in advance in discussions between participant and coach/mentor)

- Management / leadership philosophies
- Leadership values
- Prioritization / delegation / time management
- Budgeting
- Presentations
- Planning and conducting meetings
- Professional development
- Team development and team leadership
- Ethics
- Balancing work with other commitments
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Connecting with people
- Employee recognition

Involvement

(List of meetings that the participant will attend, such as a City Council meeting, budget meeting, etc.)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Meeting Schedule

(Record of individual meeting between the participant and the coach/mentor)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Published by: LaShon Ross - Director of Human Resources, City of Plano, Texas

Date: 2006-09-19

Enhancement for Today... Empowerment for the Future

This article begins a three-part series to share highlights of the City of Plano's succession planning model, the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP³). This program addresses challenges and potential performance gaps resulting from retirements/resignations of tenured managers. Additionally, it enhances skills and broadens perspectives of incumbents to meet high performance standards. It is at the cusp of anticipating changing needs and a desire to remain a high-performance organization that the City of Plano began reaping the rewards of succession planning.

The City of Plano is a well-planned community of 254,000 people located in northeast Texas. Today, this municipality employs over 2,500 employees who recognize their primary responsibility as providing "service excellence" – regardless of the task at hand. However, in the early 1970's, Plano was a city of only 17,872 that was about to experience tremendous growth and visibility. Plano's geographic location in the northern corridor of the Dallas–Fort Worth metropolitan area played a significant role in its growth. As U.S. Highway 75 provided easy access to Plano, it became a magnet for young, college-educated professionals and major corporations. By 1990, the population soared to 128,713 and Plano became home to Electronic Data Systems (EDS), Frito Lay, JC Penney, Dr Pepper/Seven Up, Inc., and other major corporations all located along tree-lined Legacy Drive. As Plano has continued to flourish, so has its commitment to preparedness and excellence – so much so that it earned the designation of "All-America City" by the National Civic League in 1994.

Approaching the year 2000 and not wanting to test the notion that "one of the best predictors of future failure is past success," Plano re-focused its energy on maintaining its status and performance in an environment that was no longer experiencing the characteristics of a growing community. It reached maturity. Maturity in people is a sign of wisdom, progression, and influence. As an employer and provider of services to its community, Plano is committed to excellence in maturity as it was in growth. Record growth and a desire to maintain its attraction as one of the best and safest places to "live, work, and play" caused Plano to focus on strategic planning to ensure sustainability for its fiscal and human resources. As is the case with many municipalities, over 60% of Plano's budget is dedicated to recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff. Human resources are the foundation of any service organization and, in 2001, Plano embarked upon a methodical journey to ensure it would always have capable, qualified employees to consistently provide the level of service to which Plano citizens are accustomed.

Not unlike many other organizations, Plano recognized that it was being impacted by the pending wave of increasing retirements coupled with a lack of focused preparation for transitioning to the next generation of leaders. A 2001 review of Plano's workforce identified 46% of the Management Team as eligible to retire by 2006, and this number increases to 70% by 2010. The reality of these numbers, as well as the absence of a systematic mechanism to guide the transition process, awakened a sense of urgency within the City Council and Executive Management. Prior to 2000, Plano's hiring and promotional practices adequately fulfilled staffing needs, as the current demographic phenomenon did not exist on a large scale. However, today's environment is quite different in that change is constant and strategic

preparation is a key component of continuous success. To improve its opportunities for success in a rapidly changing environment – regardless of the challenges presented – the City Manager tasked the Human Resources Department with researching the concept of succession planning.

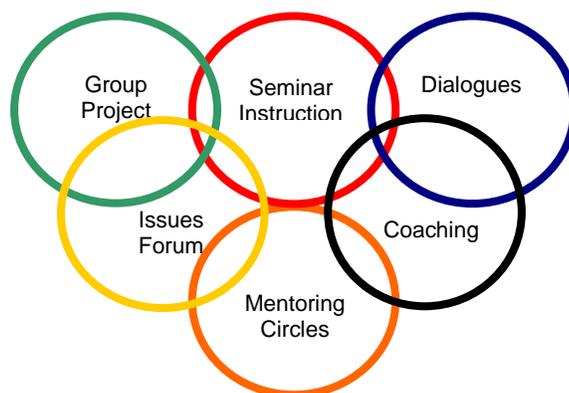
This program (if properly implemented) would have a far-reaching impact on the organization's culture. Therefore, it was imperative that the HR staff be attentive to what was being requested. The more traditional reactive role of HR would not deliver what was needed. Rather, a proactive, business-based, results-oriented process would be the only way to move forward. After all, this was to be an organizational initiative, not an HR initiative. Credibility was the key to a long-term solution, and not a "flavor of the month." So the HR Director met with the City Manager and Executive Directors, listened to their concerns, considered the organizational pulse, anticipated questions and needs, and began research and development to deliver exactly what was needed.

This in-depth research project began with the following questions:

- What are the strategic objectives of the organization now and for the future?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's culture?
- What changes, if any, are indicated to continually improve the work environment?
- What executive/leadership competencies will be required to help the City succeed in the future?
- What assessment methods are beneficial to identify potential candidates and develop systematic training?
- What tools are useful to evaluate program results?

In the meantime, a review of succession planning models in both public and private sector organizations led Plano to develop and customize a model to meet its specific professional development needs. Nine months later, the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP³) was introduced. Plano's HR Director, LaShon Ross, will be the first to tell you that development of MP³ was not easy. It required time, attention to detail, multi-faceted research, and commitment to delivering a somewhat undefined result. She stressed process as a means to consistent success. Habitual attentiveness to listening, questioning, anticipating, and delivering is a process that consistently provides a positive result, according to Ms. Ross. "We all talk about wanting a seat at the table, but we are often unable to articulate the benefit of our being at the table."

This initiative has armed Plano with the ability to enhance cognitive and leadership skills of managers while preparing them to successfully perform in next-level positions as they become available. Rather than risk any negative impact to delivery of services as the number of retirements increases, Plano has, instead, ensured itself of performance continuity by preparing the right people to be in the right places at the right times. MP³ promotes continuous improvement through a multi-dimensional approach to learning, as indicated by the model shown below:



How has the City of Plano benefited from this “home grown” succession model? The following characteristics are increasingly evident throughout the work environment:

- Improved communication among staff/across departments
- Successful cross-functional work teams
- Promotions of program graduates
- Improved employee engagement
- Availability of qualified staff to complete special projects
- Enhanced professional development initiatives available to all employees
- Subjects previously thought “closed to discussion” are now “open to discussion.”
- Goals of “customer service excellence” continue to be met.
- Challenges are seen as opportunities.

Some thought Plano’s transition through 30 years of tremendous growth to its current anticipation of build-out and maturity would present a challenge to its reputation for high performance practices and customer service excellence. However, the refreshing benefits of succession planning and performance modeling are indicators that reaffirm Plano is prepared and staffed to deliver unsurpassed levels of service to its citizenry for many years to come.

Published by: LaShon Ross - Director of Human Resources, City of Plano, Texas

Date:

Enhancement for today... Empowerment for the Future

In a previous article introducing the Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP³), the following words appeared: “*enhances skills,*” “*broadens perspectives,*” “*service excellence,*” “*systematic,*” and “*continuous success.*” I mention these words because they provide the basis for the current article which delves into program mechanics and deliverables. This article will help you to visualize Plano’s program and will provide a map for your own planning, should you desire to implement a similar initiative to address your organization’s staffing and professional development needs.

With a goal of offering a comprehensive solution for its succession needs, the City of Plano designed a three-phase, multi-dimensional program <http://pdf.plano.gov/HR/mp3/OriginalFlowchart.pdf>. It is important to note that any program of this type should be interwoven with processes to stress transparency, fairness, and purpose. Credibility is necessary if employee and organizational buy-in are to be achieved.

Participation in MP³ begins with an *Application Phase* which invites both self-nominations and executive nominations. So, eligible employees may either submit applications on their own, or their names may be submitted by the City Manager or an Executive Director. To help employees decide whether MP³ is the program for them, interested employees are invited to attend “lunch and learns” to discuss program details and have questions answered by the Program Director and graduates. After attending these “lunch and learns,” employees are able to make informed decisions as to whether they want to commit the time and energy necessary to successfully complete MP³. At this phase, some employees decide they are ready to commit and others realize the program requires more from them than they are currently able to give. Those who decide to pursue program participation do so for an opportunity to gain higher levels of insight and become more engaged and visible throughout the organization. All applications are screened by the Management Preparation Assessment Team (MPAT), and it is this team (comprised of the City Manager, an Executive Director, an MP³ graduate, and two Department Directors) that determines which candidates will move on to the next phase of the program – the *Assessment Phase*.

The *Assessment Phase* involves a more practical determination of whether employees have achieved a level of readiness to successfully address new challenges presented by next-level positions. It is often the attractiveness of higher status and salary that compels employees to seek promotional opportunities. While these benefits are important, MP³ highlights the reality of changing skill sets needed at different levels of responsibility. How often do we hear employers struggling to understand why a technically proficient person promoted to a managerial position now seems unable to excel? Could it be the fact that technical competence does not necessarily translate to interpersonal competence? There must be a “fit” between skill sets and position requirements. So, the full-day assessment centers developed for MP³ candidates require them to participate in exercises written to next-level position requirements. <http://pdf.plano.gov/HR/mp3/AssessmentCtrSchedule.pdf> For instance, if a candidate is a Department Director applying for participation at the Executive Director level., his/her responses are evaluated based upon his/her capacity to move into that next-level position. The evaluators

for all assessment centers are intentionally selected from other public/private sector organizations. For example, evaluation panels have been comprised of City Attorneys, Realtors, HR Directors, and Executive VP of HR for a private company, City Managers, Assistant City Managers, Chamber of Commerce President, and President of a local magazine. The transparency of information shared during the *Application Phase* along with including neutral assessors at this phase helps alleviate tendencies to accuse Plano of pre-selecting participants. Detailed evaluations are provided to the MPAT by neutral assessors for the purpose of making final selections. In addition to the assessment results and applications, candidates and their immediate supervisors must also submit competency evaluations to the MPAT. At the end of the *Assessment Phase*, a final selection is made. The process begins in July and is completed by November. Candidates are notified of selections, and the *Development Phase* begins in January of the following year.

The *Development Phase* is where work for the participants truly begins – and continues. A cohort atmosphere is designed to promote open communication, intensive learning, generation of previously untapped ideas, and encouragement of synergy that will continue beyond the 12-month *Development Phase*. A consistent result of MP³ has been that participants have taken on the affect of a much-used rubber band. That is to say that they are intellectually stretched to a point that they do not return to the positions of thought or behavior they held at the time of entry into MP³. Employees selected for MP³ bring many assets to the table, and the intensive development process helps them to hone, strengthen, and sharpen their skills. Of course, the organization shares in the benefits of this intellectual and emotional growth. The MP³ curriculum requires commitment and engagement from its participants to successfully complete the 300 hours in addition to their normal work assignments. The curriculum is an intentionally challenging one which accurately reflects organizational and societal realities of excelling within today's (and tomorrow's) rapidly changing and demanding environment. <http://pdf.plano.gov/HR/mp3/CumulativeExpenses.pdf>

As with any successful initiative, there are both expected and unanticipated outcomes. Development of MP³ reassured Plano that it is an effective use of internal talent to develop and implement a succession program which delivers continuous benefits without requiring large financial expenditures. In fact, there was no budget for MP³ from the time of its inception in 2002 until 2004. The HR Director dedicated many hours to research, development, and implementation of MP³, and tremendous clerical support was provided by a Sr. Administrative Assistant in HR. Following development and presentation to City Management, the “green light” was given to implement. At this point, a consultant (already engaged with Plano) agreed to develop content for the curriculum and actually deliver/facilitate the classes. One year later, this consultant agreed to serve as Program Director at no additional cost to the City. By 2004, the program had obtained the credibility hoped for, and the City decided to remove all its apples from the same basket and hire other subject matter experts to assist with curriculum instruction. It was at this time that Plano decided to dedicate funds to cover expenses for speakers, food for classes/meetings, and group project development. As of 2006, this allocation has not grown, as there has been no fiscal need. <http://pdf.plano.gov/HR/mp3/ExternalCurriculumChart.pdf>

Plano believes it is the careful and intentional planning of MP³ that has resulted in there being few barriers to its acceptance. It attributes the same to the many unanticipated benefits it has brought to the organization. Some of the deliverables generated through the comprehensive program structure are:

- Enhanced communication throughout the organization and between departments
- Group projects resulting in long-term process improvement

- Availability of work teams (cohorts) to work as consultants to the organization from concept to completion
- Introduction of monthly “Mentoring Circles” and “Issues Forums”
- Addition of a Department of Sustainability and plans for Plano to “Go Green”
- Introduction of a Mentoring Program in the Parks & Recreation Department (initiated by the P&R Director who has been a leading Development Coach with MP³ since inception)
- Development and implementation of a more accountable and educational new employee on-boarding program
- Introduction of a competency-based university model (Plano Institute of Excellence) to promote targeted professional development opportunities at all levels of the organization

Choosing to work with a consultant who happens to be a tenured professor with a noted university has proven very beneficial for the City of Plano. This gentleman has a passion for continuous learning, and his commitment to assisting others reach academic and professional goals has created the appropriate atmosphere for Plano to evolve as a high-performance organization. He works closely with the HR staff and City Management to ensure Plano is aware of emerging concepts and prepared to successfully address professional, intellectual, and interpersonal challenges. He has also been instrumental in partnering with Plano’s professional development division of HR to introduce the “Plano Institute of Excellence.” Plano’s citizenry has high expectations, and the City Council and City staff is determined to deliver what is expected. To continue meeting goals of “service excellence,” Plano realizes its staff must meet its standards, regardless of environmental factors. This requires on-going planning for both fiscal and human resources. Plano’s City Manager is committed to providing learning opportunities for staff. In fact, when budgets are being reviewed for places to trim (unlike in many other organizations), the Plano training budgets are far from the first areas of consideration. The time to stop learning and improving is not when turbulence is on the horizon. So, Plano has taken its learning initiatives to an even more accountable level. Plano now partners with two universities and two community colleges to provide growth opportunities for all employees. All instructors are subject matter experts in their fields, and this transfer of information to Plano employees continues to take the organization to higher levels of discussion and performance. Two other municipalities are joining Plano for its “Certificate in Local Government” program that will be presented through the “Plano Institute of Excellence” – in partnership with the University of Texas – Dallas and Southern Methodist University. In addition to receiving a graduate level certificate, participants will share the experience of learning together and networking with employees from three different cities. All classes will be conducted on-site and will rotate to locations selected by the three cities. Plano sees this as one of many opportunities to share resources and knowledge, and working with these highly regarded educational institutions add value and credibility to this initiative.

As it completes its fourth successful year with MP³, what has Plano learned that may be of value to other organizations? Stick to basic concepts of learning and communicating, and stress transparency and openness throughout the organization. There are many best practices, but organizations must take the best practices and customize components that meet their specific needs. There must also be a realization that process and relational issues are addressed over time, and patience is required to attain desired results. Words of wisdom from Plano: *Assess your needs; develop and implement an appropriate plan; monitor and revise the process, as indicated; resist the urge to title missteps as failures; and stay committed to your goal(s).*

Published by: LaShon Ross - Director of Human Resources, City of Plano, Texas

Date:

Enhancement for today... Empowerment for the Future

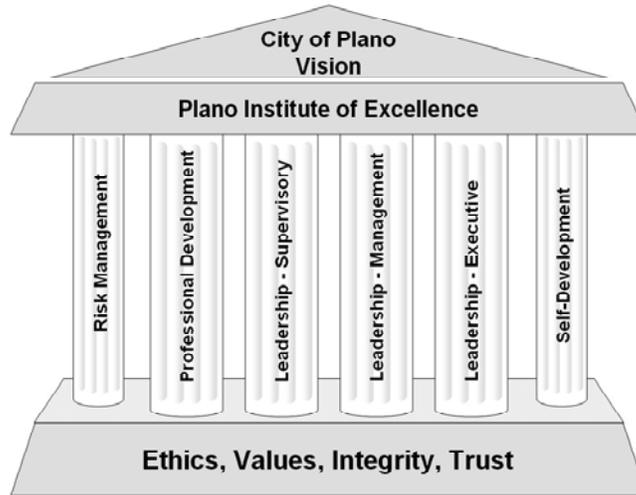
The Management Preparation Program of Plano (MP³) was designed to ensure the City of Plano has the “*right people in the right places at the right time,*” but the structure of the program has led to strategic dialogue and a rejuvenation of employee engagement, resulting in a genuine quest for continuous success. Plano’s organizational culture continues to be molded by excellent ideas generated by staff as well as partnerships which explore challenges and creative approaches common to many work environments. In addition to providing enhancements to current processes, MP³ has empowered the organization to reaffirm its commitment to exemplifying the characteristics of an “All America City” – whether during growth or maturity. Plano has put the proper processes and competency-driven learning opportunities in place to ensure its citizenry continues to enjoy unsurpassed levels of service excellence.

What does the future MP³ look like? It is a phenomenon that has already begun. What began as a succession initiative to ensure that retirements of tenured managers would not negatively impact delivery of services to citizens of Plano has become an organization-wide initiative to promote continuous learning and professional development. As an outgrowth of MP³, Plano now offers a competency-based university model to employees who want to grow personally and professionally. All classes appear in the “Plano Institute of Excellence” catalog as they would in a university catalog, and employees are able to match their goals and needs with course descriptions. The goal is to address the needs of all Plano employees – regardless of position or career plans. Employees can use the catalog as a map to craft *Individual Development Plans*. When a new employee arrives at the City of Plano, he/she participates in a full-day orientation which provides important information about City procedures, benefits, expectations, training/development opportunities, and organizational culture. This group of employees continues to attend a series of six (6) classes as a cohort group which culminates with a follow-up meeting with the City Manager to ask questions and comment on their first six (6) months of employment. The City Manager likes to say this is the meeting where employees let him know if they were told the truth during orientation. While learning about performance and behavioral expectations, new employees also learn about the importance Plano places on continuous learning. Fortunately, many classes are offered on-site which makes learning accessible to all employees. It is at this stage that employees are able to explore the many development topics and determine which classes to take to meet their personal/professional goals. Plano takes a holistic approach to its employee development initiatives, because the City knows there is an immeasurable return on this investment. Classes are designed to assist employees in meeting their personal and professional goals. This equates to a workforce which is more committed, engaged, and cognizant of the value they bring to the organization. While Plano cannot provide specific savings resulting from heightened engagement, education, and awareness, it does associate several benefits to this holistic approach. For instance, the Financial Education Series addresses everything from calculation of Social Security benefits to understanding the City of Plano’s retirement benefits to development of a financial plan which allows employees to forecast their careers from a financial perspective and minimize the number of “surprises” that may occur as they enter retirement. Plano works with its benefits vendors to provide several wellness classes to address the physical and emotional health of

employees. It is understood that employees enter the workplace as holistic individuals whose personal and professional lives are intertwined. Problems are not typically “checked at the door;” so, it is important that employees be given as many resources as possible to improve their opportunities for long-term success. Addressing the whole person through training and development has resulted in a very active wellness environment. Plano has found that a combination of consistent communication, educational forums, and a Wellness Committee which represents the broad interests of employees has made the difference in gaining buy-in and promoting personal accountability for physical and emotional wellness. In addition to the visible engagement of employees in wellness activities, Plano is entering its fourth year as a self-funded entity with no premium increases or plan design changes. The City also maintains a healthy fund balance for its health benefits to cover the cost of liabilities associated with GASB 45 requirements.

We live in the age of metrics, and we can find multiple answers and statistical explanations for any single issue. Plano believes metrics are important but should not be narrowly defined. There are many performance factors to be measured through levels of employee engagement, enhanced relationships, and improved dialogue leading to visible efficiencies in productivity. A key factor is that managers be involved in the process of measuring skills enhancement gained by employees through development opportunities. This concept is easily incorporated within the performance management system and used as both a planning and assessment tool to guide dialogue between managers and employees. Plano’s professional development model, the “Plano Institute of Excellence,” incorporates this multi-dimensional approach to learning and is styled as shown below:

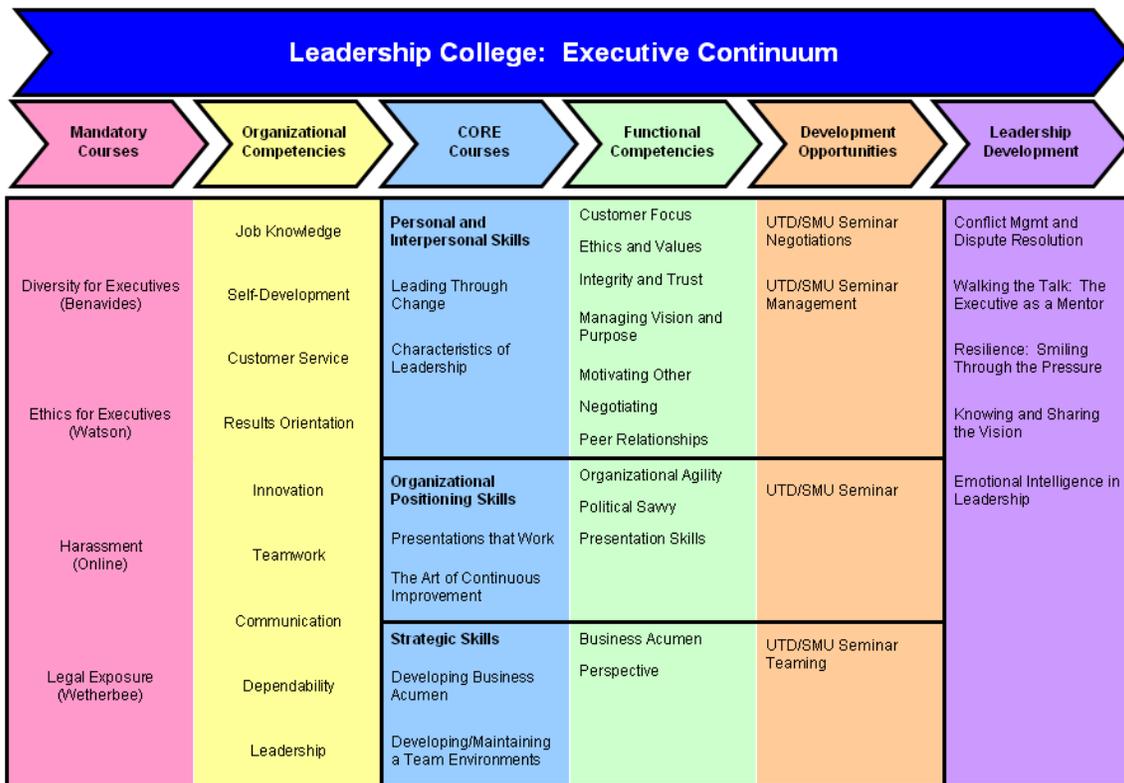
Plano Institute of Excellence



Professional Development College: Individual Continuum

Professional Development College: Individual Continuum						
Mandatory Courses	Organizational Competencies	Recommended Courses	Functional Competencies	Development Opportunities	Leadership Development	
New Employee Welcome New Employee Orientation (+Harassment) Diversity Ethics Intro to Local Gov't	CORE 1	Job Knowledge	<u>Personal and Interpersonal Skills</u>	Approachability	7H Foundations	Introduction to Leadership
		Self-Development	Customer Service Excellence	Boss Relationships	Be Proactive	Certificate in Service Excellence
	Customer Service	DISC for Me	Composure	End in Mind	Leadership for the 21 st Century	
CORE 2	Results Orientation	Listening	Customer Focused	Put First Things First	Project Management	
	Innovation	Conducting Difficult Conversations	Ethics and Values	Think Win/Win	Customer Care	
CORE 3	Teamwork	Strategic Skills	Integrity and Trust	Seek First to Understand	Influence without Authority	
	Communication	Decision Skills for Public Servants	Interpersonal Savvy	Synergize	Mediation Training	
CORE 3	Dependability	Dealing with Difficult Customers	Listening Skills	Sharpen the Saw	Toastmaster's	
	Leadership	Customer Service in Enforcement	Patience	Business Writing		
	Leadership	Time Management in Outlook	Peer Relationships	Action Oriented		
			Decision Quality			
			Functional Skills			
			Learning on the Fly			
			Problem Solving			
			Technical Skills			
			Time Management			





While most of the topics are commonly addressed in a variety of work environments, Plano has carefully stipulated specific issues to be addressed with its staff. This type of targeted learning is delivering the results Plano seeks to successfully address current and future challenges. Plano has agreements with the universities/colleges which allow the respective educational institution to determine the best instructors to develop and deliver the classes, based upon learning objectives submitted by Plano's Organizational Development Manager.

The primary goal of the Plano Institute of Excellence is to teach to the organizational competencies defined by Plano as being most important for its continued success. The organization recognizes that managers are required to be competent in categories that may not be relevant for non-management or executive level staff; so, classes are designed to meet the needs of staff based upon job responsibilities. During development of MP³, it became obvious that the competencies needed to successfully manage Plano in 2006 are not necessarily the same as those needed in 2015. Demographic, financial, and societal changes dictate that organizations be adaptable and flexible if they are to remain competitive in the market and attractive to potential employees. If Plano employees identify their professional development goals, the educational infrastructure is in place to take them wherever they want to go.

Plano, has evolved from a small community of 17,872 in 1970 with limited diversity to one which has grown into a large, thriving community of over 254,000 with an ethnically, professionally, and culturally diverse make-up. Planning has always been a core commitment for Plano. It has positioned the City to remain strong and competitive for forty (40) years. In a service industry such as municipal government, typically 60% - 70% of the budget is dedicated to staffing needs; so, it remains a priority to invest in the most important aspect of the budget – people. Plano is

investing in its staff, because it understands that without qualified committed staff, service excellence does not exist. Employees must be given resources to be successful and must be empowered to engage. There are multiple benefits to be cultivated in an environment focused on excellence; however, leadership must set the course. The Plano City Council and City Management continue to support efforts toward continuous learning and high performance. These concepts are ingrained within the culture of Plano, and these expectations are shared upon introduction to Plano and reinforced as the employment relationship ensues. Offering MP³ as an avenue of development has been a great asset, but it has served as a springboard to many other innovations. Rejuvenation and synergy have resulted which make Plano excited about its readiness to seize opportunities not yet visible on the horizon.

Reinforcement of the characteristics of high performance and increasing the level of dialogue have truly been the cornerstone of MP³. Plano has been given many opportunities to share knowledge within the organization, the community, and with its governmental colleagues. This sharing has been accomplished through on-site classroom instruction, site visits throughout the community, and presentations for seminars. Although MP³ was customized to meet Plano's specific needs, its basic structure is adaptable within any environment. Since its introduction in 2003, Plano has responded to sixty-nine (69) written requests for information on the development and implementation of MP³. Plano subscribes to the idea of sharing and partnering so that win-win scenarios may result more frequently. Consequently, MP³ has been the subject of thirteen (13) articles in national and international publications; the recipient of four (4) awards; presented as a topic during seven (7) conferences; and was included in the CPS Human Resource Services study entitled *Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State and Federal Government*. These opportunities to share program details provide platforms for dialogue and the creation of networks which cultivate ideas and promote high performance. There are multiple ways to approach succession planning and professional development, but Plano has the improved performance, enhanced communication, introduction of successful initiatives, and continuing credibility of its staff and elected officials to show that their approach does work. What is the most valuable lesson Plano has learned through MP³? It is important to invest the time and dollars necessary to keep the best of the past while innovatively addressing the challenges of the future. Perhaps, the following statistics speak best to what MP³ has delivered to the City of Plano:

- Seven (7) MP³ graduates have been promoted.
- A Department of Sustainability has been introduced.
- Two (2) MP³ graduates successfully managed the Katrina Hurricane Housing Response Initiative within Plano.
- The MP³ Class of 2004 is currently completing a Service Prioritization Project to be used by Plano as a map for future fiscal planning.
- The Parks & Recreation Department has implemented a successful Mentoring Project.
- Mentoring Circles continue to grow and provide a forum for employees to be refreshed and share ideas within one another.
- The Issues Forums provide a monthly platform to brainstorm and share executive-level information and determine how best to disseminate this information throughout the organization.
- A qualified, high-performing work team may be called upon at any time to develop an idea, conduct research, or implement an initiative deemed as priority by City Management.

When the City of Plano reflects to determine whether responding to the need for a succession plan has been worth the staff time, organizational commitment, and financial resources devoted

to this topic, the answer is an unequivocal “yes.” While Plano worked with internal staff to complete all of the initial research and development of its succession program, Dr. Tony Picchioni’s willingness to work with them in a consulting capacity to continuously improve and facilitate the curriculum has been a tremendous asset. Dr. Picchioni’s extensive work as a practicing Counselor, Mediator and college professor allows Plano to tap into his wealth of knowledge and passion for working with others. Plano is pleased that it has embraced an initiative which not only benefits the organization but has enhanced the personal and professional lives of the people who continue to make it a success – its employees.