



## Tidewater Community College – Instilling a Lean Culture

### Background:

Tidewater Community College is one of the largest and fastest growing community colleges in the nation. Tidewater currently serves 42,000 students each year at its four campuses. With 3,300 employees and over 150 programs, Tidewater prides itself on providing students with marketable skills that will help them achieve success.

**Challenge:** Tidewater had grown by leaps and bounds over a 15 year period. To deal with the tremendous growth in enrollment, many processes had been reactively implemented. While none of the process steps were ill-intended the accumulation of these ‘quick-fixes’ over several years created inefficiencies, duplications and omissions. Cumulatively, the stop-gap practices created barriers for smooth and efficient operations. Inefficiencies were particularly evident in the enrollment, admission and student services areas, the employee hiring/onboarding process and a variety of other administrative business areas.

### Solution:

Tidewater President, Dr. Edna Baehre-Kolovani, had experience in applying lean programming at several other colleges and knew that great benefits would derive from its implementation. DMACC Business Resource’s workplacelean program was selected to help bring lean thinking to Tidewater. The workplacelean consultants set out a plan of action after talking with several key senior staff members. Tidewater lean task force members were trained in process mapping and with each session, the Tidewater staff took more and more ownership as the actual “mappers” while the consultants facilitated the process. Tidewater’s Student Enrollment Management system, Human Resources hiring process and procurement system have benefitted from the lean implementation. The next phase of the initiative with workplacelean will consist of a Train-the-Trainer program so that lean process improvement can be applied to additional college functions and sustained over the long-term.

### Results:

The outcomes have been very positive for the Student Enrollment Management and the Human Resources hiring process programs. Results included the creation of greater efficiencies, clear and faster enrollment processes, equal policy and procedure implementation at all campuses, improved customer satisfaction, and much improved cross-departmental collaboration and communication. The outcomes for the third process, Procurement, were less impactful due to extensive state-mandated procurement procedures, however achievements did include a much better functioning procurement team, quicker response time from order to fulfillment, and an improved reputation on campus for competency and customer service.

*“We love the work that the workplacelean consultants have undertaken and we are thrilled with the results we have achieved to date. All of their training and facilitation is done with complete professionalism and effectiveness.”*

*– Dr. Baehre-Kolovani, President, Tidewater Community College*

