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## Action Project

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**Title:** Improve the Retention of a Diverse Campus Population  
**Version:** 3

**Institution:** Red Rocks Community College                      **Status:** Active  
**Submitted:** 2010-11-01                                                      **Category:** 4-Valuing People

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### 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

RRCC values and respect the inherent differences of our faculty, staff and students. In order that our educational programs, services and activities reflect this commitment, we propose to implement a plan to understand the underlying barriers in the college culture and identify those strategies that will lead to the feeling of inclusiveness and support.

#### 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

Enrollment of students with different ethnic backgrounds has increased as a result of outreach efforts throughout the college's service area. We have identified a need to evaluate the inclusiveness of the campus culture as a priority to meet the needs of our changing student population.

#### Organizational Areas Affected

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

The college's Diversity Council is comprised of faculty and staff from multiple departments. The Diversity Council has proposed implementing strategies to increase retention of diverse populations, and has concluded that to truly infuse diversity into the campus culture, the entire college community must be engaged.

#### Key Organizational Process(es)

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

The Diversity Council's mission states "We will value and respect our inherent differences and endeavor to learn from each other. Our educational programs, services and activities will reflect this commitment to diversity." Initially, surveys and focus groups will be used to identify and prioritize concerns. However, to truly meet the objective of a welcoming campus environment, ultimately all key organizational processes will be impacted.

#### 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, initial activities will include a employee and student climate survey resulting in an environmental scan of our campus, our communication, and our recruitment of employees and students. The data from the survey will be used to develop and prioritize action plans to include curriculum adaptations, diversity training, and recruitment and retention practices of students and employees. The second year will be focused in implementing the action plans and analyzing results of the quality improvement efforts.

## Project Success Monitoring

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

Year one will focus in collection and analysis of the environmental scanning process. Year two will document the implementation of the action plans developed in response to the data analysis from the environmental scanning.

## 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 focus groups will assist in identifying benchmarks that will be used to measure the impact of the implementation of the action plans. In addition to quantitative measures of student retention, qualitative measures will include annual climate surveys.

## Annual Update

### Project Accomplishments and Status

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

The Diversity Action Project Committee designed a Diversity Climate Survey which was administered to Faculty and Staff during the All College Meeting on January 11, 2010. It was also administered to a sampling of students during the Spring 2010 semester on both campuses. The Institutional Research office analyzed the results and presented them to the Diversity Action Project Committee near the end of the spring semester. The results were also disseminated to all faculty and staff via email.

The survey efforts resulted in 168 Faculty and Staff completing the survey as well as 1,072 students. Overall, 87% of Faculty and Staff feel that RRCC has an inclusive environment along with 79% of students feeling the same way. Initial findings pointed to two areas that may need addressing: discrimination on campus and visible leadership in diversity. We would like to investigate these areas further.

In the week prior to Fall 2010 classes starting ("work week") next steps for this action project were discussed. These next steps will continue to be developed over the course of the fall semester. In the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle this project appears to be in the Check stage.

## Institution Involvement

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

The project has been kept on the institution's priority list by several dedicated champions on the Diversity Action Project Committee. The Committee held regular meetings to ensure project progress was on track and continued to define and work toward specific goals, such as the creation, distribution, and analysis of the Diversity Climate Survey. The institution has involved people in work on this Action Project by soliciting feedback from Faculty, Staff, and Students regarding diversity on campus via the Diversity Climate Survey. Importance of the project has been demonstrated by administering the survey to Faculty and Staff during the All College Meeting at the beginning of the Spring 2010 semester as well as sharing the results of the survey with Faculty and Staff via email and presenting the results at different constituency meetings. However, there are still some constituencies that need to be visited. Importance of the project was also demonstrated by the faculty that volunteered to administer the survey to students in their classes. The results will be shared with Student Voice in the Fall 2010 semester.

## Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

At this point in time planning about the critical next steps is a bit vague. The planning of the next steps of this action project was designed to be done in the Fall 2010 semester. Initial recommendations resulting from the meeting during "work week" included getting a member of the college leadership involved with the Diversity Action Project Committee, regular diversity training through the human resources department, cataloging the activities that different areas are doing regarding diversity, institutionalizing diversity by creating a Diversity Resource Center or by institutionalizing the GLBT Resource Center and Safe Zones (that

is make it part of a job description), and advertise proper channels for students' concerns regarding issues mentioned in the Diversity Climate Survey.

### Resulting Effective Practices

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

RRCC could certainly entertain discussions with other organizations regarding the process of developing, administering, analyzing, and reporting the Diversity Climate Survey tool. The process developed through the implementation of this action project can be adopted by other colleges interested in increasing stakeholder participation. The key components of the process were developing a survey to gather data, administering that survey to a broad cross section of stakeholders, and disseminating the results back to the stakeholders. Unique to this project was the development of the survey. After extensive research by the Diversity Action Project Committee to find a national survey regarding diversity that would meet the needs of this project, it was determined that there was a lack of existing tools. Once the survey was developed, the Committee identified the key stakeholders on campus as students, faculty, and staff. Student input was solicited with cooperation from faculty during classes while faculty and staff input was collected during an "All College" meeting where faculty and staff are expected to attend. With support from the Institutional Research Office, the surveys were compiled and results were then shared with the students, faculty and staff during constituency meetings held on campus and via email.

### 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

Currently the Diversity Action Project Committee is a small yet very passionate group that would like to see grass roots efforts to promote awareness and acceptance of diversity become institutionalized. There is concern that if certain members of this group didn't do this work it wouldn't be done. The current fiscal climate poses challenges to this effort. Another challenge facing this Action Project is that the Director of Human Resources, a member of the Diversity Action Project Committee, has recently accepted a position at another organization. Also, the magnitude of this project suggests that it will need to be ongoing outside the timeline of an AQIP action project.

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