

Please submit your Narrative Summary via email to Kathy@companyofexperts.net and put "AIFT Certification" in the subject line of your email.

1. Please include your name, title, email address, and phone number.

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2. Please include the AIFT© training dates and location at which you received your training.

Corning Community College, Corning, New York
June 5 – June 8, 2012

3. Brief description of the organization, group, community, or individual(s) you worked with.

I chose to work with my department at Corning Community College, Career and Transfer Services. Corning CC is currently engaged in developing a new strategic plan and this opportunity presents the chance for the Career and Transfer Services Office to build its departmental plan to fit into the larger College strategic plan. Through CCC's own Appreciative Inquiry Summit the College determined 6 areas of strengths and growth: (1) Student Focus and Engagement; (2) Access and Opportunity; (3) Quality Facilities; (4) Excellent, Innovative, and In-demand Educational Opportunities; (5) Community Connections and Partnerships; and (6) Diverse Community College Educators Committed to Student Success.

- In addition to the Career and Transfer Services Staff (Ralph DeMusis and Loretta Hendrickson) the following other CCC faculty and administration were invited to participate in the AI experience on July 24, 2012:
 - Deb Beall: Associate Dean of Instruction: Liberal Arts and Sciences: Social Sciences
 - Susan St. John Jarvis: Faculty, Social Science Division
 - Allison Zimmerman: Coordinator of Student Disability Services
 - Michelle Madden: Coordinator/Liaison, CSS Workforce New York
 - Patsy Drake: Admissions Office
 - Diana Cleary: Director of TRiO Student Support Services
 - Karen Poole: Advising and Counseling Services (unable to attend)

4. **Definition** - the first D of an Appreciative Inquiry, during which the overall focus of an inquiry is determined, i.e., a positive topic that is important to the organization or group.

Please tell us about your planning and designing of the inquiry, including the following:

- Please include a list the names and/or category of stakeholders you included in the Core Group (the cross-section of people that helped you design the inquiry, define the affirmative (positive) topic and modify the interview guide for the inquiry)
 - I was the primary member of the "Core Group".
 - However the Career and Transfer Services staff has been discussing over the course of the 2011-2012 academic year the elements that we believe are essential to providing quality career and transfer services to the Corning Community College student population.

- How was the Core Group chosen?
 - No special criteria, simply myself and the department staff.
- Initial contact with the client – was there a compelling issue?
 - Our compelling issue is that several years ago (about 2004) the leadership at Corning Community College made the decision to terminate the Career Development Center and end services as a distinct unit of the Division of Student Development. The then Career Development Center was an award winning center recognized by several state and national organizations for its service to the CCC student population. The decision to terminate the CDC was met with skepticism, resentment, anger, and frustration. After a forced retirement of the Director, the remaining CDC staff members were merged into the College's Advising and Counseling Office. The Career Development Center staff and Center itself lost its unique identity. All this served to demotivate the staff who remained from the former Career Development Center.
 - During this period without the Career office the College leadership recognized, after taking some “hits” on program reviews and other college-wide assessments, that a Career and Transfer Services Office with services distinct from Advising and Counseling was needed, wanted, and warranted. The College secured grant funding through the Perkins Career and Technical Education grant to re-establish a Career and Transfer Services Office. The 2011-2012 academic year was the first year for this renewed Office. During this time basic services were offered to establish the identity of the Career and Transfer Services Office. This inquiry was used to establish the future direction for the Career and Transfer Services Office making it a cornerstone again in the holistic education of Corning Community College students.
- What were the dates for the Core Group meetings?
 - June 28, 2012
- How were the Core Group meetings structured?
 - I reviewed the materials from the Corning Community College Strategic AI Summit in February 2012 and the resulting report compiled by the CCC Gold Standard Committee for the strategic direction that the college wishes to go. It will be important that the services developed and offered from the Career and Transfer Services Office are in alignment with the larger College strategic plan. From this I determined those areas that Career and Transfer Services could support and enhance.
- Who were the stakeholders? How were the stakeholders chosen?
 - Additional stakeholders/participants were invited because of their experience in the discussions regarding Career and Transfer Services in other parts of the campus. I wanted to make sure that there was representation from academic affairs and our workforce development and community education program as well.
- Please describe the client buy-in and support for the inquiry. Who are/were the ‘champions’?
 - For this particular inquiry, as the Director of the Career and Transfer Services Office, I am the primary “champion”? It will be my responsibility to continue to

- champion the strategic plan and its implementation over the course of the next three years.
- The other staff members in the Career and Transfer Services Office are supportive of using AI to move forward with developing our strategic directions and plans.
- What was the Affirmative (Positive) topic that the Core Group identified for the inquiry?
 - **Student Focused, Engaging, Innovative Educational Opportunities through Career and Transfer Services**
- What method did you use to help the Core Group identify the topic? Include material such as the modified interview guide they used (i.e., the generic interview guide slightly modified for the positive topic of the inquiry) agenda for the meeting(s), handouts, and/or PowerPoint slides
 - For this particular inquiry, it is critical that the operations of the Career and Transfer Services Office are aligned with the Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic Plan of Corning Community College. Therefore, in planning this inquiry I turned to the documents produced from the Gold Standard process and the College-wide Strategic AI Summit held in February 2012.

5. Discovery - the second D of an Appreciative Inquiry; a two-part phase that includes inquiring into exceptionally positive moments, and sharing the stories and identifying life-giving forces.

Please describe the planning and design for the Discovery Phase, including the following:

- What were the date(s) for inquiry?
 - July 24 and July 25, 2012.
 - July 24, 2012 was the Department Staff + the invited guest participants. (From beginning until the development of the Provocative Propositions)
 - July 25, 2012 was just the Department Staff. (Took the information from the previous day and begun the discussion of the development of the Department Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2015) (Destiny, Delivery).
- Where was the inquiry held?
 - For ease of attendance for the participants the inquiry was held on campus in the Commons building in the Triangle Lounge.
- How was the inquiry meeting structured?
 - The Flow for the day went as followed...
 - We started with an overview and purpose for the day.
 - I used “You Ought to be in Pictures” exercise where I asked the group to find a picture that spoke to them, glue it on the flip chart paper, and then describe why they selected the picture they did.



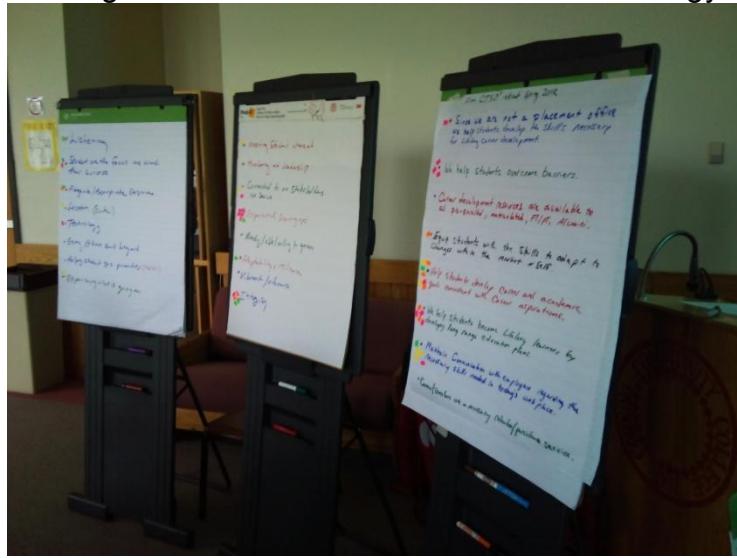
- We next did a “Good News Circle”. Often on a college campus it is easy to get “lost” in your own work and not know what is going on within the larger college community. This offered a chance for everyone to catch up.
- Even though the College has been using AI in the development of the larger College-wide strategic plan, we spent some time getting a better sense of AI and some more information about it. I showed Jackie Kelm’s video of AI basics, “What is Appreciative Inquiry?”



- We then moved into the Paired Interview Discovery for a total of 60 minutes.



- We shared the stories and then discussed common themes that were emerging from the stories.
- Using “Lots ‘O Dots” we found where the energy was leaning.



- We discussed the 2 top emerging themes and decided to move forward on both of them. The group broke into 2 smaller groups to continue working.
- What method of interviews did people use to inquire into exceptionally positive moments? (i.e. face-to-face paired interviews, etc.)
 - We used the face-to-face paired interviews to explore the exceptionally positive moments.



- Questions were developed from the themes revealed during the larger February 2012 Corning Community College Appreciative Inquiry Summit and the resulting six strategic directions.
- The theme areas included:
 - Student Focus and Engagement
 - Excellent, Innovative, and In Demand Educational Opportunities
 - Diverse Community College Educators committed to Student Success
 - Leading and Engaging Change
- Was there any resistance during the inquiry? If yes, please describe how you, the Core Team, and/or the client addressed this.

- There was no resistance to participate in this AI experience. I had personally invited members of the college community to join the Career and Transfer Services staff.
 - All present willingly participated in all aspects of the day and the process. Great energy was developed throughout the day. And because of the areas of the campus represented it allowed for people to come together who normally do not get the chance to work together on projects on campus.
- Please describe the sharing of the stories.
 - Each pair took turns describing some of the key points in the educational experience of their partner, some key points of facilitating or navigating change, time when their partner felt energized or empowered to be innovative. A time keeper helped with continuing the flow.
 - Many of the stories included going above and beyond what was expected or anticipated; and doing so with integrity. The stories often included a key mentor or educator that helped the person to find their path or their space.
- What were the Life-Giving Forces (what they MOST wanted to create MORE of) that the group identified in the stories they shared?

Below are the life giving forces that emerged through the sharing of the stories of success and “mountain-top” experiences.

Students are the focus... we want their success	**
Help student develop career and academic goals consistent with career aspirations.	*****
We help students become lifelong learners by developing long range education plans.	*****
Career development resources are available to all pre-enrolled, matriculated, ft/po students, and alumni.	
Career and Transfer are a necessary student retention and persistence service.	
Helping the student to set realistic priorities	
CTSO helps students develop the skills necessary for lifelong career development.	*
We equip students with the skills to adapt to changes within the market and the self.	*
We help students overcome barriers.	***
Meeting the students where they are at.	*
Ready, willing, able to grow and develop	
Experiencing what is going on	*
Developing, providing, and coordinating experiential learning opportunities.	*****
Maintain communication with employers regarding the necessary skills needed in today's workplace.	*****
Connected to the stakeholders we serve.	**
Going above and beyond	
Providing mentoring and leadership.	
Having adaptability and resilience.	*
Being vibrant/ having vibrancy	
Having integrity	****
Listening	*
Adequate and appropriate resources	**
Location on campus	*
Using Technology	*

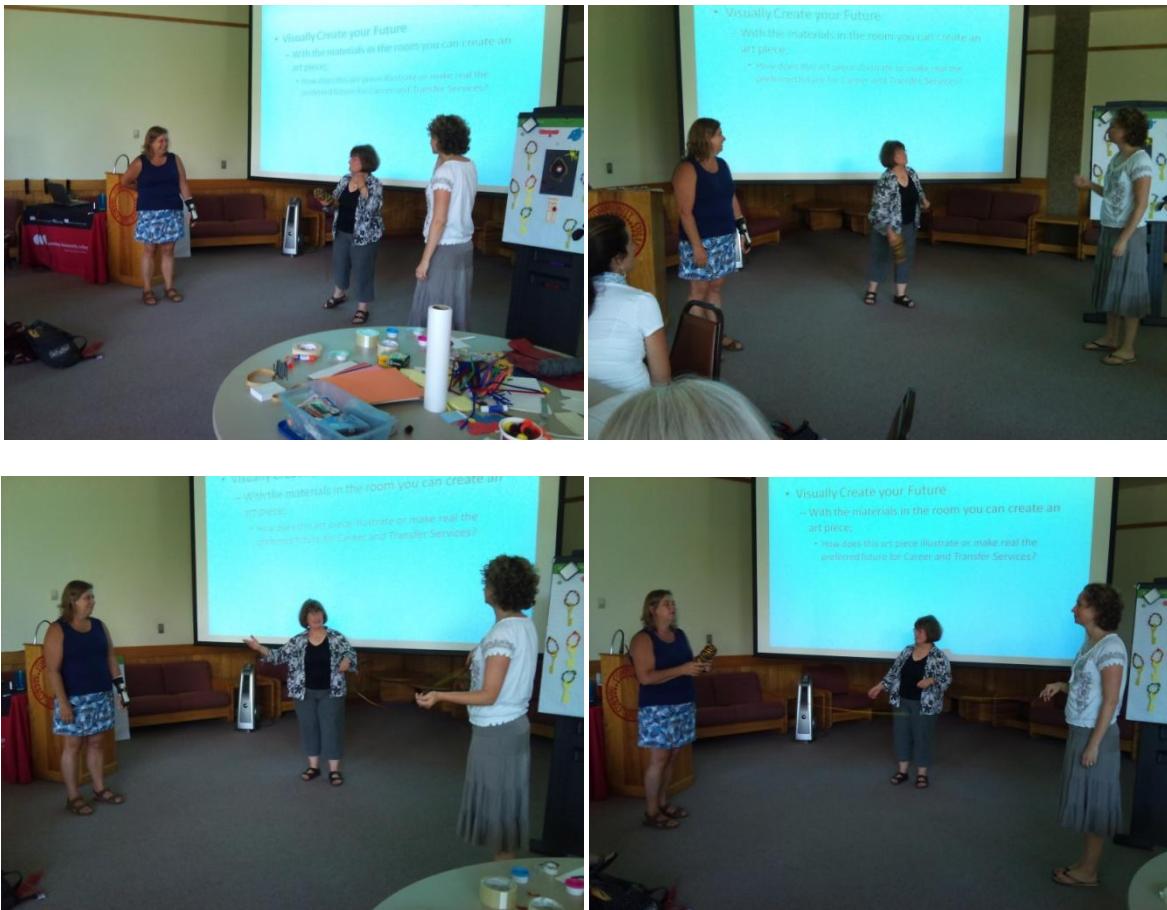
The themes shaded in yellow are the 2 areas that as a group we decided to move forward with into the Dream stage of the AI.

- How did you collect the data from the stories? How did this translate to the visual and word images?
 - Each pair spent 30 minutes engaging in a one-on-one interview. They used a Summary Sheet to organize some thoughts about the interview over lunch. I had each pair share their stories with the whole group following lunch.
 - We then developed the list of themes we heard emerging throughout the stories and used the Lots 'O Dots exercise to find the ones that were generating the most energy and interest.

6. **Dream** - the third D of an Appreciative Inquiry, during which people create shared images of a preferred future; typically involves a visual image which translates to a word image (Provocative Proposition or Strategic Statement).

Please describe the planning and design for the Dream Phase, including the following:

- Please describe with as much detail as you can the visual images including any pictures.
 - Group 1 took on the theme related to Experiential Learning. They chose to show this as a performance piece that ultimately involved all of the members of the group for the day. They showed the importance of the interconnections of the campus by creating a web from yarn. To start one member of the triad was the faculty member, another played the student role, and another was a member of the Career and Transfer Services Office. The faculty member encouraged the student to participate in our Service Learning course. The student needing some resources related to experiential learning sought out the Career and Transfer Services office for ideas of site locations to perform her service learning project.



Later other members of the group were added to signify the relationship with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, our upcoming AmeriCorps VISTA member, our Academic and Workforce Development Center in Elmira, and our Admissions Office.



The Other group took the theme of helping students develop career and academic goals consistent with their career aspirations. So after thinking about this idea for a moment they got to work creating a 3-D poster.



The piece in the middle on the black construction paper was to represent a kaleidoscope. The white dot in the center was the student with many pieces moving

around the student; always keeping in mind that the student is the focus of the work that we do. The cutouts of the cap and the diploma represented the career and academic goals and aspirations of the student. The keys were placed on braided pipe cleaners. The braid had significance in that one strand was the student, their support such as family, and the third was a CCC college student educator based on the key. Each key stood for Admissions, Advising and Counseling Services, Student Activities, Classes and Faculty, Financial Support, Persistence. The keys were they the keys that opened the door to success for the student. The lion and the cotton balls (stormy clouds) were things that could impede the student's ability to be successful with college and later in their careers. The coffee cup lid was strategies that the student could use to defend off things that will get in their way.



Both groups had a great deal of fun with this step in the process. Although it took a bit to get going, once they were, the creative juices got flowing and things got moving.

7. Design - the fourth D of an Appreciative Inquiry, during which people innovate and improvise ways to create their preferred future.

Please describe the planning and design for the Design Phase, including the following:

- Please describe what method(s) you used to help the participants design their word statements
 - As we moved from the performance piece and the 3-D poster I asked them to consider the discussion that led to the development of their Dream piece. What was key in the further discussion of their theme? How did they illustrate that?
 - I reminded them that with your present tense statement consider...
 - Is it provocative? - (Does it stretch what is being done now?)
 - Is it grounded? – (Is this pie in the sky or is it realistic?)
 - Is it desired? – (Is this idea what the CTSO and CCC want to see?)
 - Is it affirmative? – (Is it strengths based and positive?)
- Please include the Provocative Proposition(s) the group or organization created from the Life-Giving Forces.

AI Provocative Propositions- Career and Transfer Services, Corning Community College

July 24, 2012

Theme area: Help students develop career and academic plans consistent with career aspirations.

"From the initial contact a student has with Corning Community College until their last (lifelong services), a consistent message is delivered about the need to have clearly stated academic and career goals in line with their aspirations, interests, skills, and values. This initiative is supported, encouraged, and inspired by all members of the campus community."

Theme area: Developing, Providing, and Coordinating Experiential Learning Opportunities

"We work with students to create a network that gives students meaningful experiential learning opportunities that lead to academic success and enriches the community."

- What are the Strategic Intentions the group or organization developed to realize the Provocative Proposition(s) they created?
 - This AI process is the initial step in developing a new strategic plan for the Career and Transfer Services Office at Corning Community College. This plan will be directly connected to the 6 strategic directions Corning Community College identified through its Gold Standard process this past academic year. A basic draft is one of the attachments.
- What commitments, requests and offers did the stakeholders make?
 - In discussing the provocative propositions after they were shared out by the 2 groups the topic turned to the importance piece of none of this is not possible without cooperation across the campus. That to achieve these ideas we will need to be more and more collaborative.

8. Destiny/Delivery - the fifth D of an Appreciative Inquiry, during which people innovate and improvise ways to create the preferred future by continuously improvising and building AI competencies into the culture. It also includes noticing and celebrating successes that are moving the system toward the preferred future the organization or group co-created.

Please describe the Destiny/Delivery Phase, including the following:

- What organizational, group, or community attitude, process or structure changes have people made as they move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)?
 - At this early stage of the process it is the development of our 3 year strategic plan (2013, 2014, and 2015). This plan will be in alignment with the CCC College new 3 year strategic plan. The plan is included but is in very early draft form. This will be an ongoing agenda item for our Department for the fall 2013 term.
- What progress have people made toward their Strategic Intentions or Initiatives or Pilot Projects?
 - This is the first step of the Career and Transfer Services Office strategic planning process in conjunction with Corning Community College's larger strategic planning process. So the progress so far is that we have started the journey.

The discussion throughout the AI process was that as a college we need to be more integrated/interconnected in our delivery of services. This does not always mean that everyone needs to know how to do everything. But that the different operational parts of CCC know where the connections are to link together to provide quality services to the student body as a whole.

- What stories of success can you share?
 - At this point in the process it was the affirmation that the development of the Career and Transfer Services is becoming a stronger vital part of the services and educational experiences offered to our Corning Community College students. This AI process starts a larger process of strategic planning for the Career and Transfer Services Office.
- What will **you** do to ensure that people continue to move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)?
 - The themes that developed and ultimately the strategic plan will become the architecture for building Career and Transfer Services at Corning Community College. These will become key discussion points for our future staff meetings. We will regularly return to them to track progress and update.
 - Again one of the major discussion points throughout the day was the importance of interconnections and integrated services. As the department director it will be important for me to maintain communication and conversations that continue to build collaborative relationships with colleagues and others providing quality student education services.
 - Help build a culture on campus where all of us (not just the faculty in the classroom) are college student educators.
- How will you help them gather stories of success? How will you help them celebrate?
 - As a department we have several formal structures in place to collect and maintain the “stories of success” including record keeping of students seen, programs offered, and services rendered.
 - Also as part of our regular staff meetings we will return to the statements developed during this AI process.
- How will you, as the AI Facilitator, support their ongoing success?
 - My role as the Director of Career and Transfer Services is central to supporting the success of this initiative and inquiry.

9. What did you wish for in the inquiry?

My primary goal and intent of conducting an inquiry is the development of an intentional strategic direction for the Career and Transfer Services Office that is aligned with the overall CCC strategic plan. After several years without a Career and Transfer Services operation at CCC the College leadership decided that such a distinct service was critical to the operation of the College and the success of the students. Other than determining it was a needed service and connecting it to the Perkins IV Career and Technical Education grant as a major effort, little initial structure was offered to develop the office and services.

10. What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation?

Before facilitating this particular AI experience, I had a smaller AI earlier this month. This summer I am teaching *Facilitating Learning Organizations* in the MS.Ed. program at Elmira College. The timing of CCC's use of AI, the AIFT program, and this course could not have been better. On July 12 I took my class through a short AI experience related to “learning and being change

facilitators". Taking my class this even this short AI helped prepare me for this larger departmental AI for the Career and Transfer Services Office at Corning Community College.

The practice with my class on July 12 gave me time to become comfortable with not having to have the answers, being able to let the process work, and being comfortable with the timing and coordination of the process.

During the AI on July 24 with my CCC department and colleagues...

11. What was your "personal best" experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?

For me it was seeing the energy and ideas about how Career and Transfer Services is a vital part of the educational experience for Corning Community College. It affirmed the important role that is played by the educators in the Career and Transfer Services Office.

12. What surprised you during the inquiry?

When we moved into the Dream stage there was hesitation on doing something artistic. Some of the group felt that they were not "crafty" enough to do this part of the process. But we persisted onward. In finalizing the Discovery phase we noticed that 2 themes really emerged as being important ([1] Helping students develop goals and [2] Experiential learning opportunities). So we opted to split into 2 smaller groups to work in the Dream stage. The group that took on the Experiential learning opportunities made their Dream visualization a performance piece whereby they used yarn to create a "web" of how the distinct pieces of the entire college community come together to partner to create an engaging and integrated learning experience for the students. Being the smaller group they ultimately included all of the members of the group into their performance piece.

13. What might you wish for next time?

This experience was both lab experience for my own personal AIFT certification and real departmental planning processes for the CCC department I lead. I needed to maintain essentially 2 roles during this process (facilitator and department director). Allowing the process to emerge organically was important. However, as the department director I need to remember the reality of the conditions facing us at this time at Corning Community College.

For next time I am looking more so at just being able to be the facilitator and not have responsibility per se' for the outcomes that develop through the process.

14. Please attach any materials you've used including PowerPoints, agendas, etc. to help us "experience" your facilitation.

15. Do we have your permission to share your story with others?

Yes

16. Do we have your permission to share your session materials with others?

Yes