

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Assessment of Student Learning

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

Embed throughout the instructional processes the continual improvement practice of setting clear learning and/or program expectations, systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance is matching the expectations, and documenting the evidence as important information that will be used in planning subsequent program and or teaching modifications.

The strategies associated with the classroom assessment goal are formative. They are designed to give students early feedback on progress, and help faculty formalize the process of deliberately reflecting on student performance. The formative strategies create tangible evidence that can guide instructional adjustments specific to improving student learning.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Planning Continuous Improvement

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

The Vital Focus' Constellation Survey and Conversation Day (10/2004) identified the need to improve the process of data driven decision making to achieve the measurable outcomes of student retention and student completion/graduation. The Assessment Committee was formed to prioritize goals and design the implementation strategies.

Assessment has been a continual challenge for us. We are constantly engaged in assessment activities as we intuitively react to student's needs. However our intuitive approach does not maximize the collective power we have as good teachers to build a culture of continual quality improvement. Formalizing the process of assessment will require faculty designed implementation with administration support and management. Our president has explicitly stated that instituting a strong assessment plan across instruction is a top priority.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Instructional Services will implement the action project. Instruction Services is comprised of the vice president of instruction who will assume the role of Key Leader, the deans of instruction will assist in the monitoring, review and documentation of the assessment practices and the faculty will be responsible for developing assessment strategies aligned with course learning objectives.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change

Red Rocks Community College has a strong reputation among our stakeholders for excellence in teaching and the learning of our students. Other than summative evidence of tests, certification exams, and course grades we do not have consistent documentation of teaching practices that produce students prepared for transfer and workforce success. Without this evidence we are not as effective as we could be in planning and implementing improved teaching strategies.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

Formative assessment practices are a required goal in faculty performance plans. Faculty have been engaged in aligning their course learning objectives with their teaching practices as a precursor to developing assessment strategies that measure the effectiveness of the teaching practices in helping students master the course competencies.

Faculty have been engaged in closing the loop of assessment; they have developed assessment strategies, collected data on student performance, reviewed the data and reflected on possible alterations to their course/and or teaching practices to improve student performance. As a result of this initial work and the plans for continued professional development, a year long review of the formative assessment practices occurring at the classroom level beginning in the fall of 2006 is expected to produce data that can be used by faculty in their continuous quality improvement efforts at the course level. Faculty will have the opportunity to measure course alterations planned from the initial assessment review conducted in the spring of 2006 to determine if student performance is impacted.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Faculty will declare their assessment plans as part of their goal setting at the beginning of each term. Deans will follow up with faculty using the Assessment Loop Cycle to gather a summary of the assessment activities. The summaries will be posted to the Red Rocks Community College AQIP site as evidence of our quality journey.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

The initial implementation phase of assessment is focused on instructional processes. Our long range goal is to model across the institution the cycle of gathering performance data and measuring performance against clearly stated expectations. Public institutions of higher education in Colorado are required to document and show increased measures of student success defined as access, retention and completion. To achieve these objectives mandated as part of the state funding we receive, our teaching and learning and student support services must be seamlessly connected with the shared commitment to quality evidenced by the effective use of assessment's iterative cycle for program improvement.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

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