

# Retention Action Project

## The Action Project Commitment

Institution: Lakeland Community College

Planned Project Kickoff Date: April 2009

Target Project Completion Date: May 2010

Actual Project Completion Date:

A. Action Project Title:

Improving Student Retention

B. Action Project's Goal:

To develop a plan that will improve student retention and degree attainment.

C. AQIP Category:

Helping Students Learn and Understanding Students' Needs

D. Rationale for Action Project:

Our task is to create a retention plan that, when implemented, will improve student retention and degree attainment. College employees indicated a strong interest in student retention during Conversation Day and in a vote during Fall semester 2008. Faculty are aware that students do not always make steady progress toward their academic goals and often fail to complete courses even when earning satisfactory grades overall. Recognizing that community college students have significant risk factors, we believe that closer contact and communication with students will foster higher retention and success rates for Lakeland's students.

E. Organizational areas impacted by this Action Project:

The areas impacted by this Action Project include: Admissions, Financial Aid, Counseling, Registration, Learning Center, Faculty, Student Development, Enrollment Management Committee, Academic and Support Departments.

F. Key processes that will improve due to this Action Project:

Student intake, identification of goals and monitoring of achievement;

Communication between student support areas and students;

Increasing the use of student email;

Improving the dissemination of information to students;

Improving intervention with at-risk students;

Encouraging the development of student cohorts and learning communities.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project.

The Retention Action Project team will explore a variety of resources that can be employed to increase student retention. In some cases, this will mean promoting services currently available to students. We will also work on organizing efforts to make those services more accessible to students. Identification of the student's personal goals for their experience at Lakeland will assist the college in tailoring learning and related services to student needs.

H. Plans to monitor and communicate progress related to the Action Project

Our goal is to mobilize the campus community to make student retention a priority. The Action Project will be explained on Lakeland's AQIP webpage and in our ePost newsletter, and regular updates will be provided to the Board of Trustees, the Vice President's Academic Advisory Council (VPAAC), department chairs at their semi-annual meetings, faculty at division meetings and the Planning Advisory Council (PAC). We will also report at the President's Coffees (held monthly) and in the Lakelander (student newspaper) as well as by employee e-mail.

I. Overall outcome measures of this Action Project:

We will produce and distribute a retention plan to the college. It will contain details of retention initiatives with appropriate metrics for each. We will monitor degree and course completion rates to gauge the success of this project. Because graduation rates for community colleges are monitored over three-year intervals, we will also monitor persistence in successive semesters as well as graduation rates since persistence will result in eventual degree and certificate attainment.

J. Strategies for maintaining organization enthusiasm for this Action Project:

Student success stories

Ongoing communication

Opportunities for involvement of faculty, staff and peer mentors

Announcement of improved persistence and graduation rates

K. Project leaders:

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