

## AQIP ACTION PROJECT PLAN

A: Title: Retention and Goal Completion: Learning Communities

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2006-2008

### **B. Description**

Using grant funding, Inver Hills will design and implement Learning Communities targeting underserved students. This project entitled COMPASS (Communities of Mentors, Peers, and Successful Students) is designed to address the challenge of retaining students to their goal completion. Through Learning Communities the College hopes to increase student success in degree completion and student satisfaction levels. A successful implementation of Learning Communities may also create a culture change in the College.

### **C. Related AQIP Category**

#1—Helping Students Learn

### **D. Rationale for Action**

Several factors drove the College's decision to find ways to become pro-active in retaining students: 1) Poor retention and graduation rates 2) Increased ELL population in service area 3) 40% of students are first generation 4) Need to address the aggressive recruitment efforts of competitor institutions (Three Twin Cities schools are offering free tuition through the Power of You program)

### **E. Areas Affected**

1) Learning Community Instructors 2) Instructors across campus 3) Learning Center 4) Counseling 5) Multicultural Affairs 6) Foundation 7) Marketing/Recruitment

### **F. Processes Affected**

1) Instruction 2) Tutoring 3) Counseling 4) Recruitment 5) Community communication

### **G. Rationale for Timeline**

SEPTEMBER 2006: Establish baseline data: 1) Examine results of the N-L Student Satisfaction Inventory (compare results with pre-project and with national results) 2) Analyze data from College Student Inventory 3) Use results of College Student Inventory in college level classrooms 4) Identify IPEDS, retention, graduation rate, goal completion data. FALL 2006: 1) Recruit 100+ students for Learning Communities (LCOM); 2) Fall Retention goals achieved; 3) Mid semester (November) focus groups – what themes appeal to the current LCOM participants. Would they like to go into another LCOM after their first semester; 4) Recruit instructors for 2007-2008; 5) Make an announcement during Oct. Professional Day to see if other faculty are interested in starting their own learning community. SPRING 2007: 1) Recruit 56 students for LCOM; 2) Create video to promote LCOM; 3) Idea to make a video that would focus on advertising LCOM, IHCC, Financial Aid, etc to High School ELL instructors. Get the word out there that college is within your means and you can attend college – attend Inver Hills; 4) Retention of LCOM students is 10% greater than non-LCOM students; Number of LCOM students with a GPA higher than 2.0 is 10% than non-LCOM students; 5) The Satisfaction rate of LCOM students is 90% greater than that of non-LCOM students; 6) Faculty who teach in LCOM is 90% greater than the satisfaction rate of non-LCOM faculty; 7) Print materials on the affordability of IHCC will be available for students and students' parents; 8) LCOM schedule for 2007-2008 will be finalized. 2007-07 ACADEMIC YEAR 1) IHCC will offer 4 new learning

communities LCOM and 4 themed LCOMs (A.A, Pre Nursing, Honors, Weekend/Evening, etc); 2) the program will recruit new 200 students and 25 faculty; 3) LCOM communities will continue to meet accountability measures and satisfaction measures; 4) Through Project Breakthrough (the umbrella project for campus retention and student success initiatives), LCOM will seek continued grant funding for new initiatives within communities; LCOM will work with the campus budget committee to integrate its funding into the college general budget.

#### **H. Monitoring the Project**

Members of the community will be kept focused on the Project through all-campus staff meetings, professional days for faculty; annual AQIP Action Project Reports; and publicizing the Learning Center and engaging faculty across disciplines in its activities.

#### **I. Outcome Measures**

1) Cohorts entering Fall 2006: Persistence rates for semester-to-semester and Fall-to-Fall for LCOM students will exceed the retention rates for non-LCOM students by 10%. 2) Cohorts entering Fall 2006: Overall academic success (achieving a semester GPA of 2.0 or above) of LCOM students will exceed that of non-LCOM students by 10%. 3) 60% of previously undecided students will select a college major or career goal by the end of the Learning Community experience. 4) 90% of participants (students and faculty) will evaluate the program positively, as measured by a satisfaction survey. 5) Participants will report increased level of confidence and positive perception of self as a successful college learner, as measured by pre- and post-project administrations of the College Student Inventory (CSI) or similar instrument. 6) Academic achievement in English 99, a “gatekeeper” course to college-level coursework, as measured by grades of “C” or above, will exceed that of Non-LCOM students by 10%; Academic achievement in English 1108, the college-level writing course, as measured by grades of “C” or above, will exceed that of non-LCOM students by 10%. 7) 100% of LCOM instructors will attend faculty development activities and incorporate new teaching strategies into their courses as a result of this project. 8) 90% of LCOM instructors will evaluate their participation and professional growth positively. 9) The number of unduplicated headcount participating in LCOM will increase by 25% each year for the next three years. 10) The number of faculty participating in a learning community will increase by 25% each year for the next three years.

#### **J. Other Information**

EXTERNAL PARTNERS: 1) The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) has defined a set of accountability measures: Average Cumulative GPA, Average Credits Earned; Entering Cohort; Entering Term; First Generation; Graduated; Pell Grant/non-Pell Grant; Retained; Success; Transferred; Students of Color; Underrepresented Students; Adult (non-Traditional) Students; Online Course; Retention Rates. IHCC will use these definitions when generating data. In some special cases, IHCC will also generate data using more appropriate definitions for the institution. 2) MnSCU, in collaboration with system institution, has set individual institution and system-wide targets in a variety of areas: Retention rate; Disparity between success rate for students of color and Caucasian students; Percentage of students enrolled in STEM courses; Number of students enrolled in online courses; Number of students enrolled in customized training; Number of continuing education (credit returning adult learners); Dollar amount of gifts and grants to Foundation. IHCC has incorporated these targets into each of its Action Projects as appropriate. 3) MnSCU has identified most baseline data as the data for the 2004-05 academic year cohort. IHCC will use this baseline data for its trending

data. 4) MnSCU and several external foundations have provided grant funding to support new student success projects at IHCC. CHAMPION: IHCC has provided full-time re-assigned time for a faculty counselor to coordinate Project Breakthrough, the umbrella project for three of its Action Projects. A task force of LCOM instructors champions the project in the classroom. Barbara Read, Vice President for Student Affairs, is the administrative advocate and support for the Project.

**K. Contact Person Information**

Name:	Jennifer Olson
Title:	Project Director
Email:	jolson@inverhills.edu
Phone:	651-554-3762