

Preparing Students to Create the Future: Leaders in Continuous Improvement (LCI) Student Organization Launches



A newly formed student organization has launched this semester focusing on continuous improvement methods that prepare students to be a step ahead of the competition as they participate in internships and co-op opportunities, and enter industry after graduation. The group has been meeting bi-weekly since their initial recruiting event at K-Day in Sept. and currently had 30+ members. LCI has hosted industry speakers and has heard teach-backs on improvement topics such as process mapping. The group is actively participating in ongoing 5S events on campus and plan to expand their activities to include consulting with local businesses. Following is an excerpt from a recent Lode article.

The Michigan Tech Lode, November 13, 2013. *New to campus is the student organization Leaders in Continuous Improvement. Continuous Improvement is the process of improving product, relationships, process or services in an organization.*

Through internship experience and on-campus work in the Office of Process Improvement, student founders wanted to share their knowledge and experience of continuous improvement with other students. Brainstorming began last spring for the student organization, and it has become an official organization this fall.

Continuous improvement involves philosophies on how to guide a company on to improvement practices. One of these philosophies is Lean, a methodology currently practiced on the Michigan Tech campus. Lean focuses on a respect for people, improving a process for the benefit of the customer and eliminating waste. This is also a widely used methodology in the manufacturing world.

Leaders in Continuous Improvement want to help students gain experience through hands-on learning on campus and in the community. "During our meetings we learn about different tools and techniques or philosophies in Continuous Improvement and then we want to go out and apply them," said Megan Johnson, a Biomedical Engineering graduate student.

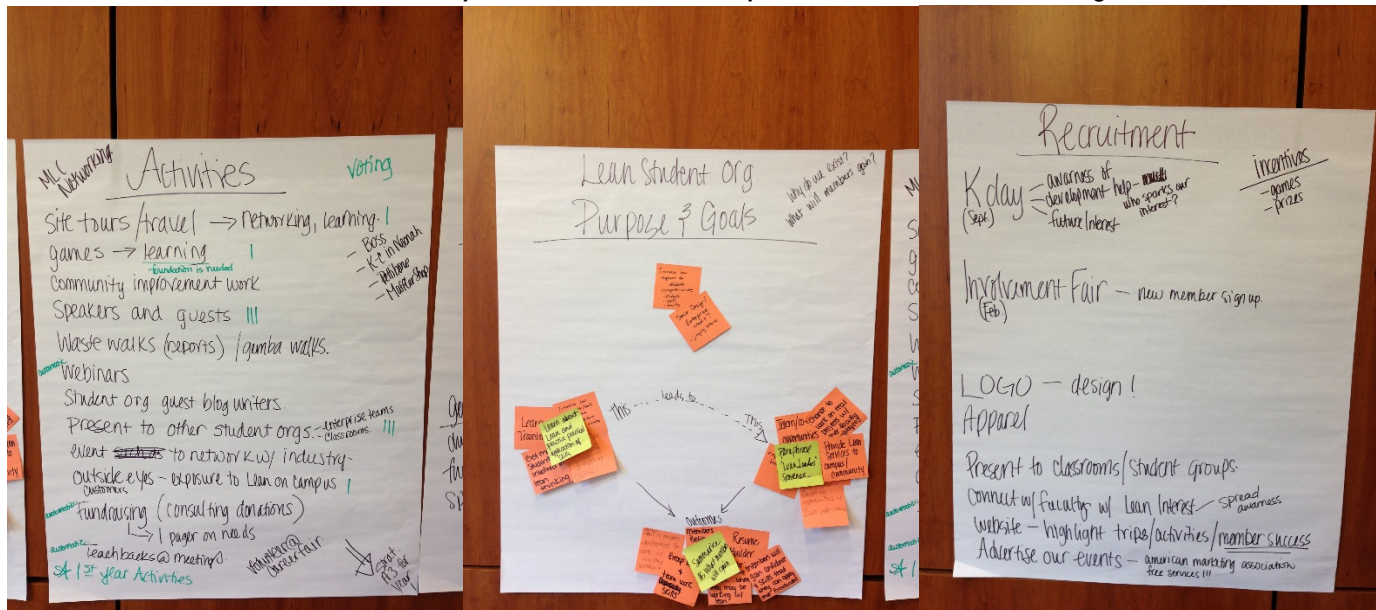
"Our overall goals are to educate our members and the campus community on continuous improvement and what it is, what the benefits are and to have our members actually practice continuous improvement hands-on, to promote it in the community in general," said Johnson.

Another goal of Leaders in Continuous Improvement is to gain networking and knowledge that can help students with future employment opportunities. "We are also hoping to bring in as many industry speakers as we can to help members A: see how it is used in industry, and B: have that networking experience with the people who are actually out there doing it," said Johnson.

"In the future we want to consult with local businesses, we've actually already talked with the Smartzone and they would love to have us come in and work with their startups and look at their processes and see if we can help them improve," said Johnson.

References

lutzi, Nicole (2013, November 13). Student org spotlight Leaders in Continuous Improvement. The Michigan Tech Lode. Retrieved from: <http://www.mtulode.com/2013/11/01/student-org-spotlight-leaders-in-continuous-improvement/>



Lean Outreach and Connections

- Vice President for Administration Ellen Horsch, Student Process Improvement Coordinator Kaylee Betzinger, and Interim Manager of Process Improvement Chris Maxson presented to the Presidential Council of Alumnae (PCA) on September 19, 2013. Their presentation defined our Lean practice at Michigan Tech, showcased Ms. Betzinger’s personal Lean journey including her two internship opportunities that have sprung from her Lean involvement as a Student Process Improvement Coordinator, and wrapped up with acknowledging the current state of Lean at Michigan Tech, campus involvement numbers, and an overview of future plans. The presentation generated considerable discussion, questions, and interest from the PCA and led to industry speakers at a Leaders in Continuous Improvement meeting prior to the fall Career Fair.
- Theresa Coleman-Kaiser, Lean Facilitator and Implementation Leader, has been involved in three activities with the Michigan Lean Consortium (MLC). She presented a 90-minute workshop in August at the MLC annual conference titled “Demystifying Leadership Standardized Work”. July through October she served as a volunteer coach for three Lean Greenbelts candidates as part of the State of Michigan’s journey to bring Lean to state government. She is currently working with the State of Michigan to assist in a review of scoreboard metrics for the Department of Education.
- The “Local Lean Group” of Houghton, Keweenaw and Baraga County businesses continues to add value to the University’s Lean practice as well as acting as a forum for sharing knowledge among the 20+ local businesses and organizations represented. The group’s next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at the Great Lakes Research Center.
- The Michigan Tech Continuous Improvement Blog (<http://www.mtu.edu/improvement/>) continues to be updated weekly, sharing the story of our continuous improvement journey.

Improvement Events

Four (4) Lean improvement events have been completed since the FY13 report, with an additional eleven (11) events currently initiated, underway, or just wrapping up. An annual report of the fiscal year with a comprehensive list of all improvement events (event descriptions, results and any associated cost savings) is shared every fall.