

Action Project

Title: Faculty Academy

Version: 3

Institution: Heartland Community College

Status: Completed

Submitted: 2009-11-24

Category: 4-Valuing People

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2006-05-19

Target completion date: 2006-12-19

Actual completion date: 2009-09-14

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The Instructional Development Center (IDC) in consultation with faculty will organize a formal "class" for new college instructors about eight weeks in length. The class will cover such topics as creating student learning outcomes, rubrics and grading, class presentations, class organization, syllabus construction, classroom assessment techniques, and an introduction to WebCT. A pilot class will be in place by August 2006.

Reasons For Project

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

We have heard that new college faculty need specific, dedicated and intentional development covering a wide range of topics. Existing workshops are perhaps too ad hoc to serve the specific needs new faculty. A class/cohort approach will also help with a variety of orientation issues for both new and adjunct faculty. Finally, Parkland CC (Champaign, IL) has had great success with this general model.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

The Instructional Development Center and the Academic Support Division is currently charged with offering faculty development workshops and will be most impacted by this action project. Additional impacted areas include other the academic divisions of the college and Human Resources.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

This will improve new faculty orientation, faculty development and student instruction.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

This will correspond to the academic calendar, so a Fall 2006 pilot project seems reasonable. Improvements can then be made for a Spring 2007 second pilot and the formal "final" program can be implemented during Fall 2007.

Project Success Monitoring

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

The class will start as a pilot for approximately 5-10 faculty beginning Fall 2006. It will be evaluated during the late fall of 2006. Adjustments will be made for a second pilot of approximately 5-10 faculty to occur during Spring 2007. Overall evaluations will take place during late spring and summer 2007, and a final course will be in place for Fall 2007. The assigned project committee will hold the plan accountable to these deadlines.

Project Outcome Measures

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

We will use measures of new faculty satisfaction with both the orientation process and with the course itself. We will monitor the satisfaction levels of faculty "teaching/facilitating" the course. We will have course assignments connected to course learning outcomes that we can collect and assess. Also, academic division chairs will be surveyed to incorporate their overall assessments of course graduates compared with non-course graduates. Finally, we can do longitudinal follow up surveys with course participants to evaluate long term impacts of taking the course.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

To briefly recount the history of "Faculty Academy" here at HCC, it was begun in Fall 2006 as a means of systematizing faculty training and instructional development. Initially modeled after a program offered at Parkland Community College, it has become something uniquely our own. During its three years of existence, it has grown and expanded. Though it will be retired as an AQIP project this year, it will remain an ongoing component of faculty development for the College under the direction of Instructional Development Center (IDC) staff. The Fall 2008 Faculty Academy I consisted of six sessions held over a 12 week period of time. New and newer faculty attended these sessions which featured a variety of topics (e.g., teaching philosophies, strategies for helping students learn, techniques for measuring student learning, ways of engaging in scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning) and presenters (e.g., experienced faculty, Academic Support staff, Student Services staff, and IDC staff). At the

close of each session, attendees were asked to project at least one way they would apply and use the content of the session. When the series concluded, attendees expressed satisfaction with what they had gained from attending. As a result of successful Faculty Academy I offerings on three occasions (Fall 2006, 2007 and 2008), another six-session series has been planned for Fall 2009. As a precursor to the Faculty Academy I experience, new faculty participate in early August orientation sessions. Human Resources, IDC, and Information Technology staff organize and deliver this offering. New faculty are appreciative of the opportunity to enjoy a light supper together, receive a complimentary book about teaching and/or assessment, and to gain helpful insights about syllabi construction and classroom management from experienced faculty. Faculty Academy II was created in Spring 2008 primarily for experienced faculty, though new faculty can partake in it as well. This faculty development offering involves participants reading a common book (e.g., *The Courage to Teach*, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, and *Teaching to Transgress*) and then gathering together on multiple occasions throughout the semester to discuss the book's contents and its applications for their own classroom teaching. In addition to face-to-face discussion, dialogue sometimes takes place via WebCT. As a result of the popularity of this program, two groups were organized for Faculty Academy II in Spring 2009, a group was convened in Summer 2009, and yet another group will soon get underway for Fall 2009. In Fall 2008, a new director began providing oversight of the IDC. As she met one-on-one with new and ongoing faculty, both adjunct and tenure track, she became aware of special interests (e.g., peer mentoring and observation; service learning and community outreach; and developmental education trends). Based on such input, the new director initiated Faculty Academy III offerings in Spring 2009 to focus on these special topics. For one of these programs, three webinars were purchased, shown, and then discussed by interested attendees. Faculty Academy III will continue during Fall 2009. Among the foci are online survey construction and administration; use of human subjects; helping students manage their studies when crises complicate their lives; and the "slow education" movement.

Institution Involvement

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

The initial planning and development of Faculty Academy was undertaken by a diverse steering committee composed of faculty, staff and administrators. As the program stabilized and expanded, oversight for the program shifted to the Instructional Development Center staff. The director of the IDC turns to members of a faculty advisory committee for ideas, recommendations, and suggestions. Similar kinds of input are gathered more broadly from face-to-face conversations and surveys the director conducts with a wide variety of faculty. Since its inception to the present, Faculty Academy has benefitted from the support of central administration and ancillary units (Academic Support, Student Services, etc.), as well as from members of the AQIP Coordinating Committee. While IDC staff members organize and publicize Faculty Academy offerings, they invite faculty and staff members to serve as presenters and facilitators. On occasion, persons volunteer to be presenters or facilitators of a Faculty Academy series or session. It has always been and continues to be important that Faculty Academy be faculty driven.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

This project is being retired. With its success has come sufficient commitment and

momentum to keep it functioning for some time to come.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

As previous reports have documented, several practices have proven effective in developing and maintaining this successful project. Most Faculty Academy offerings are not provided in "one shot" formats. Instead, they are typically provided as a series of sessions attended by a consistent group of participants who build rapport with each other over time that contributes to a willingness to openly share ideas and experiences. Another practice that has been shown to be effective is that of encouraging diversity...diversity in presenters/facilitators and faculty attendees. The best outcomes result when Faculty Academy participant groups are a mix of adjunct and tenure track, part-time and full-time, and new and experienced faculty from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

Project Challenges

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

Identifying and using practical, efficient methods of tracking the impact of Faculty Academy programs is an ongoing challenge. In addition to collecting evidence of participants' satisfaction with their Faculty Academy learning experiences, the goal is to determine the ways participants apply what they have learned and with what degree of success for themselves and their students. Promoting the use of WebCT as a means of enhancing participants' interaction and discussion also remains an ongoing challenge. The College will make a transition from WebCT to Blackboard this year. This will be a major adjustment for many. One need that surfaced during AQIP Conversation Days was expressed by adjunct faculty, especially those that teach primarily at night because they have other professional obligations and responsibilities elsewhere during the weekday. They would like to have more faculty development offerings provided on week nights and on Saturdays. An online survey has been recently administered to adjunct faculty regarding time, topic, and format preferences. As results are analyzed, it will be determined whether Faculty Academy can be delivered in a manner that can meet their expressed need.

Annual Update

Reason for completion

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

Faculty Academy has become part of the organizational life through the efforts of faculty and the Instructional Development Center.

Success Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

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expanded. Though it will be retired as an AQIP project this academic year, it will remain an ongoing component of faculty development for the College under the direction of Instructional Development Center (IDC) staff.

What started as a fall cohort offering for new full- and part-time faculty has evolved to include Faculty Academy II sessions for continuing faculty. Typically Faculty Academy II cohorts have read a common book and discussed its implications for practice at Heartland. Past books used have been

Discussion as a Way of Teaching, The Skillful Teacher, the Courage to Teach and What the Best College Teachers Do more issue-driven as opposed to text-driven workshops. Grounds for Learning used face-to-face and online discussions to examine our specific experiences in spring classes. Additionally, other faculty groups met in Faculty Academies to discuss Experiential Learning, Developmental Education, and Mentoring. More than 90 faculty and staff have participated in Faculty Academy offerings in FY 2009.

Unsuccessful Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

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Promoting the use of WebCT/Blackboard as a means of enhancing participants' interaction and discussion also remains an ongoing challenge.

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