

APPLICATION FORM

Title of Entry: Aspiring Leader Program

Division: Large Organizations

Award: Optimal Operations

Entrant's Name and Title: Joan H. Colbert, MA
Manager, Organizational Development

Phone: (814) 534-9778
Email: jcolbert@conemaugh.org

Organization: Conemaugh Health System
1086 Franklin Street
Johnstown, PA 15905

Date Implemented: 06/10/2013
Date Results Achieved: 05/04/2017

Team Members: Bobbie Hunt *Business Development Manager, Crichton Center*
Candace Malisko *Tax and Compliance Manager*
Charlene Romani *Nurse Manager*
Daniel Pyle *Vascular Services Manager*
Diane Kurchak *Nurse Manager*
John Pudliner *Environmental Services Manager*
Kimberly McKool *Lab Manager*
Linda Klochak *Cardiology Practice Manager*
Mark Meekins *Imaging Manager, MYMC*
Maryellen Belz *Supply Chain Director*
Michelle Buttry *CNO, Nason Hospital*
Nicholas Schario *Tech Support Manager*
Steve Kutchman *Respiratory Manager, MiMC*
Tonya Spada Dixon *Patient Nutrition Services Manager*
Tracy Dodson *OR Director*
Sharon Stephenson *Pharmacy Tech Supervisor*
Diane Kennedy *HR Assistant/OD*

Executive Summary - One-page executive summary should be a concise explanation of the project initiative. It should summarize the quantitative information that best supports the end result and must include: a) title of entry; b) description of the problem/opportunity, including goal, and target audience(s); c) evidence; d) baseline data; e) intervention; and f) results

a) Title of Entry: Aspiring Leader Program

b) Description of problem/opportunity, including goal and target audience.

Our organization needed to prepare for future management needs by identifying staff level high performers (target audience) and developing them for leadership roles. We had new leader training, however, we learned we needed to implement a proactive approach to better prepare the future leaders before they were placed in a first line manager position. Our goal was to develop a succession plan process for first line leaders. The Leadership Development Team (LDT) developed and implemented the Aspiring Leader Program (ALP). This initiative was tied directly to our talent management goals in our strategic plan.

c) Evidence – Qualitative evidence included new leaders promoted from within stating they wish they had been more prepared for a leadership role. Many were proficient technically and/or clinically, however, lacked competencies in management skills. They requested development prior to being placed in the role, to provide an easier transition. Some decided to return to the staff level positions.

d) Baseline Data

Prior to implementation of the ALP, there was no organized strategy in place for succession planning at the first line manager level.

- Prior to implementation of the ALP, there were no staff level employees formally designated as high potentials or aspiring leaders (ALs).

e) Intervention:

- a. June 2013: Implementation of an Aspiring Leader Program.
 - i. Gathered data from AL graduates and organizational leaders on how to improve the ALP.
- b. September 2014: Based on feedback, LDT made significant changes to the ALP selection process and program and have made minor changes since.

f) Results: Current ALP statistics since 2013 to present

- Number of Aspiring Leaders Selected – 50
- Number of Withdrawals from the ALP – 4
- Number of AL Resignations from Organization - 8

Current Number Employed ALP Graduates		38
Number promoted to First Line Manager positions	Number promoted to higher level staff positions	% graduates selected for higher level positions
10 (26%)	7 (18%)	45%

Assessment - Describe the needs assessment process and/or research conducted prior to implementing the initiative and the results of that needs assessment/research, including evidence and baseline data.

We began the development of the ALP by benchmarking with other organizations from a variety of industries. Sources included internet searches, ATD, Linked In, and local organizations. We gathered a minimal amount of information on aspiring leader programs. We then began to gather information from existing leaders within the organization on what they wanted in our ALP. Recommendations included providing the AL with opportunities to shadow organizational leaders, to develop skills in management competencies, and to physically visit and learn about the strategic alignment with other entities in the organization. This step provided us with enough information to form the foundation for our own program.

Intervention - Identify the steps taken to initiate your effort(s) including strategies, implementation plan, and the interventions.

In 2013, the first version of the ALP was launched. At a high level, this is what it consisted of:

- Selection Process:
 - Formal Interview with 2 members of the LDT
 - Completion of application process including:
 - Essay describing reasons for wanting to be a leader
 - Letter of recommendation from candidate's manager
- Program length: 2 years
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Employed at organization for at least two years
 - Current performance evaluation of "Exceptional Performance" or "Greater than Effective,"
 - No corrective action within the last year
 - Desire to work in a leadership role
- Program goals:
 - To promote growth and development of staff to enhance succession planning for first line managers.
 - To assist aspiring leaders in affirming their desire to pursue a career in leadership
- Program components:
 - 48 hours formal classroom training
 - 16 hours job shadow experiences with organizational managers
 - 3 field experiences at other organizational entities

In 2014, feedback was gathered from the prior year's class and their direct managers. Based on that feedback, significant enhancements were made in the selection process and program components:

- Eligibility criteria: added Bachelor's degree or pursuing
- Selection process enhancements added to application:
 - Portfolio – resume, community service, team participation, recognitions
 - Personal SWOT Analysis
 - Two online leadership assessments – used for supportive information
 - DiSC Communication Style Profile
 - PXT Leadership Assessment

- Program length: 1 year
- Program components added:
 - Lead a departmental team project.
 - Participate on an organizational project team.
 - Have a Mentor for the entire year of the ALP.
 - Be a Mentor in an area of strength.
 - Individual presentation at end of ALP describing the personal impact of the experience in ALP.
- Engage the manager of the AL encouraging frequent meetings to discuss the benefit of the individual courses and all other program components.

In 2015 – No additional enhancements were made.

In 2016

- Replaced the Personal SWOT analysis in the application process with a SOAR Analysis. Each applicant described his/her own Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results.
- Instead of (4) 4 hr shadow experiences, an option of 2 hr job shadows was implemented. The total 16 hour shadow requirement remained the same.

The following is a closer look at the intervention as it is implemented today.

1) Call for Applications

Annually in May, employees are made aware of the ALP via their managers, organizational Communication Link and Care Notes newsletter. Interested employees approach their managers or vice versa. Information sessions are held for employees to learn more about the program. ALP graduates volunteer to attend the sessions, share experiences, and offer support to interested staff. The employee's Manager, Director, and VP evaluate the employee's leadership potential and give employee approval to apply. Brochures and applications are made available to staff. It is made clear at the information sessions, in the application, and in the brochure that completing the ALP does not provide a guarantee of a promotion to a leadership role. The program provides an opportunity for growth and development to increase the AL's foundational management skill base so they become more viable candidates for future management positions in the organization.

2) The Application

By June 30, applications are submitted to HR's OD Manager who reviews for completeness. Since implementation, we've received an average of 22 applications each year.

3) Online Assessments

HR OD Manager assigns two assessments to each applicant to complete within 7 days. The results of these assessments are used for supportive information on the candidates and are not directly used to select. One is a Communication Styles assessment and the other PXT assessment measures leadership potential for an aspiring leader level.

4) The Interview

When the assessments are completed, the candidate is scheduled for the ALP interview with two members of the LDT. Interviews are completed in July. Four members of the LDT share the interviews to ensure a consistent process. Interviewers are not permitted to interview candidates from their departments. A behavioral interview format measures these

competencies: Coaching, Leadership/Influencing, Employee Engagement, CQI, and Motivational Fit. The interview score is weighted twice that of the application Essay and Portfolio described next.

5) Application Review

Using specific criteria, the LDT reviews the candidates' essays and portfolios submitted as part of their application and award points for both the Essay and Portfolio. The Essay is worth 100 points--20 pts for answering each of the five questions; 10 points deducted for grammar and spelling errors. The Portfolio is worth 105 points with 20 points awarded for a current resume with a professional appearance and no spelling errors, 20 points for Community service, 20 points for Accomplishments on Teams, 20 points for Recognitions received inside the organization as well as in the community, 20 points for completion of the SOAR analysis, and 5 points for anything additional the candidates want to include.

6) The Selection Decision

A selection grid is created with all candidate scores. The double interview score is added to the portfolio and essay score resulting in a total score for each candidate. Since there is no predetermined number of ALs that will be selected, the team analyzes the data and determines where the cut-off will be based upon the nature of the scores. HR OD Manager meets individually with non-selected candidates to provide feedback. This step is very well received.

This table provides a summary of the number of selections to date.

Year	Number of Aspiring Leaders Selected
2013	18
2014	9
2015	12
2016	11
Total Selected	50

7) ALP Kick-off Orientation

In August, a Kick-off orientation is held for selected aspiring leaders, their managers, their mentors, sr. leadership and members of the LDT. At this event, ALs are recognized and congratulatory remarks made by sr. leadership. A cohort photo is taken for internal communication purposes and is included in a press release.

Kick-off orientation provides an introduction to an internal Share Point site where ALs log documentation of the various components of the program. The ALs meet their Mentors they will have for the year. Direct managers learn about their roles.

8) ALP Begins

Classroom

The ALP includes 48 hours of formal classroom training in management skill building which include: Conflict Management, Introduction to Lean Six Sigma, Ideal Patient Experience for Leaders, Teamwork & Relationship Building, Communication Styles, Ethics, Coaching & Mentoring, Time Management, Public Speaking, Change Management, Personal Branding, and Strategic Planning.

These courses overlap with a portion of the courses included in the organization's new leader curriculum. This gives the aspiring leaders an opportunity to network with new leaders in the organization and to learn about the issues they face in their roles.

Shadow Experiences

ALs are required to schedule a total of 16 hours shadowing leaders from various disciplines in the organization in increments of no less than 2 hours with each shadow host. This provides flexibility for the AL to spend more time in an area of interest and less time in other areas but enough to broaden his/her perspective on the organization. Job Shadow hosts meet these criteria: 1) employed with organization for at least 3 years, 2) job performance in good standing, and 3) someone who enjoys teaching others. It is very important the aspiring leaders be exposed to positive role models during these shadow experiences. Job Shadow hosts are trained on the expectations of the role.

The AL is responsible for scheduling their own shadow experiences. A confidentiality form is signed by the AL for each experience. At the conclusion the shadow host signs the form indicating the experience was completed. The form is sent to HR for the ALs record. Outcomes include a broadened organizational perspective and networking opportunities.

Field Experiences

Three field experiences are required at all three entities of the organization. The AL's home entity is optional. A field experience includes a welcome from each entity President and a tour of the facility. Leaders of key hospital functions present information to the group and answer questions. Each AL spends time with his/her counterpart. Networking time is provided over lunch. Entity representatives on the LDT coordinate the field experiences. These LDT members have taken ownership of these events and enjoy overseeing a portion of the ALP at their respective home entities. The field experiences have become a favorite component of the ALP. ALs appreciate seeing the entities first hand that they hear about every day in their home facility.

ALP Organizational Project

An organizational project is identified for each class of ALs. These have included teams charged to address issues identified on employee engagement surveys, to plan an internal Donate Life campaign, and to assist other process improvement teams. This experience provides the AL with experience participating on a multidisciplinary team with a larger scope of impact. The ALs expand their internal network with this component and gain first-hand experience using process improvement tools.

Departmental Project

With the assistance of the AL's direct manager, a departmental project is identified. The AL assumes the leadership role with the support of the manager. Team members are identified in the AL's department. This project provides the AL with experience leading a team with a more focused charge and smaller scale than the organizational project. It also provides them with an opportunity to lead his/her peers and practice the skills they have learned in the developmental classes included in the program.

Have a Mentor

At the start of the program, each AL is assigned a Mentor they have for the entire year. Mentors meet these criteria: 1) employed with organization for at least 3 years, 2) excellent job performance, and 3) someone who enjoys teaching others and giving back.

A mentor from a different discipline than the aspiring leader is assigned. This provides diversity between the pair which provides growth and development opportunities for both. The role of the Mentor is a guide, ally, confidant, teacher, and friend. A monthly meeting is required, however, some Mentors also invite their ALs to meetings where there is opportunity for further development. Many pairs develop lasting relationships.

Be a Mentor

Another component for the AL is to be a mentor to someone or a group of individuals who have a learning need in an area of strength of the AL. This is most often met with an informal meeting between the AL and his/her mentee(s). Some examples in the past have included clinical procedures, computer skills, and automating department procedures.

Individual Presentations

The final component of the ALP requires each AL to deliver a 15 minute presentation highlighting their experience in the program over the past year. They are not given any guidelines other than the time allotment, so they are free to deliver this information however they wish. Attendees include the AL’s director Manager, all organizational Directors, Senior Leadership, and LDT members.

This event serves as a “showcase” for the aspiring leaders and exposes them to key decision makers throughout the organization. They also have the opportunity to apply the public speaking skills they learned in the classroom. This is a confidence building experience for the ALs and very satisfying to their managers, mentors and LDT to see the growth and development that has occurred during the past year in the program.

9) ALP Graduation

In September, a graduation luncheon is held. Attendees include ALs, their managers, their mentors, sr. leadership, and LDT members. A sr. leader shares congratulatory remarks to the graduating class and presents framed certificates of completion to individual ALs. The graduates enjoy this event. A cohort photo is taken for internal communication purposes. ALs take their own personal pictures with their cohorts, mentors and their managers. It’s a happy event for them.

Results - Summarize the success of your initiative and provide evidence of sustained improvements.

Of the total of 50 ALs selected since 2013, four withdrew while in the program due to a decline in job performance or a lost desire to finish the program. Another eight resigned for outside employment opportunities. To date, 38 ALP graduates remain employed with the organization, and 45% of those individuals have been promoted; 10 have been promoted to management positions and 7 promoted to staff positions with a higher level of responsibility.

Current Number Employed ALP Graduates		38
Number promoted to First Line Manager positions	Number promoted to higher level staff positions	% graduates selected for higher level positions
10 (26%)	7 (18%)	45%

The 10 promoted to management include these positions: Manager Decision Support, Nurse Manager (4), Radiology Operations Manager (2), Clinical Documentation Manager, Assistant Director Billing, and Manager Volunteer Services. The Manager of Decision Support has since been promoted again to Director.

Six of the seven promoted to higher level staff positions were hired by our MIS Department which utilized the ALs to participate in the system-wide initiative to implement a new electronic clinical documentation system. This was an 18 month project which elevated the project management skills of all of the AL graduates and resulted in permanent positions for all of them. The seventh was promoted to a lead role in Case Management with an anticipated promotion to manager when the current manager retires in a few months.

Since the inception of the ALP program, the Manager of OD in HR frequently receives calls from Directors who are hiring Managers to determine if any ALs meet the qualifications for the position. We are pleased with this, as it shows the ALP has earned credibility in our organization.

An optional survey is administered to ALP graduates to measure satisfaction with the program. As a result, enhancements have been implemented to improve and sustain the success of the program. Questions using a 5 point Likert scale are asked as well as open ended questions.

Survey Results: 18 responses

How satisfied were you with the ALP?

-67% responded "very satisfied".

-28% responded "satisfied".

-5% responded "dissatisfied"

As an employee, the ALP has helped me to develop personally and professionally:

-55% - strongly agree

-30% - agree

-15% - strongly disagree

What was most beneficial about the ALP?

"The courses have been developed to give you a very solid foundation for your overall leadership. It helped me develop my own style of leadership and gave me the confidence to use the skills learned. Also, it helped me start to form a network within the whole system. This made it easier when I started as a manager to know who to contact for different situations."

"I really think that the networking was a huge benefit to me. It's hard to get out and meet people when you're down in the lab. I also really enjoyed getting my DISC profile. It allowed me to learn where my strengths are and what things I can improve. The tours were also another favorite."

"The professional mentor piece of the program."

What changes or enhancements do you suggest to improve the ALP?

"Increase number of 1 to 1 shadows to get more exposure to organizational leaders."
(implemented in 2016-2017)

“I think instead of each person doing a project for each home department, the entire class should do a project that would be implemented in the organization. Choose something that needs attention organizationally.” (implemented in 2016—2017)

“Maybe making past graduates mentors for new participants” (implemented a variation of this suggestion in 2016-2017)

“I really think that the 360 Degree Leader book by John C. Maxwell would be great for the program, since it focuses on leading from where you are at until you do get that leadership job! I would've also liked to have more lunches with the aspiring leaders through the year.” (plan to implement in 2017-2018)

General Comments:

-“The ALP has really helped me grow as a leader and also has opened MANY doors for me and my career.”

-“This is truly a great program. I highly recommend it to anyone that is interested in leadership.”

-“I enjoyed the program very much & learned so much from so many people. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to participate in the program & am looking forward to expanding what I learned during the year.”

-“I learned a lot of tips and tools to use while dealing with people both personally and professionally. I learned to be a listener.”

-“had high hopes but was disappointed”

-“Classroom, field experiences, and job shadowing were all equally beneficial to my learning experience. All have helped prepare me for a role in management, as well as helping me become a better leader in my role in my dept.”

-“I enjoyed working with people that were in charge of the organization and seeing what role they play in the organization. It was great to meet people from different departments that I probably would have never met otherwise.”

Adaptability - Describe the potential ability to replicate your initiative in other organizations that provide the same service or serve the same type of population. Also, describe how to maintain the initiative and/or its results, any negative outcomes, areas of improvement or lessons learned.

With leadership commitment, this program could easily be replicated in other health care organizations. A multidisciplinary team approach to planning is highly recommended. Gathering feedback from graduates is a must. Listening to the feedback and making enhancements is necessary to maintain the success of the program. The only negative feedback has been a couple of anonymous comments received via the survey stating the program was disappointing. We suspect these came from graduates who have interviewed and not been selected for management roles, although this has not been validated. The LDT is currently evaluating what can be put into place to continue to support the graduates while they continue to pursue their leadership goals.

Supporting Appendices – You may include clearly labeled pictures, data tables, or graphs as appendices if needed. – None included