The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Red Rocks Community College

Project Details			
Title	First Year Student Experience	**Status**	ACTIVE
Category	2 - Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs	**Updated**	
Timeline		**Reviewed**	
Planned Project Kickoff	12-01-2015	**Created**	11-17-2015
Target Completion	11-23-2017	**Version**	1

1:   PROJECT SUMMARY

A: This project will expand First Year Experience to include more class sections, workshops, mentor programs, summer bridge, and transfer classes. The project will streamline current programing done in separate departments and bring them together under one umbrella. This project is designed to improve student success and college readiness of first time college students. The organizational processes that this action will affect will be the creation of new class offerings, learning communities, the registration process when the class becomes mandatory, the college culture as a whole, and the continued and expanded collaboration of the two main areas involved: Instructional Services and Student Success.

2:   PROJECT RATIONALE

A: We are initiating this project now because the current structure of FYE will not sustain our expansion goals. Creating this project allows greater resources to be utilized across campus folding in other departments and divisions to allow for campus wide participation in the program. We have piloted First Year Experience courses the last few semesters and are ready to scale up. The goals of First Year Experience align with those of our strategic plan and support the focus on retention and completion. The programing of First Year Experience directly supports the college's strategic plan touching 3 of the four main goals:

Student Success: Increasing remedial completion, improving retention and completion rates, and developing innovative academic programing.
Community Engagement: Increasing attainment for underserved students, lowering student debt load and defaults rates.
Culture of Inquiry & Evidence: Establish clear pathways to completion, develop career planning and experiential education.

Students taking the First Year Experience course and participating in continued First Year Experience programing will be more equipped to know their college and career path, become aware of financial aid implications and financial management, create community among peers, faculty and staff, become involved more on campus, leading students to retain, persist, and complete both developmental and college level coursework at higher rates.

3:   PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: Goals:

1. Assist first time/full time degree seeking college students in transitioning from high school to college or the work force into college through a focus on self-discovery and mastering key personal development skills.
2. Increase retention in first time/full-time degree seeking students.
3. Expand the offerings of such programing to include more departments and streamline already developed programs.
4. Make First Year Experience mandatory for all first time/full time RRCC students.

Deliverables:

1. Increased course offerings
2. Learning communities
3. Higher retention rates
4. Higher completion rates
5. Service learning activities
6. Expanded workshops on test anxiety, study skill and time management

7. Expanded peer mentor program
8. On-line support system (YODAA)
9. Summer bridge programing

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: Key groups that will collaborate to expand and develop First Year Experience will be Student Outreach and Retention, Tutoring, Connect to Success, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, Admissions, Career Services, Foundation, Diversity and Inclusion, Student Life, TRIO, Instructional Deans, and key faculty (yet to be named) within instructional services. A committee will be formed with key players to develop and outline the big plan and then delegations from the committee will work together to develop and expand First Year Experience programing. This expansion will examine/develop/create high impact practices publicized by the National Resource Center on First Year Experience such as collaborative assignments and projects, diversity and global learning, writing intensive courses, service-learning opportunities, learning communities and common reading experiences.*

 *__National Research and Trends on High Impact Practices in the First-Year Seminar__
Jennifer Keup 2014 Annual Meeting of AAC&U Washington, DC
http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/research_presentations/files/2014/NSFYS%20&%20HIPs_findings_AAC&U%202014.pdf

5: PROJECT CONTROL

A: This project will use a number of metrics to monitor progress and success.
1. Student course evaluations – pre and post evaluation
2. Fall to Fall retention rates
3. Student Completion/transfer rates
4. Increased enrollment in the FYE classes
5. Student course evaluations
6. Direct assessment of students learning outcomes
7. Focus groups with instructors
8. Program review
9. Focus groups with students
10. Individual interviews with instructors
11. Individual interviews with students

A time line of certain key goals and developments will be initiated to track progress and push movement of the overall goals.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: Further examination will need to happen concerning if/when/how the First Year Experience class will become mandatory. This would include looking into Banner capabilities and buy-in of instruction for co-requisites on classes. Other challenges may include the magnitude of the project with so many stakeholders involved that agreement/consensus on what needs to be developed will be delayed or thwarted by conflicting agendas and desires.

7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A: As the RRCC service area and enrollment patterns have changed the need for increasing college readiness of our students has increased. First generation, low income and disabled students have grown. The First Year Experience will provide an essential program for addressing the needs of our increasingly diverse and at-risk students, and help them to achieve their goals.