Action Project

Institution:	Colorado Mountain College		
Submitted:	2007-03-30	**Contact:**	Dr. Meeta Goel
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Timeline:
Planned project kickoff date: 07-01-2005
Target completion date: 09-01-2009
Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Improve Access for CMC Learners

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

The Colorado Mountain College (CMC) student population will reflect CMC service area community demographics. The CMC AQIP Access Team and Diversity Council desire to systematically review the demographic make up of the college community compared to the demographic make up of the service area community to identify any gaps therein that signal access barriers to segments of our community. To this end, the AQIP Access Team in collaboration with the Diversity Council have identified two immediate sub goals: Sub Goal 1: Build a Systems Portfolio that will identify underrepresented student groups by campus and college wide as compared to community demographics to determine future AQIP Access goals. Suggested cohorts to pull: first generation, low income, special populations, ethnicity, gender, by age, remedial student conversion to college courses; ESL student conversion to college courses; GED graduate conversion to college courses; local high school graduate participation rate. As data is compiled for Sub Goal 1, both the Diversity Council and AQIP Team determined that, parallel to this data gathering, action should continue to honor the work and research of prior Diversity Council groups and thus a continued focus on our Latino/Latino/Hispanic population was established as: Sub Goal 2: Align the Latino/Hispanic student participation rate with the non-Latino/Hispanic participation rate. Therefore, increase to 18% the college-wide participation rate of Latino/Hispanic students enrolled in college courses not including ESL and GED. [Note: although this project and initiatives will target meeting needs of the entire Latino/Hispanic population, the indicator for success on this project will be the alignment of the % Latino/Hispanic students graduating from local high schools in the district with the % of Latino/Hispanic students enrolled in CMC courses not including ESL and GED]. Rationale for this specific sub goal is due to the large influx of Latino/Hispanic residents to the CMC service area. Some K-5 schools in the service area are over 50% Latino/Hispanic. As a growing and significant population within the community, we will insure that Latino/Hispanic community members are demonstrably encouraged and feel welcomed to college courses that take them beyond ESL and GED.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

As a learning-centered college, CMC is committed to building initiatives based on fact-based, data-driven information. Coupled with the community college mission of access, CMC desires to collect and synthesize data to better understand our community needs and potential barriers to access. As CMC builds this data, CMC will incrementally target specific and focused cohorts of students to determine participation rates compared to predetermined benchmarks. With a systematic, data-driven approach to understanding community (students' and stakeholders') needs, CMC feels it will successfully launch a continuous improvement cycle for insuring that the mission of access is a reality for the entire CMC community.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Students Student Development (a.k.a. Student Services) Institutional Research Diversity Council (college wide action-oriented committee)

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

Outreach efforts High School Relations Advising Communication pieces (marketing) Student Support Services: tutoring, testing, orientation, financial aid First Year Experience program development Strategic Planning and Budget allocations Student Surveying

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

Diversity Council, Diversity Action Teams, and AQIP Action Team meet with a focus on the established goals which is demonstrated with notes/minutes, reports and outcomes. Action items with assessment are established and are reflected in campus and functional area strategic plans. Diversity Council, Diversity Action Teams, and AQIP Action Team follow up on assisting with the assessment of action items and use the results to establish/revise action items and/or establish new goals. This will be demonstrated in annual reports produced for the Diversity Council, AQIP, and Student Development. Students and/or community members will be surveyed systematically to determine trends in their perspectives. At least one annual college wide workshop/training on diversity awareness will be held and evaluated by participants.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Sub goal 1: Systems Portfolio – a data-trend matrix will be developed tracking success and retention factors by student cohort and further refined to reflect per campus trends compared to service-area demographics. Sub goal 2: measure of success will be the college wide participation rate of Latino/Hispanic students in credit and/or non-credit courses not including ESL and GED. Align the percent of Latino/Hispanic students graduating from local high schools in the district with the percent of Latino/Hispanic students enrolled in CMC courses not including ESL and GED. Definitions: College-wide: statistics and measurements based on aggregate data for entire CMC system versus per campus. Participation rate: percent of students enrolled in courses not including ESL and GED beyond drop for refund date. Rationale for sub goal 2: CMC recognized that it easily reached an acceptable participation rate for Latino/Hispanic students when including ESL and GED since a large portion of enrollees in these specific areas are Latino/Hispanic students. However, participation in ESL and GED alone did not signify to CMC that it had genuinely created the level of access desired for all community members. Therefore, after discussions in the CMC leadership groups of ALT (Administrative Leadership Team) and Diversity Council it was determined that to truly meet the challenge of access, the goal needed to be narrowed to capture access (participation rate) of Latino/Hispanic students in credit and/or non-credit courses not including ESL and GED. Rationale for sub goal 2 benchmark: it is noted that this benchmark focuses on the high school graduating class demographic makeup versus comparison to the simpler benchmark of the service-area community demographic makeup. In this case, it was acknowledged that simple alignment with the service-area demographic make up for CMC college-level courses was an unrealistic and unfair measure of CMC accessibility to Latino/Hispanic students. This is based upon two realizations:

- the challenge of our immigrant community having a consistent level of education and literacy at the high school level. - Immigrants may tend to only seek ESL courses that assist them in securing work. It is believed, through anecdotal interactions with our Latino/Hispanic community, that economic survival is a priority for our immigrants leading to multiple jobs and/or jobs with unstructured hours leaving little room or interest in courses beyond ESL and GED. Therefore, although this project and initiatives will target meeting needs of the entire Latino/Hispanic population, it was concluded that a fair and true representation of CMC's success in Latino/Hispanic accessibility is insuring that the Latino/Hispanic high school graduates participate at CMC at the same rate as the non-Latino/Hispanic high school graduates.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

July 2005: The AQIP Access Team and Diversity Action Teams established: DAT UNO (Spanish): – An internal clearinghouse to communicate recommended Diversity Council action items to campuses and functional areas and compile a document of what strategic action plans each campus and functional area have identified for the upcoming year and ultimate accomplishment of those plans. DAT UNO coordinates its activity to be in concert with the annual strategic planning process. Outcomes: DAT UNO creates an annual document identifying the college-wide strategic action plans by campus and functional area and the accomplishment thereof. Diversity Council follows up on acknowledging and celebrating accomplishments. DC continues to pass suggested action items through DAT UNO. DAT DEUX (French): The Think-Tank Team to research best practices (i.e. existing CMC practices, literature review, conferences, community and other colleges, etc.). Outcomes: DAT DEUX compiles an annual "laundry list" of suggested action items which are highly detailed, are measurable and the suggested method to measure impact/success of the action item plus any success stories of that action item. DAT TRE (Italian): The team to arrange annual college wide workshops and presentations on diversity topics. Outcomes: an annual college-wide workshop or presentation that has a 50% college-wide participation rate. (Note - % of participation or other measure of success to be determined) DAT FUMF (German): The Student Perspective Team. This team gathers data from various groups of students on their perspective of the CMC environment and support/comfort of all types of students. This may be accomplished via surveys, focus groups, and such. Outcomes: An annual report on the data, how collected, and the interpretation of the results. Results will be used to create additional action items through DAT DEUX. Results will also serve as a baseline for measuring CMC success in diversity initiatives. September 2005: participation rate trends for Latino/Hispanic students and service- area high school graduate demographic make up are pulled and analyzed. By December, 2005: a Focus Group and/or survey is conducted of Latino/Hispanic Students/community and compiled by the Diversity Action Team on Student Perspective (DAT Fumf). Best practices and initiatives are identified by the Diversity Action Team on "think-tank" (DAT Deux). Practices and initiatives are highly detailed with recommended assessment tools. March, 2006: Results and findings from DAT Fumf and DAT Deux are reviewed and prioritized by Diversity Council and AQIP Access Team. The Diversity Action Team on "clearinghouse" (DAT Uno) insures dissemination and use of the action items college wide along with follow up on assessment of success. A Diversity Council Strategic Plan is developed for implementation for 06-07. The Systems Portfolio (data trend matrix) is complete and reviewed by the Diversity Council to identify gaps in access to be addressed as future goals. May, 2006: DAT TRE: college-wide faculty and staff training piece. This committee lost their chairwoman and therefore was delayed in action. A questionnaire was administered to faculty/staff with a very limited response. The timing on this may have been off. In the future, DAT TRE will start putting together training after DAT DEUX has done research. This way, they can look at the data from DAT DEUX and use it. DAT TRE puts together a display for Appreciation Day celebrating our students and staff/faculty entitled: "Together, all of us impact lives!". By Summer/Fall, 2006: identified action items are implemented for the 06-07 academic year. (Strategic Plan attached) July, 2006: Diversity Council initiates and charges new DAT Teams. October, 2006: Diversity Council and AQIP Access Team reviews progress and prepares to assess success of action items. March, 2007: Diversity Council and the AQIP Access team review the updated trend data including participation rate benchmark for progress. Action items are reviewed and adjusted as necessary to continue progress toward meeting benchmark and/or a new goal is identified that focuses on another underserved student/community cohort. Diversity Council and AQIP Access Shortlist of 06-07 Projects Completion of the Diversity Council Strategic Plan initiatives and assessment thereof. Completion of the Diversity Council PowerPoint

Presentation and subsequent showing at Foundation, College Council, and the Board of Trustees. Creation of a video documenting student testimonials and CMC's impact on their lives for next Appreciation Day. Expansion into the Arts including annual purchase of student art for permanent display at campuses. Completion of the Data Portfolio and identification of other student cohorts who may be under-represented. Creation of strategic plan for 07-08 based on identified student cohort.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

The Action Project Goals are goals both for the AQIP Access Project Team and the larger college wide Diversity Council. Both the Diversity Council and the AQIP Team are chaired by the Chief Student Development Officer who will produce annual reports demonstrating progress on goals, assessment thereof, and new or revised goals. The annual report will be disseminated college wide and to the Governing Board. This accountability through the annual report coupled with the identification of a primary "driver" on this goal will keep attention and energies focused on the goals.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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Annual Update: 2008-09-13

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

Testimonials from current Latino students at CMC have been posted to our website in Spanish. These stories are intended to encourage prospective students and their families in their pursuit of higher education. Bilingual brochures continue to be created (Spanish/English) to educate the parents of our Latino students. Marketing ads continue to be placed on local Spanish Radio Stations in two of our Campus Service Areas that have the largest Latino participation gap. Our Youth & College Outreach Coordinator & Dean of Students collaborated with the Campus Deans at the two campuses with the largest participation gaps to hold First Ascent programs and Latino Youth Summits. A student art contest with a diversity theme was conducted, with the winning art work provided the cover for the summit brochures. The students responsible for the event program cover were recognized at both summits; one at Spring Valley Campus, the other at Vail Eagle Valley campus. The usage of our Latino Help Line (Spanish phone contact) has increased throughout our district. CMC was successful in securing an Upward Bound grant to serve Lake and Eagle counties. These counties represent the highest numbers of first generation and low income students within the CMC district. Additionally, we have increased the availability of scholarship opportunities for students wanting to attend CMC. More specifically, the number of scholarships designated for first generation and low income students has been increased through our pre-collegiate program, our partnership with Alpine Bank and other major donors. The number of Latino students taking credit classes who are being advised by the Youth & College Outreach Coordinator has doubled this past year. Data at the state level reveals a growing disparity in college preparedness for Latino students compared with other groups. Consequently, at CMC, Latino students are showing a higher need for remedial course work. When participation rates are inclusive of developmental and ESL courses, CMC's overall Latino participation rate of 22% is reflective of our community make-up. The Latino participation rate of 11% in college level courses suggests a need to intervene even sooner in developing college readiness skills. This indicates a need to collaborate more effectively with area public school personnel, students and their parents. An example of this outreach was the Berry Creek Middle School Career Fair orchestrated by our Youth & College Outreach Coordinator and sponsored by the Vail Eagle Valley Campus. Another existing initiative of this type is our summer First Ascent Program focused on developing leadership skills for entering high school students.

Review   (09-14-08):

Colorado Mountain College has made significant progress, in fact appears to have met the Action Project goal of having its student population reflect the demographics of its service area communities. Since the Action Project was kicked off the college has done an excellent job of assessing what steps (action plans) have to be taken to successfully implement the Action Project and continues to be aggressive in developing and implementing action plans as is evidenced by website information being posted in Spanish, targeted marketing strategies and the continued use of bilingual brochures. The First Assent programs and Latino Youth Summits are excellent examples of early intervention implementation steps. The increased use of scholarship dollars for first generation students and to increase diversity on your campus is a step that should show immediate positive success and is a huge step that should make the Action Project highly successful. As stated above the college has recognized the need for early intervention and taken some initial steps and understands that much more needs to be done and that the college needs to be very pro-active in this area to meet the needs of its Latino population and to be successful in meeting its diversity goals for its campuses. An early intervention strategy especially in the area of remedial education, if this is not already happening, is working closely with the community colleges in its local area. AQIP categories 1. Helping Students, 3. Understanding Student Needs and Other Stakeholders' Needs, 2. Learning by Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives and the principles of High Performance Organizations such as: Agility, Focus and Leadership are on display in the past year's accomplishments of this Action Project.

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

The Diversity Council led by the chief student development officer and comprised of representatives from all campuses and across functional sponsored the focus on access. Student Development staff along with campus personnel collaborated successfully on the writing and securing of the Trio grant. The Dean of Students and Youth & College Outreach Coordinator working with campus, public school and community representatives partnered effectively in the planning and implementation of the Latino Youth Summits. Current Latino students at CMC were involved with planning and executing both Summits. Former students from CMC who are now pursuing Bachelor's degrees elsewhere return for these events to serve as a panel and share their experiences. The CMC Foundation supported fundraising efforts for various events, as well as additional scholarships. Marketing personnel recruited Latino students to share their stories relative to the pursuit of a college education.

Review   *(09-14-08):*

The college appears to have not only the necessary college departments involved in this Action Project but through the Diversity Council the broader campus community. In addition to creating a culture on the campuses through broad based involvement in the implementation of the Action Project, the college has added an excellent component to institutional involvement in the Action Project by former students who return for the events and share their stories. It appears to be happening although not specifically state in this section that the college also has sought and received quite a bit of community support for the Action Project. AQIP categories 9. Building Collaborative Relationships, 4. Valuing People appear to be guiding this section of the Action Project. As are the AQIP principles of Collaboration and Integrity.

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

With the increased media focus on the demographic changes in the state of Colorado indicating a further lag in college participation rates on the part of traditional age Latino students, there is a renewed enthusiasm for this project. Additionally, with the coming of our new President in July 2008, there has been increased emphasis on building vital partnerships with service area school districts and other community constituents. The importance of this project focus is underscored by increasing the visibility and authority of the Division of Student Affairs. Our chief student development officer is now our Vice-President of Student Affairs. A major focus will be the development of a model where CMC partners with area public schools in addressing college readiness. This model would intentionally and carefully align high school and college course outcomes and objectives. The hope for this model would be to provide a seamless and successful pathway into college level course work, including dual enrollment options. Our new President recognizes the long-term nature of this endeavor and its relevance in meeting the needs of our communities through the year 2020 and beyond. Merely examining participation rates is short sighted. Thus, clear student access as well as success indicators and their baselines are currently being determined, with the understanding that access without the necessary support is not opportunity. A balanced scorecard will be developed so that we will be able to better monitor, present and document our progress on these indicators.

Review   *(09-14-08):*

As a next step the college could consider closing this Action Project and beginning a new Action Project that builds on the strengths of the Action Project just completed as well as the continuing change in demographics indicating a continued lag in college participation rates by Latino students. The securing of a TRIO grant gives the college a variety of financial options to continue the fine work they have done in successfully implementing this Action Project. AQIP categories 5. Leading and Communicating and 4. Valuing People are being successfully by the college in this Action Plan. Principles of Foresight and Information have been used with a great degree of success by the college.

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

The broad scope of Diversity Council did not allow for the singular focus that this project needed. A major challenge, therefore, has been finding high level sponsorship both within the college and our communities. We feel our new President and our Vice-President of Student Affairs can provide the impetus for the required leadership in this arena. Our President has already begun training teams in continuous improvement to target critical issues. This project may benefit from the attention of one of these continuous improvement teams during the coming year.

Review   *(09-14-08):*

As mentioned above maybe the college could consider closing this Action Project if they are satisfied with the implementation to date and develop a new Action Project that would have the sponsorship necessary to provide focus through the development of action plans necessary to implement a new Action Project. The training of teams in continuous improvement to target critical issues regarding Action Project implementation is a positive and necessary step to successful project implementation. AQIP Category 8. Planning for Continuous Improvement and AQIP principle Leadership that are being by the college in this section of the Action Project will help in the successful development of effective practices.

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

The broad scope of Diversity Council did not allow for the singular focus that this project needed. A major challenge, therefore, has been finding high level sponsorship both within the college and our communities. We feel our new President and our Vice-President of Student Affairs can provide the impetus for the required leadership in this arena. Our President has already begun training teams in continuous improvement to target critical issues. This project may benefit from the attention of one of these continuous improvement teams during the coming year.

Review *(09-14-08):*

As stated in both D and E the challenge for the college will be to provide a focus for the Action Project most likely through the development of action plans to target critical issues facing the college relative to the implementation of this Action Project. AQIP category 8. Planning for Continuous Improvement and principles Focus and Leadership are important elements of this section of the Action Project.

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?

Not at this time because we feel this project's focus has been reinvigorated with the new leadership. If we should need assistance, our new contact/leader for this project Brad Bankhead (Vice-President for Student Affairs) and/or Dr. Meeta Goel (Vice-President of Institutional Effectiveness) will contact AQIP.

Review *(09-14-08):*

The institution is making reasonable progress toward the completion of the project and development of an institution-wide continuous quality improvement culture. Reviewer 9787.