



View Review

Action Project: Improve student retention and customer satisfaction.

Institution: San Juan College

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

Members of the Student Support Council focused on advising, early alert systems, the registration process, and tutoring. The Council implemented policies that require degree-seeking students with less than 24 credits to meet with their advisor each semester. Another policy included withdrawing students who have not met payment requirements by the census count date. A tutoring manual has been developed and is currently in use. The manual addresses policy and procedure information, a mission statement, goals and objectives, training materials, and information about working with special needs students. This provides a consistent standard for tutors and is expected to improve the training process. In addition, new tutors now undergo 15-17 hours of training each semester and continuing tutors must complete 10 hours of training each semester.

Review: A. You are commended for the progress you have made in revising and implementing policies for the early alert system, the registration process, advising and tutoring. It appears you have made changes already and are positioned to make additional changes in the future as you strive to improve student retention and satisfaction. It is not clear to what extent practice has followed policy implementation and the impact these policy changes have had on retention and satisfaction. High performing institutions frequently use fact-based information gathering and thinking to support their analysis and decision-making.

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

This project was given to the Student Support Council. The Council members are from various departments on campus and include student representation. The individual action items for the project were developed by the council members, students, and the Student Success Center staff.

Review: It appears the Student Support Council was assigned responsibility for carrying out this Project and this Council has broad representation across campus. Have you provided other people not working directly on the project with a means for registering their ideas, concerns and needs? Often the most creative solutions come from unexpected people and places; don't allow conventional notions of authority and responsibility cause you to neglect what may be rich unexpected sources of fresh approaches.

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

The Council is recommending that San Juan College investigate the purchase of a web-based student portal system to assist with the development of an Early Alert System. In addition, the Council is recommending developing and implementing training sessions for faculty, prior to implementing a mandatory advising program for degree-seeking students for the spring 2003 semester. The Student Support and Learning Councils will begin to investigate mandatory placement.

Review: C. At this time, the Council has recommended the purchase of a web-based student portal system to support the Early Alert program and training for faculty advisors. It is exploring mandatory placement. It is not clear if all the systems and processes have been reviewed for retention and satisfaction. The Stretch Targets did not describe qualitative and quantitative data to be considered in a comprehensive review of systems and processes impacting on student retention and satisfaction. Has base-line data been collected to provide a benchmark for measuring improvement?

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

In addition to the tutoring guides that provide consistency, student retention of tutored students are tracked and compared with the general population. The tutors themselves are evaluated twice each semester and important feedback is provided in an effort to help improve performance.

Review: D. You note your work with Tutoring Guides could serve as a model from which other educators could learn. Although this reviewer recognizes and appreciates the work done, it is not yet time for AQIP to designate this as an “effective practice” because it has not been used in a variety of settings arising in different terms within the same institution. You should persist in your efforts and work on refining the Guides. If you do so successfully, your work may indeed produce an “effective practice” worth sharing with the broader higher education community.

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

The challenge will be to implement the student portal system. The College is in the process of procuring a new integrated administrative software system. Most new administrative systems have a student portal option that could be purchased, however implementation of such a system may take two or more years. This will be one component of a fully developed early alert and retention system for use by all SJC full-time and adjunct faculty. The Council will analyze, recommend and implement a new model for advising during the next year. This should improve the fall-to-fall retention rate of the first-time student population.

Review: E. The challenges you face are no different than those faced by any other colleges in adopting new computerized systems of record keeping. The challenge regarding the model for advising is confusing since in Item C you indicate faculty are being trained for a mandatory advising program effective Spring 2003. Has there been adequate collaboration to develop a shared institutional focus? However, a key principle of high performing institutions is agility, flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs and conditions.

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:

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