
Action Project

Title: Collaboration Council □ Establish a forum for shared decision making

Version: 3

Institution: Red Rocks Community College

Status: Active

Submitted: 2010-11-01

Category: 5-Leading and Communicating

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2009-01-01

Target completion date: 2011-09-01

Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

Improve the strategic planning process by increasing the engagement of college stakeholders in making recommendations and carrying out and measuring the outcomes of the decisions.

Reasons For Project

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

Red Rocks has launched several initiatives to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of students. While the short term results achieved have produced the highest enrollment growth of the 13 colleges in the Colorado Community College System for fall 2008, the initiatives are somewhat isolated and not well connected due to the lack of an overall institutional strategic planning process for quality improvement efforts.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

Convening a Collaboration Council comprised of representatives from students and all employee groups will improve internal communication so that all staff and faculty have a working knowledge of the programs and services available to students. The Collaboration Council will review and make recommendations concerning proposed initiatives and programs to ensure alignment with the mission and vision of the college.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

The Collaboration Council will review and make recommendations concerning proposed initiatives and programs to ensure alignment with the mission and vision of the college.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

During the first year, the Council will refine the data collection and analysis processes to monitor current programming and initiatives for use in establishing budgeting priorities. The Council will also develop the process by which proposed new initiatives will be considered as aligned with the mission and vision of the college. The second year will focus on the effectiveness of the Council in establishing data informed budget priorities.

Project Success Monitoring

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

The feedback from the college's System Portfolio to Category Five noted specific opportunities for

improvement in the planning process. These opportunities include developing systematic benchmarking to document measurable improvements as a result of quality improvement initiatives. The second opportunity suggests the need to clarify what communication and decision making processes are taking place with and between committees and councils of the college.

Project Outcome Measures

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

Qualitative measures will include the documentation of the benchmarking used to measure program improvements and new program start up. Quantitative measures will report on the effectiveness of the shared role of the Council in making budget priority recommendations to the college leadership using data driven decision making processes.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project

Collaboration Council met monthly during the year. Documentation regarding Roles and Responsibilities, outlining scope of authority, responsibilities, membership, and terms was drafted, presented and approved. The Noel-Levitz Satisfaction survey was administered during the year with results presented to Collaboration Council highlighting areas of crossover regarding strengths and challenges identified between the student and faculty/staff surveys. In reviewing data the Council recommended investigation into the identified challenges, primarily relating to student advising and financial aid, for developing into future action project items.

Council was also charged with surveying, through an internally developed Survey Monkey tool, faculty/staff opinion on whether faculty/staff only should be allowed to bring pets on-campus. The survey was administered through each member of the Council representing each employee constituency. Survey results were mixed, however a pilot policy allowing pets on campus was agreed upon and implemented summer 2010. Council will review results fall 2010.

A primary function of Council is to serve as a communication vehicle to constituency groups. A significant portion of each meeting was spent with representatives providing updates of interest to the entire institution. Following each meeting minutes were disbursed to the Council to forward, with or without additional comments, to their membership

Institution Involvement

Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project

Per the President, the Collaboration Council meets monthly and is considered a priority by members. Council membership consists of:

- The President of the college, who shall serve as the Chair
- Faculty Senate President and one full-time faculty representative elected by their peers through Faculty Senate
- RRCC's SFAC representative
- Two adjunct faculty members, preferably one each representing CTE programs and traditional transfer-oriented instruction
- Two full-time classified staff elected by their peers through Classified Council
- Two full-time admin/pro-tech staff elected by their peers through Admin/Tech Pro Council
- Two student body representatives which may be selected from The Student Voice and/or Phi Theta

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Also attending but in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity will be members of the President's Cabinet including the:

- Vice President of Instruction
- Vice President of Student Services
- Vice President of Administration
- Executive Director of Advancement and RRCC Foundation
- Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Education Center
- Director, Marketing and Communications

Additionally, the following may attend for informational purposes relating to accreditation and/or strategic planning:

- AQIP team/committee members
- Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
- Director of Grants and Planning

The Assistant to the President will be responsible for taking and distributing the minutes of each Collaboration Council meeting to the members, who will in turn distribute them, with comments, if necessary, to the constituency they represent.

All are welcome to attend the Collaboration Council meetings should their schedules permit and participate in the Public Comment portion of the meeting or at the invitation of a Council member.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The Council will take on a much larger role for the upcoming academic year. The College has completed a Master Plan in compliance with the state mandate for all public higher education institutes to complete this process every ten years. The Master Plan will provide space need and utilization recommendations to meet demands for the next decade.

The College has retained services to execute an "assumptive based futures" planning process, for which Collaboration Council will take primary responsibility. The facilitator will work with the Council to develop committee structures, means for data collection, and formulation of 4-6 separate "futures" that will be the basis for establishing three-to-five year long-range plans. As Colorado and the Colorado Community College System are faced with difficult legislative and funding issues, this process will allow the institution to plan, prepare and quickly implement action plans. The entire college staff will participate in a day-long retreat in October to begin the process. This will allow for all voices to be heard and all concerns/thoughts to be addressed.

Following the day-long retreat, the Council and any subcommittees created for the process will be charged with creating the long-range plan that will also coordinate with AQIP and action project needs, priorities established for Red Rocks through the Colorado Community College System and Colorado Department of Higher Education, and the Master Plan, so that these separate processes are working in concert toward institutional excellence.

Resulting Effective Practices

Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project

The Role and Responsibilities document could be easily adapted/modified by other institutions interested in a shared governance type of structure. It outlines degrees of influence – determinative, Collaborative, and/or advisory – the Council and/or individual members will have in the decision making process, means of communication, membership, and terms. Additionally, it addresses what types of decisions – curriculum, personnel (salary, benefits, reassignments), and individual division/department budgets – that Council will not be involved with.

The Council is also charged with assisting in the development of budget priorities for the institution annually. Budget presentations are included in Council meetings, but are most often informative in nature instead of decisive. Due to the funding crisis faced by the nation and state of Colorado for the past two years, and the forecasted continuation of said crisis, the Council has not had the opportunity to fully explore this piece of its responsibilities.

Project Challenges

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when

Defining membership, terms and communication methods was a significant step for Council this past year. The next challenge – making the Collaboration Council more than a communication device – will be addressed this coming academic year with the planning process.

Due to the budget issues and the enormous enrollment increases the institution has experienced this past year, the Council has served primarily as a reporting forum for the various constituencies represented. Actual decision making has been limited to policies with no budget impact, such as the implemented Pet Policy. The execution of the planning process and subsequent plan, will allow Collaboration Council the opportunity to steer the college based upon collective input from all constituencies.

Any budgetary influence the Council may have will be determined primarily on the results of several ballot initiatives in the November elections and whether there will be a significant rescission of general fund allocation. All colleges in the CCCS have been instructed to prepare for a fifty percent general fund cut for FY11. Collaboration Council will be instrumental in determining where those funds will come from, should this worst case scenario happen.
