



# 2005 Award Winner

## Richland College

Established in 1972, Richland College (RLC) is one of seven two-year community colleges in the Dallas County Community College District. RLC's unique "Thunderduck" culture is rooted in the belief that it is the whole person who best learns, teaches, serves, and leads. RLC's 144 full-time faculty, 414 full-time support staff and administrators, and 811 part-time faculty provide educational services to a multi-cultural student body of 14,500 students seeking college credits and nearly 6,000 continuing education (CE) students. Located in Dallas, Texas, RLC is the first community college to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

## Drilling Down to Improve

With input from a broad range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community members, RLC's ThunderTeam, comprised of senior leaders, sets and deploys RLC's vision and values, directions, and performance expectations. The organization's 10 values, including integrity; mutual trust; considerate, meaningful communications; responsible risk taking; and joy, are communicated through a variety of means, including a daily computer pop up screen which features a "Value of the Week." The mission statement, "Teaching, Learning, Community Building," is posted on all 275 of the college's exterior doors.

RLC has four strategic planning priorities: identify and meet community educational needs; enable all students to

## Highlights

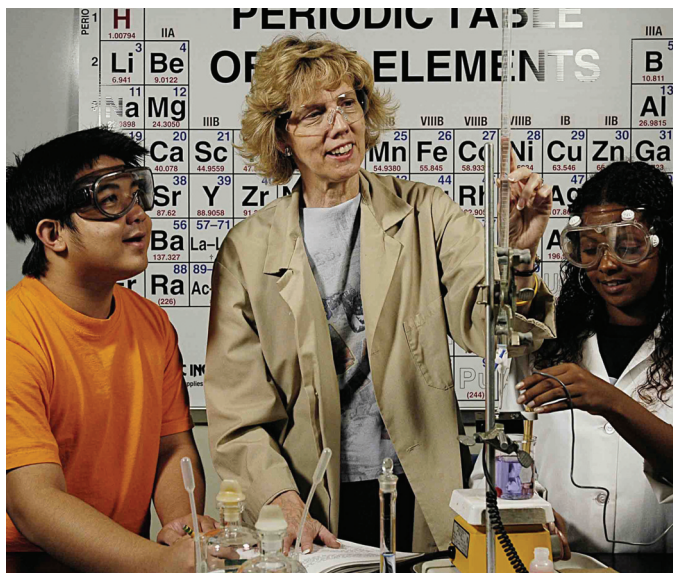
- The number of students who complete the core curriculum in preparation for transfer to four-year institutions has grown from 500 students in 2002 to 1,660 in 2005.
- From 2000 to 2005, RLC's enrollment for credit students has increased from about 12,500 to about 14,500, exceeding local competitors.
- Four satisfaction measures students rate as most important, including classes scheduled, class time convenience, variety of courses, and intellectual growth, have surpassed the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction national norm over the past four years.
- RLC has a well-deserved reputation as a "leadership training ground"; 22 of its former employees have been named as presidents of other colleges.

succeed; enable all employees to succeed; and ensure institutional effectiveness. Each priority has associated measures for success called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The ThunderTeam meets monthly to review KPIs and evaluate progress toward meeting these priorities. If progress is not on track, the ThunderTeam requests its members to "drill down" into the organization to determine root causes and suggest actions to improve performance.

To help improve its own performance, and that of others, RLC helped found and participates in several organizations, including the League for Innovation in the Community College and the Continuous Quality Improvement Network.

## Enabling Student Success

RLC's mission is to offer programs and services that enable its students to achieve their educational goals and become life-long learners, community builders, and global citizens. In an innovative move that reflects this mission, RLC will open the first collegiate charter high school in Texas on its campus this fall. Richland Collegiate High School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering will enable up to 400 high school juniors and seniors to graduate simultaneously from high school and Richland College with an Associate of Arts degree. The school will be tuition free, and the curriculum will focus on mathematics, science, and engineering.



Unlike its peer community colleges, most of Richland's programs and services are aimed at students whose primary goal is further education at a four-year college or university. The average age of its students is 28; and 21 percent of them need developmental education to become college ready. The school has many measures in place to ensure these students are successful. In addition to offering developmental courses, RLC's Rising Star program provides scholarships to students at risk of not succeeding in school. The number of students receiving this aid has grown from 184 in 2001 to 450 in 2005. To make getting an education as convenient as possible, RLC offers a number of options to traditional classroom scheduling, including Internet, flex-term, and fast-track classes and evening and weekend courses.

The college maintains a close relationship with the local business community and tailors its technical, occupational, and workforce job skills programs to meet not only students' needs but also local employers' needs for a skilled workforce.

RLC's persistence and creativity in enabling all students to succeed is paying off. RLC outperformed three of its peers in student success measures in 2004. Satisfaction in the five most important student satisfaction measures—classes scheduled, class time convenience, quality of instruction, variety of courses, and intellectual growth—has increased over the past four years and four measures now surpass the national norm. Overall, RLC was above the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey norm on 42 of the 79 survey items. The number of students achieving an associate's degree has steadily climbed over the past several years and outperforms three of its peer colleges. The employment rate of students taking technical training or workforce development classes has remained at or near 100 percent since 1997. The percentage of students achieving a grade average of C or better has improved from 65 percent in 1999-2000 to 70 percent in 2004-2005.

Student retention rate has improved from outperforming only one of its five peer institutions in 1999 to outscoring four of its five peer institutions in 2003. In concert with retention rates, RLC's enrollment has increased from about 12,500 credit students in 2000 to about 14,500 in 2005—an increase of approximately 16 percent—and has exceeded local competitors in all five years, including the next highest performer, by more than 3,000 in 2005.

## Leadership and Innovation

RLC has a well-deserved reputation as a “leadership training ground.” Employees are encouraged to advance to senior leadership positions, are offered training and internships, and act as “understudies” to fill in when senior

leaders are out. RLC is justifiably proud that these growth opportunities have resulted in 22 of its former employees being named as presidents of other colleges. All employees have career-development plans that include a minimum of 36 hours of training. Key Performance Indicators for employee learning show that almost 95 percent of employees exceed professional development requirements.

While its state funding was reduced from 70 percent to 30 percent of its total budget over three legislative sessions, RLC has found innovative ways to maintain low tuition rates as well as its educational quality and services. For example, the school maximizes the number of part-time instructors, uses administrators to teach, and created “Instructional Specialists” to teach students who need extensive personalized services, such as developmental math and English-as-a-Second Language. Sixty percent of the total faculty are part time. To remain agile in a changing environment, RLC designs its staffing approaches to keep payroll costs at no greater than 75 percent.

To help faculty stay in touch with students, facilitate discussions, and provide assignments and grades online, RLC implemented eCampus Blackboard technology. Use of eCampus has risen steadily from less than 10 percent in 2001 to 37 percent in 2005, exceeding the best performance of its peers.

To improve every employee's mind-body-spirit health, participants in RLC's ThunderWellness Program develop a plan that includes physical exercise, mind-body health techniques, and relaxation strategies.

Surveys of faculty and staff satisfaction from 2000 and 2005 show that overall employee satisfaction increased from 76 percent to well over 80 percent.

As part of its mission to be “community builders,” faculty and administrators serve on chamber of commerce boards and provide literacy and general education programs to organizations such as The Family Place and the Dallas Metroplex Homeless Alliance. To enhance the community's environment and provide an outdoor classroom for its horticulture program, RLC, in partnership with the Dallas Trees and Parks Foundation and Texas Utilities Company, has created the nation's largest urban tree farm on its campus.

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