
Action Project

Institution: Lake Superior College
Submitted: 2008-01-31 **Contact:** Sue Stenerson
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 10-01-2007

Target completion date: 05-01-2009

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Student Engagement Day

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

To establish a day each semester that gives the entire campus community an opportunity to connect with each other in ways that will further individual growth both personally and professionally.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. 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: _

This project relates directly to Category 1 -- Helping Students Learn. The LSC student engagement days will be college community events designed to support and celebrate student success. This project focuses on the College's priority to improve our persistence and retention rates for fall to fall through to graduation. The project received initial support through an internal college Innovation Grant.

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

Academic Affairs and Student Services are the units most impacted by the project and are also the two units most involved in the development and implementation.

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

Instruction, counseling and advising

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

During the first year of the project, the team will seek the involvement of many constituencies on campus in planning for the event. Successful implementation is a major undertaking and must involve many on campus as well as the greater Duluth community. The first event will be held during fall semester of fy2009. The evaluations will guide the needed changes for the spring event.

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

A timeline will establish milestones against which we will gauge our progress. Much of the planning will necessarily be completed prior to the summer break.

I. 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:

In the short term, the outcomes we will strive for are at least 66% student participation in the activities

during the Fall term and 75% participation during the spring term. Satisfaction surveys will demonstrate participant satisfaction of at least 2.5 on a 4-point scale. In the long term, we hope to be able to tie participation to an increase in persistence and retention.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

Century College, an AQIP institution in White Bear Lake, MN, has successfully implemented their own student success days and have offered assistance and guidance in the development of our student engagement day.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

Contact Name: Paula Young, Learning Center Director

Email: youngpa@lsc.edu

Phone: (218) 733-7671 Ext.

Annual Update: 2008-08-05

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

The following activities were completed this year: Identified dates for the Student Success Day, which required discussion and compromise on the academic calendar approved by the faculty union; Established a revised academic calendar to include two Student Success Days; Created a framework for the days; Visited Century College during their student success day and reviewed best practices; Established a media plan and announced the event to the college community; Created an event proposal form; and Established a statement for inclusion on course syllabi.

Review (09-20-08):

Lake Superior College should be commended for thoughtfully embarking on this focused effort, and for benchmarking and collaborating with a nearby institution that has found success through a similar effort. The College appears to be well poised for a successful beginning. By exhibiting focus, collaboration and involvement of key constituents, LSC has exhibited several of the key principles of high performance organizations. This project is well-grounded in helping students learn (AQIP Category 1).

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

During the development of the framework for the day, faculty and student focus groups were held, the topic was discussed during shared governance meetings, the team presented the framework during the opening faculty day of spring term 2008 and the new calendar was widely distributed. Team members created updates and bulletins on progress during the latter half of the spring term.

Review (09-20-08):

From a communication standpoint (AQIP Category 5), the College appears to have been intentional and thoughtful about communicating what Student Engagement Day is. Aside from a statement on syllabi and their engagement in initial discussions, it is not clear that faculty members are intricately involved in the operational aspects of making Student Engagement Day a success (1P4, 4P9). Could this initiative be related to faculty and staff professional goals and evaluations (4P10, 4P11)? See "Partnerships to Connect In- and Out-of-Class Experiences" by S. Westfall in *New Directions for Student Services* n. 87, 1999.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

At the close of the spring term, the team distributed the session request proposal to all on campus. The next steps will be to collect and schedule the sessions, continue the update bulletins, develop a web page for Student Success Day, secure a keynote speaker and solidify the agenda, and develop the registration

process, posters and publicity.

Review (09-20-08):

Lake Superior College should be commended for its foresight, planning and communication efforts. The established timeline and marketing plans are evident. How will the College use data and other results from Student Engagement Day to guide continuing efforts? In other words, the College must take great care to ensure that outcomes measured (7R2) relate back to the College's initially stated goal: student persistence and retention. By taking time to plan evaluation of this effort in advance, Lake Superior College will remain focused on continuous quality improvement (AQIP Category 8) related to the initial goal.

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

The site visit to Century College during their Student Success Day was invaluable in developing our plan and identifying gaps we would like to avoid. The update bulletins have also been an effective practice.

Review (09-20-08):

See response to Item A. Benchmarking with another institution that has experience with Student Engagement Day activities demonstrates a great deal of care, foresight and appreciation for collaborative relationships (9P6).

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

There are many challenges associated with planning this event and anticipating involvement without ever having gone through it. The team identified the following: Attempting to estimate participation of both students and session presenters; Planning logistics; Clarifying expectations of students for the day; Timeliness; Budget; and finally Sustainability.

Review (09-20-08):

Use the SMART formula for goal setting (goals should be sustainable, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound). The College can capitalize on its relationship with Century College to anticipate and plan for surprises (8P6). Again, faculty involvement is the key to high participation in extracurricular endeavors such as Student Engagement Day. If there are not faculty leaders on the implementation team for this event, the College would be wise to enlist help from such individuals quickly (9P7, 5P7, 5P9, 4R3).

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-20-08):

Lake Superior College is making good progress thus far. Stay focused on several core values: measuring effectiveness (AQIP Category 7), accountability for project success among faculty and other internal constituents (4P10, 4P11), and using the opportunity to build and strengthen collaborative relationships with employees, students and the local community (AQIP Category 9). 9827