

## AQIP ACTION PROJECT HLC Review, 2004

**TITLE: Title: *Increase access and opportunity for underserved students***

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

You have made an excellent start on processes and activities that will support your stated goal to “increase access and opportunity for underserved students”. You have put into place multiple means of recruiting potential students from many populations currently under-represented in the IHCC student population – including high school students, minorities/immigrants, students seeking careers that are nontraditional for their gender, etc. You are making an intentional effort to build lines of communication with several types of groups within your service area. It is clear that you are making a serious effort to understand your students’ and other stakeholders’ needs (AQIP criterion 3). You have developed a Diversity Plan through input from a team consisting of members from various campus constituencies (showing the AQIP principle of collaboration), and have followed this up by consolidating implementation of various related activities and processes into a newly-created Multicultural Affairs office (demonstrating sensitivity to AQIP criterion 5: Leading and Communicating). You have documented progress in several activities related to your recruiting process. You have also mentioned several initiatives that are ongoing in the areas of program development (ELL) and academic support (counseling/study skills). These are all appropriate to your stated goals, and demonstrate systems-type thinking at the institutional level. An area that your update did not mention much was how you intend to/are measuring the qualitative impact of your many additions and improvements on recruitment or retention of the targeted populations. You did mention keeping track of a retention rate in your stretch target, but nothing was said about this in your update. When you look at all 9 AQIP criteria, criterion 7: measuring effectiveness is the underpinning that holds everything else together. I came across a good article recently that addresses the importance of measurement at all stages of the change process. This article is by Judith A. Hale, and was published in July, 2004. You can access this article through the American Productivity and Quality Center website ([www.apqc.org](http://www.apqc.org)) as a free white paper.

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

You have involved staff, faculty, administrators, and students in various aspects of this action project. You apparently understand the need to adhere to the AQIP principle of collaboration. Broad-based involvement such as you have achieved also has the added benefit of increasing level of buy-in to the change process. I would suggest that the Action Project Committee use someone who functions in an institutional research capacity (or has expertise in the area of quantitative measurement) as a resource if not a standing member. This type of person would ensure that meaningful and reliable measurements are taken to assess the impact of change within the context of this action project. Without measurement, the “check” part of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (also known as the Shewhart or Deming cycle) will be largely ineffective – which jeopardizes the appropriateness of the decisions implemented in the “act” part of the cycle. Also, with this many people involved in the action project, you want to make sure that effective communication/information dissemination processes are in place. Some institutions utilize a shared network drive to provide this broad-based access to activities and work products of the action project. Publicize and celebrate your successes!

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

Your planned next steps for this action project are designed to reach most the Performance Targets that you have defined for Year 2. The one exception that I see to the above statement is in regards to meeting specific demographic targets. Since these demographic targets were not explicitly discussed in this update, you may need to place more emphasis on this portion of the implementation plan for this action project. This may be possible through the services of the institutional researcher projected to be hired in Year 2.

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

The fact that you have created opportunities to showcase your campus to a variety of external stakeholders is a significant success. This could present good PR opportunities as well. Having a closer connection to those you aspire to serve can only benefit your ability to be responsive to their changing needs (supporting the AQIP principle of Agility).

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

Perhaps instructional space could be freed up to house some of the College Center functions. Some institutions have made agreements with high school districts, churches, and community centers in their service area whereby community facilities are made available for college evening/weekend use. Besides increasing available space for the college, it has the added advantage of providing services in the local community. You may want to explore the possibility of housing some of the proposed ESL classes in community-based locations as well. Another way that some institutions have maximized limited space/slowed the need for additional space to support the needs of their current/prospective student body is by placing a segment of their services online (parts of counseling, library, etc).