The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Bay de Noc Community College

Project Details			
Title	Improving the Student Residency Process	**Status**	COMPLETED
Category	6-Supporting Institutional Operations	**Updated**	09-30-2011
Timeline		**Reviewed**	10-10-2011
Planned Project Kickoff	10-03-2011	**Created**	09-30-2011
Actual Completion	08-01-2012	**Version**	1

1: Project Goal

A: This project will apply continuous quality improvement methods to the current steps taken by the Admissions and Records/Registration departments to ascertain student residency, which in turn determines the students' tuition rate. The goal is for both departments to emerge from this project with a clear, consistent process that meets the needs of Bay de Noc Community College and is easy for students to navigate.

2: Reasons For Project

A: The Student Services department has identified this process as one with high student impact, affecting a large number of Bay de Noc Community College students. The current process requires significant resources, both in terms of staff time and paperwork creation. Inconsistencies in current procedures account for student and staff dissatisfaction. Also, with the recent updating of the College's student information system, the timing for process improvement in this area is ideal.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The individuals most involved in the implementation of this action project will be staff members employed in the Admissions, Records/Registration, and Student Accounts departments. Other departments, individuals, and committees will be consulted and involved as necessary.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: At the current time, the Admissions department has one set of criteria by which they judge student residency status, a decision that can have important implications for students, since residency status determines an individual's tuition rate. Unfortunately, the Records/Registration department has a separate set of standards for this same decision, occasionally resulting in inconsistent placement decisions and inconsistent requirements in terms of acceptable forms of residency documentation. This action project will aim to bring these two departments together, along with other affected individuals, to develop a consistent process and a consistent set of standards by which to judge student residency status, improving both the internal customer satisfaction with the process, as well as the students' satisfaction with and understanding of the process and standards.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: This project directly involves a limited number of individuals and departments, so it should be accomplished in short order. The intent is to clearly define a new process in time for trial implementation for the Winter 2012 semester. Then, after the start of that semester, to check for process improvement opportunities and revise prior to closing out the project in February 2012.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The activities relating to this action project will be overseen by the Executive Dean of Student Services, so ensuring adequate progress on this project will primarily fall under his responsibility. At regular intervals over the next several months, the Executive Dean will be expected to provide a status update on the project to the President's Advisory Council (PAC), mainly to ensure that the project is on target for timely completion and that any decisions being made will not adversely impact any of the other College departments, all

of which are represented on the PAC.

7:	Project Outcome Measures

A: The new procedure must be consistent across departments, must meet the requirements of the Data Standards Team (a group responsible for the proper storage and maintenance of data in the College's enterprise resource planning system), and must adequately and accurately allow for the charging of student tuition. The new procedure must also be easily understood by students and stakeholders, while meeting the College policies with regard to student residency. In terms of actual data measurements to be used in assessing the success of this project, the College intends to monitor how many tuition adjustment requests are received, with the understanding that an improved and more accurate process will reduce the number of these requests.

Project Update

1:	Project Accomplishments and Status

A: This action project is newly declared and, therefore, does not have accomplishments to report for the prior year. Instead, Bay de Noc Community College would like to receive feedback from AQIP regarding the information contained in the action project declaration form.

2:	Institution Involvement

A: At this time, nobody besides the Executive Dean of Student Services has become involved in the development of this action project, apart from a brief discussion held with the members of the President's Advisory Council. Members of the Admissions and Records/Registration departments will need to become involved soon, however, in order to adopt a suitable resolution to this problem.

3:	Next Steps

A: Next steps for this project include calling a series of meetings between individuals from the Admissions and Records/Registration offices, collaboratively developing a proposed solution, suggesting that solution to campus committees like the President's Advisory Council and the Data Standards Team, and then implementing the new standards and process for the Winter 2012 semester. The process will then be assessed in late January and modified as necessary before the project's anticipated March 1, 2012, completion date.

4:	Resulting Effective Practices

A: Because this project is entirely new, no effective practices have been identified as of yet. Feedback from AQIP should focus on the information provided in the action project declaration form.

5:	Project Challenges

A: Collaboratively developing any new process presents challenges in the way of mediating the needs of various individuals/departments, implementing the decided-upon changes, and assessing the new process's impact on the areas in need of improvement. While a specific process improvement plan has not yet been developed for this action project, any assistance or references AQIP could provide relating to general process improvement/mapping, managing collaborative improvement processes involving individuals from multiple departments, or common student residency standards and processes used at other community colleges would be greatly appreciated.

Update Review

1:	Project Accomplishments and Status

A: This Action Project is in the early stages. Congratulations on aligning the administrative needs of students and the internal business operations of staff in a project that may lead to enhanced customer service for both. The project goals appear to be driven by a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, and a desire to improve operations for students and internal stakeholders with an eye to the future. This project appears to be directly aligned with the following AQIP Categories: Category 1 (Helping Students Learn), Category 3 (Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs), Category 6 (Supporting Institutional Operations), Category 7 (Measuring Effectiveness), and Category 8 (Planning Continuous Improvement). There also appears to be a demonstrated relationship to several of the principles of high performing organizations, e.g., learning-oriented, agility and responsiveness to change, and foresight to plan proactively.

2: Institution Involvement

A: This project has the potential of being an extensive change movement that requires re-focusing of people and their workflow. The inclusion of those individuals who have the ultimate responsibility for the project outcomes, as well as an opportunity to engage other stakeholders may be a strategy that is helpful for institutionalization of the process. It may be helpful to construct a recruitment and communication plan for the project to assist in recruiting institution-wide support as well as institution-wide visibility. This type of strategy may also be helpful in keeping the project as a top priority in the institution. At times, it may also be helpful to regroup (stop and start) when it appears that engaging individuals may be a challenge. The ability to engage as advocates other administrative members and academics with previous working knowledge of change processes may be helpful to recruit and stimulate interest in this project.

3: Next Steps

A: The institution presents several steps that will drive the project moving forward. It may be helpful to establish a comprehensive work plan with clearly outlined timelines, measures, responsible individuals, and other metrics to help assess where the project is in its implementation stages. Construction of such a work plan may be helpful in keeping the project on target, and could also serve as a source of measureable milestones. This may prove to be particularly helpful with the rapid turnaround time suggested for project completion.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A:

This Project is in the early stages of its implementation. One of the benefits of AQIP participation is the ability to engage with other colleagues and institutions that are interested in continuous quality improvement and aligning themselves with the principles of high-performing organizations. It may be helpful to search the AQIP Action Project Directory to determine if there is a model of effective practices that could inform your process. Sharing effective quality practices is the guiding principle behind AQIP, and has been shown to be helpful to those who engage in this collaborative opportunity.

5: Project Challenges

A: AQIP Action Projects are designed to be informative and a learning process, while driving systematic institutional improvement, in practical chunks, on a practical schedule. A review of other Action Projects that have included establishing or working with process mapping, change strategies, motivating and leading teams, as well as student residency issues and tuition setting may be a resource for informing this process. A resource for these projects is the AQIP Action Project Directory. It may be informative to search this directory for strategies to help guide this project to completion.

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: The project has been completed. New policies related to improving the student residency process were recommended to the Board of Trustees and these were approved and implemented.

2: Success Factors

A: The process of accomplishing this project worked well. The appropriate personnel met to ascertain the current process; then they mapped the current process; and then they revised the current process after determining where there were problems; and then they wrote new policies for Board approval to reflect the changes.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: Overall, this was a successful project. Each individual involved--Records/Registration Assistant, Registrar, Admissions Enrollment Facilitator, Director of Admissions, and Executive Dean of Student Services--brought a positive attitude to the change process. Good communication after the project was completed ensured that there were no problems or challenges once the new policies were implemented.