

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

MLC members share Lean practices at St. Joseph event

The Michigan Lean Consortium (MLC), along with the Oakland University Pawley Lean Institute, hosted a Lean thinking event Friday, Dec. 4 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital (SJMO) in Pontiac.

Event attendees came from a variety of industries, including education, automotive, health care, energy and information technology (IT).

The day started with presentations from SJMO senior leadership on the progress made and results seen at the hospital from using Lean principles.

SJMO then gave "best practice" guided tours of key areas where Lean has been implemented.

"The highlights of the event were primarily the lab and radiology tours," said Ken LePage, associate vice president of Process Excellence at SJMO. "These were just two of the areas in the hospital that are transforming to a Px (process excellence)/Lean culture."

After the tours, there was a panel discussion with SJMO employees who were involved in the Lean implementation, where MLC members shared feedback and asked questions.

Then four Michigan-based MLC charter members discussed the Lean journeys within their organizations. The presenters were: Ali Gunal, manager of the Continuous Improvement Unit at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan; Richard Fleming, director of the Michigan Shingo Prize through The Right Place; Julianne Leigh, director of budget and the Pawley Lean Institute at Oakland University; and Jason Schulist, director of Continuous Improvement at DTE Energy.

The MLC also elected officers and appointed board members for 2010 at a luncheon after the event. Willie Brown, Ken LePage, Jason Schulist, Debra Setman and Chris Wilson have been elected officers and will decide the individual positions amongst themselves. The positions are chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, secretary and ad hoc board member.

Prior to his retirement, Brown was responsible for practicing Lean management at General Motors Corporation. Setman is the director of Strategy Development and Business Improvement at Johnson & Johnson, and Wilson recently retired as director of Operational Excellence for Amway Corporation.

Fleming and Phil Berry, senior director of Continuous Improvement at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, have been appointed board members. The lunch meeting also consisted of discussing priorities for 2010 and reviewing lessons learned from the benchmarking visit at SJMO.

"There are plans in place to make the MLC a thriving piece of Michigan's continuous improvement story," Setman said.

The mission of the MLC is to offer a diverse network of knowledgeable Lean professionals who come together to share innovative practices. The organization aims to create a Lean culture in Michigan to ensure sustainable competitive advantage, which could translate into healthier businesses that offer more job opportunities leading to economic growth in the state.

The charter members of the MLC include: Amway, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, DTE Energy, Johnson & Johnson, The Lean Learning Center, Northwestern Michigan College, the **Oakland University Pawley Lean Institute** and the Michigan Shingo Prize through The Right Place.



Debra Setman acted as moderator of the St. Joseph Mercy Oakland panel discussion at the Michigan Lean Consortium event Dec. 4.

SUMMARY

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Created by Amanda Benjamin (aabenjam@oakland.edu) on Friday, December 18, 2009

Modified by Rachel Zynel (rezynel@oakland.edu) on Friday, January 20, 2012

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