
Action Project

Title: Expand our presence into the Mountain Communities

Version: 2

Institution: Red Rocks Community College

Status: Completed

Submitted: 2010-03-15

Category: 9-Building Collaborative Relationships

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2009-04-01

Target completion date: 2011-09-01

Actual completion date: 2010-12-21

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

RRCC has several Mountain Communities within our service area whose only access to post secondary education requires traveling. We propose to survey the communities to determine interest and needs and to design and implement a plan to bring educational opportunities to these communities.

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

Representative from the local governments and school districts have approached the college. They are interested in revitalizing their communities and have identified a lack of educational opportunities for their constituents as a barrier to their goals.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

The Rocky Mountain Education Center (RMEC) is the college's non-credit continuing education department. RMEC will work closely with Instruction to design a survey for the mountain communities that assesses their interest and willingness to support a RRCC presence. Implementation of classes and programs resulting from community interest will involve the entire college.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

To fully serve the needs of our Mountain communities we will need to provide services to students that while limited are similar to those of our main campus. The organizational processes of the Lakewood campuses will need to be expanded to reflect additional locations. This will involve all departments 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 initial phase of this program we will be surveying the local mountain community populations and determining what actions will fit the needs of each of communities and the needs of the college. RRCC will then provide some initial course offerings to one or more of the local communities based on the results of the survey. The second year of the program will be focused determining our success of the program and the ability to continue and hopefully expand our presence in the communities.

Project Success Monitoring

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

Year one will focus on surveying the local Mountain communities and analyzing their interest programs. In

year two we will offer classes and monitor enrollment, retention and student satisfaction.

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

Continued successful course offerings will be used to measure the success of this action project. We will actively engage Mountain community leaders in discussions involving the vision and direction of the project.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

Efforts to offer Small Business Management courses in Park County were not successful. Only six students enrolled in the course, and the instructor did not submit grades until the VP of Instruction intervened. While the school and county administration in Park County felt they had a sense of what the community wanted, we learned it is best to go directly to the citizens of the communities inquiring about additional locally based course options.

Other efforts included a Mountain Community Survey to the residents of Clear Creek County in the Spring of 2010. Institutional Research analyzed the results which were sent to the President's Cabinet. The survey resulted in 238 respondents of which 96% indicated they would be interested in taking RRCC courses if they were available in their local community. More specifically; 46.5% expressed interest in Languages (Spanish, French, etc.), 42.6% in Art, (painting, poetry, etc.), 40% in Computer soft skills, and 34.8% in Small Business Management. A meeting was held with the former Superintendent, the new Superintendent and the County Commissioner. Based on the survey results it was decided in this meeting that Clear Creek County residents were more interested in non-credit/continuing education coursework in the areas of Small Business Management, Art, Computers, and Spanish rather than credit/undergraduate coursework.

Institution Involvement

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

RRCC involved Clear Creek School District's Superintendent early in the process of developing the Mountain Community survey and continued to work with the district's personnel to distribute the survey. One of the county commissioners was also brought in early in the process. Through these channels RRCC effectively surveyed the Clear Creek County community regarding their interest in RRCC courses as well as potential sites to hold the courses. The survey was distributed by the community through the community's accepted communication channels. Furthermore, by discussing the survey results with the former Superintendent, the new Superintendent, and the County Commissioner; RRCC was able to make more appropriate interpretations about the survey data that was collected.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

In the Fall 2010 semester RRCC will offer non-credit courses through the Rocky Mountain Education Center, RRCC's non-credit division, in Small Business Management, Art, Introduction to Computers, and Conversational Spanish. The course will be held at Clear Creek High School in Evergreen, CO during the evening in the months of September and October. The critical next steps will be to evaluate the success of the non-credit course offerings at Clear Creek High School after the fall semester and determine whether or not it is a worthwhile venture for both the Clear Creek County community and RRCC.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

The Clear Creek County community was very invested in conducting the Mountain Community Survey. The Mountain Community Survey was distributed by the community through their accepted communication channels. It was available online through the school district's website as well as many of the school's websites; it was also distributed in local newspapers and direct mailings. The community also covered part of the costs a direct mailing and newspaper inserts of the survey.

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

Challenges with offering an undergraduate Small Business Management course in Park County arose due to limited enrollment and struggle to get grades in. These challenges helped shape the approach to offer non-credit course work in the Fall 2010 Clear Creek County pilot.

Annual Update

Reason for completion

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

RRCC has completed the project's objective; to investigate opportunities and community interest in RRCC programs.

Success Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

The successful aspects of this action project were the community interest surveys, the relationships built within the counties, and offering non-credit courses. Community interest surveys were conducted, then RRCC responded to those surveys by offering classes in both Park and Clear Creek counties. Offering non-credit classes in Clear Creek County was more successful than credit classes in Park County.

Unsuccessful Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

Managing class offerings at distant sites proved to be difficult. We had trouble getting the PT instructors to complete application packets so they could get paid. We also had problems getting PT instructors to give us grades for the credit bearing class.
