

## **Action Project Update, 2006**

Action Project: Recruitment and Retention of Underserved Populations

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

This was a year of sustaining and continued integration of marketing efforts and a year to move English for Academic Purposes planning out of the Action Project and into its own projects.

Marketing: Current integrated activities include (1) 25 targeted diverse population high school and 11 public community event visits; (2) the "Do the Unexpected" career week focusing on nontraditional careers as well as six info meetings on specific career areas, and (3) the Minnesota Financial Aid Counseling Association sponsored elementary school visit day for inner city schools (usually 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> graders). This year's added activities expanded the IHCC outreach. These added activities include (1) four additional visits to high school ELL classes; (2) two high school group visits to campus that involved high school ELL classes; (3) special information meeting for Mexican immigrants and children of immigrants organized with the new Mexican Consulate office and their community outreach staff (hosted and organized by IHCC, done with Metropolitan State and Minneapolis College); "College Is For You" information night with promotion directed specifically to first-generation potential students.

English for Academic Purposes: The first EAP Learning Community was run in Spring 2006 with Communication, Reading, and Outdoor Experience courses forming the academic core of activities.

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

Marketing and Communication: Three admissions representatives spent approximately 800 hours of contact time in recruitment of underrepresented populations through event attendance, group visits to campus, visits to high schools, and community contacts. The Director of Multicultural Affairs participated in outreach events and sustained the diversity initiatives developed over the prior two years. The Director of Student Life collaborated with the Director of Multicultural Affairs on a wide range of initiatives, including fostering diversity activities through the initiation of a Safe Place Program and growth of multi-cultural club programming,

English for Academic Purposes: The EAP Learning Community involved faculty across disciplines. Also, extensive planning was done for the restructuring and mission revision of the existing Learning Center. This planning involved 21 faculty members, staff, and administrators as well as a Learning Center Director from a peer institution. Planning activities for the teaching-and-learning future of the EAP initiative involved 31 faculty members, staff, and administrators. In addition, the College hosted a group of cabinet-level government officials from Somalia as part of its sister college initiative.

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

Marketing and Communication: The campus visit group model continues to be a very effective tool, and we project 25 to 30 such group visits this year. All activities and events developed during the three years of project are planned to continue. We will continue developing strategies

for promotion of career degrees and also degree completion, both in communications and in personal contact whether with special information meetings or presentations in schools or the community.

English for Academic Purposes/Underrepresented Populations: This Fall term the Learning Communities have grown to four in number and more broadly target first generation/underrepresented students. They are the center of a \$100,000 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities first generation grant and of an Action Project for 2006-09. In addition, the College is focusing on developing an innovative, best-practices Learning Center, which will provide, among other things, Learning Community tutoring and professional development for EAP instruction strategies in every classroom. This aspect of retaining the underrepresented is the core of foundation grant funding totaling \$400,000.

The current addition and renovation of the College Center will provide space and a statewide Awards for Excellence initiative is providing financial resources for student life initiatives and advising/learning programming that will make Inver Hills a more welcoming place for underrepresented students. A Meditation Room, an Adult Learner Center, Returning Veterans Programming, a Lifelong Learning Program, and the Learning Communities/first generation students initiative will all have new space and programming.

This action project will be retired following this review cycle. Its activities will be sustained and new and/or expanded activities will be developed, some through grant initiatives, others through new AQIP Action Projects.

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

Marketing and Communications: Campus visit groups that engage secondary school students actively continue to be very effective and we have grown these in number and scope of audiences. Messages have been adapted and more than ever are emphasizing college access and affordability to these audiences.

English for Academic Purposes/First Generation Students: The groundwork laid by this project has been used to document Inver Hills’s readiness to take on larger projects in its successful applications for grant funding from the State and from private foundations.

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

Marketing and Communications: Staff probably are extended as far as is practical in these focused opportunities given other responsibilities (regular campus visits, appointments, prospect/applicant follow-up, staffing for walk-in’s, orientation planning and participation). But we hope to engage other college personnel in staffing events and assisting us. Support staff and student help should be an additional resource for marketing/recruiting since we gain some assistance with the merger with the Information Center with the Marketing Department. Also, as group visits and specialized information meetings present themselves, staff has some scheduling flexibility to add these events. However, some contract work rule constraints exist that create disincentives for weekend assignments.

English for Academic Purposes/First Generation Students: Expanding recruitment activities into student success and retention activities offers a whole range of challenges. Grant funding for

these activities has removed some of the financial challenges. The challenges of transforming classroom activities to meet the needs of first generation and EAP students for greater success remain. The recognition of these challenges has moved the campus community to create three new Action Projects: Recruit and retain the adult learner through the development of an Adult Learner Center; Retain students by developing advising and programming that will help them finish what they start; and, Recruit and retain the underserved through Learning Communities.

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 whom to contact and when?

Not at this time.

G. Who should be able to see this annual update?

Anyone

Only people from other AQIP Institutions

No one