Action Project

Title:	Tutors without Borders		
Version:	2		

Institution:	Red Rocks Community College	**Status:**	Completed
Submitted:	2009-11-24	**Category:**	1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

> Planned project kickoff date: 2006-08-01
> Target completion date: 2007-08-01
> Actual completion date:

Project Detail

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

> Improve the success measured by passing grades and retention of students by adding supplemental teaching activities of tutoring in the classrooms and tutoring sessions held in highly trafficked student areas on campus.

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

> The Strategic Planning Process for the Colorado Community College System has developed three key criteria to measure college performance. Improving student retention is one of these criteria. For the past two years the student population of Red Rocks Community College has been comprised of 50 percent first generation students, which can be a contributing factor to students becoming frustrated with their college experience resulting in a higher drop out rate for these students. The college is launching a systemic review of our learning support programs to determine if the activities conducted by these programs are being used effectively by first generation students as well as other categories of students that may also be at risk for failure. Three years of survey data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement between 2003 and 2005 indicates that less than 20% of responding students access learning support services. The fall to fall retention rate for first time degree seeking students is 64.3%. These data can be interpreted to indicate a gap in that not all students that could potentially benefit from supplemental teaching services are accessing those resources.

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

> The Learning and Resource Center which houses the majority of student support services that includes academic testing, assessment, services for special populations, the writing and math centers and tutoring are the primary institutional stakeholders in the process of reviewing the learning support services currently offered and as a result of those analyses developing activities such as Tutors without Borders to improve student outcomes.

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

> Currently students must receive a referral from their instructor to access one-one tutoring in the Learning and Resource Center. Students may be hesitant to request this assistance, also as a commuter campus that caters primarily to working students finding time outside of class to be on campus to attend tutoring sessions during scheduled hours is problematic. Tutoring services are available on line 24-7 however for students struggling

with basic developmental skills online tutoring may not be the most appropriate option. Tutors without Borders partners tutors with faculty to bring tutoring services into the classroom. Drop in tutoring sessions are held as part of Tutors without Borders on a regular schedule in the cafeteria, student lounge and other areas across the campus.

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

The Tutors without Borders activities will be monitored over one full academic year. We will then evaluate which strategies should be integrated into standard operating procedures of the college.

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

Satisfaction surveys of students and instructors and tracking student success and retention over time will be the primary means of monitoring.

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

Student and faculty surveys will be used to indicate satisfaction which will be measured for students by improved understanding of material. Faculty measurement of satisfaction will note indicators of improvement on home work and classroom participation from students that are accessing tutoring resources. A representative sample of students accessing the Tutors without Borders will be tracked to measure course completion/passing rates and retention.

Annual Update

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

Since our last update of September, 2007, 7 faculty teaching a total of 12 classes have requested and received tutors in their classrooms as part of the Tutors Without Borders Action Project (TWB). Participating faculty are expected to document and report on their experience of using tutors in the classroom as part of the effort to measure the effectiveness of the action project. Faculty may choose the method in which to evaluate the impact of the tutors on student learning. Examples have included faculty that kept journals to note significant observations. A math tutor was requested by the Heating and Ventilation (HVA) instructor to assist students with applying math concepts required to calibrate the heating units. The class has historically tracked a 20-25 percent drop out rate. Adding a math tutor to the course resulted in ALL students that enrolled in the class completing the course during the spring, 2008 term. A survey administered to students participating in classrooms with tutors was overwhelming positive with all respondents indicating high satisfaction with the availability and helpfulness of the tutors. As TWB has become part of the regular tutoring support, students are engaged directly in the classroom with the full range of learning support services offered by the College. The classroom tutor acts as a liaison with the students in the classroom by introducing students to the full resources of the Learning and Resource Center (LaRC) and Student Life. Students are introduced to the Writing and Math Centers in the LaRC much earlier in the semester. Student Life supports an extension of the TWB by offering Study Group Central. Study Group Central provides space and snacks for students to continue working with their classroom tutor outside of class.

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

In an effort to gain an objective perspective of the effectiveness of the action projects, task forces were formed fall, 2007 from faculty and staff that had no previous involvement with the development or implementation of the projects. The make up of the task forces were intentionally designed to include staff from outside of instruction. The task force charged with evaluating the TWB conducted interviews with students and faculty that had used tutors in the classroom. Survey data collected from students and faculty was analyzed. The TWB task force presented their findings and recommendations at the All College meeting held in April, 2008. The recommendations included adopting the TWB action project with some modifications that included prioritizing providing tutors in developmental classes and expanding the communication of the availability of tutors to come into the classroom.

The Tutors Without Borders (TWB) Action Project has developed processes that have been integrated as part of the regular operation of the Learning and Support Resource Center's tutoring support. These processes include the recruitment and training of tutors to work in the classrooms, training for faculty on how to incorporate a tutor in the classroom, and developing an online request form to expedite the matching of faculty with classroom tutors. As part of the planned faculty release to conduct research of teaching and learning outcomes (see Assessment of Student Learning Action Project) the research is expected to include an in-depth analysis of the delivery of developmental education for students scoring below the mandatory placement scores to enroll in college level math and English. It is expected that tutoring strategies will be influenced by the findings of the research and will be incorporated in the TWB Action Project. Effective fall, 2008 a policy change of the Colorado Community College System, has implemented student fees in all math and English courses of $5.25 per credit hour to expand tutoring support for developmental math and English courses. The new revenue will be used fund additional tutoring and add a full time position to the Learning and Resource Center. One of the responsibilities of the new position will be to formalize the data collection and analysis of tutoring practices. These data will continue to be used to modify the tutoring practices as part of the college's commitment to continual quality improvement of student learning.

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

Faculty may request tutors to provide a range of services. Tutors are available to assist with specific classroom projects such as a research paper, or a discipline specific tutor such as a math tutor may be requested to assist in the application of math concepts in a non-math class such as the earlier example described in HVA. A tutor may also be requested to present on a specific topic such as scientific notation. Tutors working the classroom are compensated for their time based on the tutor's education level, experience, and the level of professional tutoring training the tutor has completed. As part of new faculty orientation, faculty members are encouraged to request a tutor to come into the classroom to describe the learning supports available across the campus. A Learning and Support Services map with common branding placed across the campus is planned to help students navigate the available learning resources available across the institution.

Project Challenges
What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project

We have yet to develop a systematic way to recruit tutors. Faculty are encouraged to refer advanced students interested in working as tutors. We are exploring more formal communication strategies that will promote tutoring opportunities to students that will engage both instruction and student government through Student Life. Efforts are also continuing to develop to encourage and support part time faculty in using tutors in the classroom.