



## AQIP Action Project CHARTER Commitment Declaration

**Institution: Black Hawk College**

**Planned Project Kick off Date** 03/01/2010

**Target Project completion date** 12/31/2010

**Actual Project completion date**

**A. What is your short identifier (10 words or fewer) for this challenge (or opportunity or problem) that you would like to address with an Action Project?** Student Early Alert System - Workflow Enhancement

**B. Describe the Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer**

In the design of the BHC *Early Alert* system, faculty are a key to retention of at-risk students by assisting with the early detection of, and intervention with, students who are experiencing difficulties that affect academic performance. The BHC *Early Alert* system will establish an efficient, and user-friendly systematic referral process for instructional and support staff and effective student intervention protocols that result in student academic success.

**C. Identify the single AQIP Category that the Action Project will most affect or impact.**

Helping Students Learn

**D. Describe briefly your institutions reasons for taking on this Action Project now**

The Early Alert Program is a system of early warning and proactive intervention for students who are struggling academically and are high risk for failure. The *Early Alert* system, utilizing Workflow software, will identify at-risk students in order to appropriately provide intervention services aimed at overcoming difficulties before they overwhelm a student and result in the termination of the students' quest for educational advancement. The system will be automated to provide faster responses to faculty concerns and student needs.

The development of Early Alert systems have long been advocated by experts in the field including Noel-Levitz (1997), Tinto (1993) and Hammer (2003). There are now selected examples of "best practice" early warning systems in higher education. BHC has explored Early Alert programs such as those at Richland College, Houston Community College, Community College of Allegheny County, Sinclair Community College, and Hillsborough Community College. Data is becoming available from these best practice sites that supports the value of early warning systems in improving the success of at-risk students. In his book on under prepared community college students McCabe concluded, "Early identification of students in academic distress is a college wide necessity" (McCabe 2003). The research of experts and the experience of leading colleges have informed and served as a foundation for



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the development of the Early Alert program at BHC. In a study of 239 institutions Cuyahoga Community College found that among the key elements in model retention programs was the availability of interventions and “showing students that the college is concerned about them.” (Johnson and McFadden, 2000).

In the 2007 and again in the 2009 Noel-Levitz’s survey of student satisfaction, BHC students were dissatisfied with the lack of communication and feedback between the students and faculty regarding how well they were performing in class. Students further indicate that the feedback they did receive was not conducted in a timely basis. This coupled with student feedback that students did not believe the College had concerns for them as individual has lead to the redesign of several student support services and the design of new services such as the Early Alert Program.

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

Student Services, Advising, Student Success Center, Counseling, Faculty, Information Technology and Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

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

Key organizational processes include those of and Early Alert Systems that identifies at-risk students, intervention protocols to support student academic progress, communication among faculty, student support services and students and the Workflow process mapping and automation technology implemented to support student success and communication.

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

The project has five phases to be completed by the December 2012.

1. Creating a workflow process map detailing how referrals will be made and forwarded to student support staff (Spring 2010)
2. Development of standards of intervention practices (Fall 2010)
  - a. These practices will include: prompt communication with the student, developing with the student a Plan for Success, and monitoring implementation of that plan.
3. Develop a feedback procedure whereby faculty making a referral will receive timely information regarding the actions taken to assist the student and will receive information reporting on the outcome of those efforts. (Fall 2010)
4. Workflow software Implementation
  - a. Conversion of homegrown system to Workflow automation (September 2010)
  - b. Improvements that support the system. (Fall 2010)



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5. Evaluation and identification of necessary System improvement. (Fall 2010)

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

The Title III Project Implementation Crew is responsible for the development and implementation of this project. This team meets monthly and will receive updates on the development of the project. The Project Implementation Crew team reports to the President's Cabinet the progress of all Title III and AQIP Action Teams.

### **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.**

Outcome Measures include:

- the percentage of students identified through the Early Alert System who successfully complete the course in which they were referred
- the percentage of faculty referrals made within the first six weeks of the term versus the later part of the term
- the percentage of students who once identified develop and apply a "Plan for Success"
- the report from faculty and staff that the Workflow software
  - automated the process in an easy-to-use graphical interface for modeling and reviewing the Early Alert workflow process
  - improved communication and feedback to both the student and the faculty

### **J. Other information (e.g. publicity, sponsor or champion, external partners, etc)**

This project is funded through Title III grant resources

### **K. Project Leader and contact person (First name, Middle Initial, Last name, Title, Email, Telephone)**

Dr. Richard Vallandingham, Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students

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