

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Red Rocks Community College

Project Details		
Title	Building a Diverse Campus: Encouraging diversity and its many dimensions while appreciating and nurturing campus, local, state, and world community	Status ACTIVE
Category	4-Valuing People	Updated
Timeline		Reviewed
Planned Project Kickoff	01-01-2009	Created 11-24-2009
Target Completion	05-31-2013	Version 4

1: Project Goal

A: RRCC is an advocate for inclusion and diversity. We provide and encourage an environment that respects the multiple dimensions of diversity in our faculty, staff and students, while breaking down barriers that inhibit inclusiveness. The proposed/ongoing project will leverage the existing diverse population of RRCC while also implementing new strategies that will lead to an organizational culture of inclusiveness and support.

2: Reasons For Project

A: RRCC continues to experience an increase in demographic diversity in its service area. This includes prospective student population and faculty/staff applicant pools. Integrating a culture of inclusiveness and diversity has been identified as an ongoing need in order to best serve and increase the engagement of the above referenced populations. Additionally, much of the extant research and literature has found that institutions that identify and leverage the talents of their diverse workforce are more likely to see increased organizational effectiveness and profitability.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The Diversity Action Project committee is comprised of faculty and staff from across the institution. It is the belief of senior leadership and the committee that to truly integrate a culture of inclusiveness and appreciation of diversity, ownership and participation by all college constituencies is necessary. Additionally, it is the belief, and subsequent action, of the leadership of the college that "leading by example" is necessary to achieve engagement and "buy in". As such, the Diversity Action Project is made up of, among others, members of the RRCC Diversity Council the College President, an instructional dean, the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the Director of Human Resources, and the President of the Faculty Senate.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Inclusiveness and diversity, as envisioned by the committee and senior leadership of the college, has and will continue to cascade across the institution. As such, practically all processes will be affected by this project. However, RRCC leadership and the committee also understand the importance of continuous quality improvement, the PDCA/ADLI cycle, and measuring effectiveness by results. There are specific processes that have been enhanced to help build and integrate an organization that embraces inclusiveness and diversity. RRCC has administered and analyzed a Diversity Climate Survey. It is the intent of the committee to administer this survey every other year in order to measure progress as perceived by the campus population. The organization has also taken a mindful approach to its marketing and recruiting efforts in order to ensure that diverse demographic populations of current and prospective students are reached. The committee is currently benchmarking best practices of other colleges and universities with the intention of implementing a comprehensive training and development program for all employees that is continuous and perpetual in that these programs become part of an employee's annual performance goals. Human Resources has overhauled its recruitment and hiring processes so that all positions being recruited for are initially screened by diverse search committees through a rigorous behavioral interview process. Every prospective employee is asked an interview question on their commitment to and experience with diverse populations. These processes will be measured by metrics established by management of the affected divisions.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The committee is currently exploring the idea of creating a resource center on the campus to be staffed by new personnel. This proposal could take from 12-18 months. The benchmarking of best practices accompanied by the establishment of meaningful “baseline” metrics will take 4-6 months. Finally, implementing and measuring both current and new processes in building an inclusive environment will be an ongoing process.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The committee, and organization, will monitor success through a number of avenues. Those ideas that have been benchmarked and implemented will be codified and recorded as meaningful activity in achieving the institutions goals. The number of training and development sessions offered on a semester basis should also provide data that inclusion efforts are ongoing. Departmental Action Plans (DAPs) will also be monitored and reviewed by the committee to ensure ongoing integration.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: The metrics established by the committee and college leadership will fulfill the “Check” category of the PDCA process. These metrics remain in development and will be arrived at through a collaborative process with feedback from across the college as well as the best practices benchmarking being conducted by the committee.