

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Colorado Mountain College

Project Details		
Title	INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ETHNICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS	Status COMPLETED
Category	5-Leading and Communicating	Updated 09-14-2006
Timeline		Reviewed 10-22-2006
	Planned Project Kickoff 05-06-2002	Created 11-23-2009
	Actual Completion	Version 3

1: Project Goal

- A:** This goal is to increase the number of diverse learners to 20% of students. Although Colorado Mountain College considers diverse learners to include students needing remediation, students with a variety of educational goals, communities undergoing strains from population growth, and students with different ethnic backgrounds, this Action Project deals specifically with ethnically diverse students. As noted in the access, discussion, minority populations in the CMC district and service area have doubled. ESL courses now account for 12% of total FTE (credit, non-credit, and ESL); up from 8% just one year ago.

2: Reasons For Project

- A:** CMC faculty and staff are mostly Caucasian (approximately 6% report some other ethnic group, and another 3% did not report ethnicity). Our communities have seen a large influx of Hispanic residents; some K-5 schools in the area are over 50% Hispanic. This growing population should be able to look to CMC to meet its educational needs. In addition, Communities are looking for ways to deal with the strains of rapid population growth. Because our students and our communities are increasingly ethnically diverse, this is a vital project for CMC.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

- A:** Pre-Enrollment Services, Counselors, Marketing, ESL Faculty and Supervisors, Development Studies, Student Access and Success Task Force, Institutional Research, Human Resources, The Learning Council, Full-Time and Community Faculty

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

- A:** Diversity training for staff and faculty Early warning systems Student support systems Student tracking (tracking goals and success) Faculty training regarding cultural factors and their relationship to learning styles

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

- A:** Monthly agenda topics at each decision-making group meeting Use of intranet communications, including e-mail, listserv, and other on-line resources Collaborate with community leadership groups, such as Central Rockies Leadership, the American Leadership Forum, Leadership Steamboat, and other such groups.

6: Project Success Monitoring

- A:** Bridging from ESL and developmental courses to college-level courses Providing an expanded tool kit for faculty to use

7: Project Outcome Measures

- A:** Comparison of CMC student population with the 2000 Census; compare diversity measures Number of Latino students enrolled Increased number of diverse learners receiving financial aid

8: Other Information

- A: Increase opportunities at each campus for intercultural exchange, with the goal of creating culturally-competent communities. Hold at least one forum at each of CMC's 14 locations. Increase from 8% to 12% the graduation rate for Latinos. Address the extreme gender imbalance at Alpine and Timberline Campuses among residential students.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: Last year the College Administrative Leadership Team (ALT), a group of about 50 district representatives, felt that although we had passed our target of 20% for overall ethnic minority enrollment (currently at 23%), CMC was still sorely lacking in diversity and that this goal needed a different approach. Thus, over the past year, this goal has essentially been incorporated within the AQIP Access goal and the Diversity Council initiatives (led by our Chief Student Development Officer), which have a part of college wide Access strategic planning goal. The Diversity Council, with college wide representation, has been working towards initiatives that will help weave diversity throughout everything CMC does. Using best practices observed during visits to Moraine Valley & Valencia, as well as other research and knowledge our Chief Student Development Officer has spearheaded access-related efforts, so that CMC's student population will better reflect the CMC service area demographics, with the ultimate goal being to increase to 18% the college wide participation rate of Hispanic high school graduates enrolled in non ESL/GED college courses. The goals of the group have been to: give strategic direction and support that influence campus and functional area strategic plans; create and oversee 6 Diversity Action Teams (DAT-includes strategic planning support, researching best practices, trainings, student perspective, website enhancement and community connections); diversify faculty, staff, and student populations; facilitate inter-group relations skills building of faculty, staff, and students; diversify curriculum; acknowledge, share, and celebrate CMC accomplishments in diversity e.g. regularly published diversity factoids via email and on eNews. Other diversity-related initiatives in the past year included: HERO (at over \$750,000) and other scholarships/grants (e.g. TRIO, Evenstart, Literacy, Department of Local Affairs-Energy Impact, etc.), many for Latino students; the many successes of ESL learners e.g. Rifle, Aspen, Roaring Fork, & Vail Eagle Valley Campuses; and Aspen Campus' Community Survey (administered in English & Spanish). Language classes were most frequently taken and Spanish-speaking respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they would like to either learn English or improve English language skills. Timberline Campus is in the process of developing its survey. Our 3-year cycle of surveying community needs will be completed in 2007.

2: Institution Involvement

- A: The key to involvement can be credited to the work of the AQIP Access Team and the various Diversity Action Teams, which have representatives from District Office and the 7 campuses and are lead by our Chief Student Development Officer. Considering the spread of our many sites, this is no small feat. They have given direction to diversity-related campus and functional area initiatives. They presented their progress to the College leadership and developed an annual report that was disseminated college wide. After reviewing their data (e.g. CMC Hispanic participation rate for credit courses at 11% in 2005), they have begun to implement their 2006-07 strategic initiatives e.g. increase Spanish presence in brochures, the Web, etc.

3: Next Steps

- A: With the progress that is being made through AQIP Access, Diversity Council and campus strategic initiatives, this project will be retired or cancelled soon.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A: We have effectively used data to become more focused in our approach to diversity. The Diversity Council studied demographics and determined a target for increasing credit course participation rate of Hispanic high school graduates. This is a big step for CMC, as the College has historically not consistently used data based decision-making. Despite the great distances between CMC sites, there has been increased collaboration across our various sites with our enthusiasm and shared focus on increasing diversity throughout CMC. The Diversity Council and its subgroups have created college wide involvement and commitment for diversity-related initiatives. This increasingly collaborative and caring culture that is there to help create an optimal environment for learning and diversity is one CMC's greatest strengths.

5: Project Challenges

- A: One of our biggest challenges continues to be recruiting diverse qualified faculty and staff. This makes it more difficult to integrate diversity into our culture. The cost of living is one factor, not only in employee recruiting, but with student recruitment. Economic survival is a priority for residents, particularly minority groups.

6: AQIP Involvement

- A: This will be unnecessary since we are retiring this project.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: It is outstanding that the college has acknowledged that its commitment to diversity extends beyond increasing the number of diverse learners. The goals of the group will surely help to make the college a welcoming and hospitable place for these learners and facilitate inter-group relations for all. Recommend that many of these ideas be considered for future projects, if not added to the project timeline. With the success of this project, there are reasons to celebrate.

2: Institution Involvement

- A: The team is commended for involving these various groups in the project as a way to increase the support for the project and the number of diverse students.

3: Next Steps

- A: Given the success of this project, the college is encouraged to continue to address the goals identified that will continue to make the college a place that fully supports its diverse learners.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A: Given the success with this project, the college should continue to use data based decision-making as a way to promote continuous quality improvements for students.

5: Project Challenges

- A: There are many web services available to assist in this way. One such site is <http://www.recruiting-online.com/course55.html>

6: AQIP Involvement

- A: