1: Project Goal

A: Pulaski Technical College (PTC) expects to implement a motivational and engaging training and professional development program that will equip employees to handle their employee relations responsibilities competently. The goal of this action project is to implement an annual mandatory training and professional development program for all full-time faculty and full-time staff. Faculty and staff will receive training in various topics such as sexual harassment, diversity, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2: Reasons For Project

A: PTC annually employs over 850 full-time and part-time faculty and staff members making training vital to the institution’s overall success. This training is essential in order to continue to abide by and promote the College’s Board Policies on a non-discriminatory work environment. Cost containment is also something that is very important to our College and by offering annual training for all employees the College will be eligible to obtain a discount of approximately $5,000 on annual liability insurance premiums. At this time, PTC has a Human Resources staff of four individuals to support the needs of over 850 full-time and part-time employees that are placed at multiple site locations. In order to offer training and support for our faculty and staff at all sites, this project will also look at ways to better utilize technology to create training and professional development opportunities for all employees.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: This Action Project will mostly affect the Human Resources Department at PTC. The implementation of this project will impact the entire full-time faculty and staff as each full-time employee will be required to participate in the training and professional development program in order to ensure that the College maintains a non-discriminatory work environment.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: This Action Project will impact employee training and new employee orientation. The project will allow PTC to create a human resource’s training and development program for faculty and staff. The College will also be able to utilize this training program in the future for all new hires during the employee orientation.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: This Action Project is planned to be completed within 9 months. Development of the training program curriculum will occur during the early part of the fall 2011 semester with the goal to start offering the training to full-time faculty and staff during the latter part of the fall 2011 term and spring 2012 term. The target completion date of the project is May 2012 where all of the full-time faculty and staff will be required to complete the training. Feedback will be collected after completion of the training in order to improve future training.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: All employees will be offered a variety of time and locations to attend the training and development program sessions. This will allow each department to determine the best time to allow their staff to attend the training session. A weekly audit will be performed to determine how many full-time employees have not completed the training session. Managers will be contacted to remind them who on
their staff have not yet completed the training program. All employees will take a quiz upon completion of the program. An employee will complete the program if he/she can score at least an 80% on the quiz. Employees will be required to re-take the quiz until they can score an 80%. Employees will also be asked to complete a survey in order to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the training program.

7: **Project Outcome Measures**

A: An annual report will be generated in order to show that all employees participated in the training and development program and that they completed the program with a passing score of at least 80%. Measurement of this Action Project will also be gathered through surveys in order to make improvements to future training sessions.

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**Project Update**

1: **Project Accomplishments and Status**

A: This Action Project is a newly declared Action Project for our institution. The Action Project Leader attended a sexual harassment training on September 8, 2011 to help human resource managers create a formal sexual harassment policy, learn how to investigate sexual harassment claims by employees, employer responsibility for sexual harassment issues, and what to include in sexual harassment training for employees. The Action Project Leader developed the training curriculum for our Pulaski Technical College's (PTC) program through use of the Society for Human Resource Management Learning System (SHRM), various federal regulations, information from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and a video from Films on Demand. The Project Leader will be the trainer for PTC's employees for this AQIP Action Project. The first training session has been conducted for the institution's new faculty members who were hired for the fall 2011 semester. A total of twelve faculty and staff members were trained on September 9, 2011. All employees who attended the training session were given a copy of Pulaski Technical College's Policies on Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and ADA Compliance. All employees who attended the session signed off on a Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and ADA Training Acknowledgement Form.

2: **Institution Involvement**

A: The initial training session was combined with our New Faculty Academy, a Pulaski Technical College program designed to help train our newly hired faculty members. The Action Project Leader worked with the New Faculty Steering Committee to get this training session included in their planned training for new faculty. For this initial training session we utilized the assistance of the Center for Teaching Excellence, the institution's center that provides and promotes professional development activities, to help distribute the handouts and make sure that all participating employees completed the acknowledgement form at the end of the training session. This allowed the trainer to focus on the training, while the Center for Teaching Excellence staff verified that all participants stayed for the entire training session and completed the necessary paperwork. The participants were given the opportunity to provide written feedback at the end of the session.

3: **Next Steps**

A: A spreadsheet has been created to keep track of the following information for employees who have/have not attended training: employee name, gender, race/ethnicity, date of training. This will allow Human Resources to compile data in a format that can be used in the future if the institution has a claim of harassment or discrimination in order to provide documentation that all employees were given equal opportunity and access to attend a training session at the College. Per the feedback received from the first training session, the training has been modified for future sessions. We will conduct a series of 8 training sessions on October 17 and 18, 2011, in order for the majority of our faculty and staff to be able to attend. We will allow all participants in the training sessions to provide feedback in order to continually modify our training so it best meets the needs and requests of our faculty and staff.

4: **Resulting Effective Practices**

A: We expect this Action Project will help employees understand the legal ramifications of violating federal legislation and how it could affect them personally. Our expectation is that employees will realize the importance of being treated and treating others (fellow employees, students and visitors) fairly and with respect. It is our goal to reduce claims of sexual harassment and discrimination
through this required training for all employees. The best defense an employer has in a discrimination or harassment legal claim is to prove that the employer was proactive in requiring training for its employees. We hope that this training will help our faculty and staff ensure that all students, staff, faculty, and visitors are treated fairly.

Project Challenges

Although we had initially planned to conduct this training via an online format, we have had problems due to licensing agreements with our software that has not allowed us to utilize the online training format at this time. We have decided that it is extremely important to train employees in a timely fashion, so for the initial training we will use a classroom setting which will give employees the opportunity to ask questions they might have about the laws and how they affect them personally. Due to budget limitations at this time, we will continue to look at other cost-effective strategies for how to offer this training in a different format in the future. If the feedback is not positive on the current training format, we may decide to pursue a formal budget request through the College's budget process to be able to offer a technological presentation format for the future. If Pulaski Technical College (PTC) wishes to remain in the forefront of education in Arkansas, the key will be to continue training and improving our current faculty and staff. Another challenge that we will face is to stress the importance of this training to managers. We need our managers to place an emphasis on the training sessions in October so we can get the majority of our faculty and staff trained during these sessions. We have communicated the importance of these sessions during our Administrative Leadership Team Meeting on September 21, 2011. We plan to utilize e-mails and inner-office reminders to all departments/divisions. Since PTC has seven sites, we will offer a training session at each site so employees do not have to travel to receive training. We are in the process of coordinating calendars so we can get all of our employees trained at our six satellite sites.

Update Review

Project Accomplishments and Status

The college is making exceptional progress toward completion of this action project. The college successfully implemented campus wide training regarding sexual harassment as well as provided participating employees a copy of the Pulaski Technical College's Policies on Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and ADA Compliance. In addition to aligning with "Valuing People" this action project also lends itself to aligning with "Leading and Communicating".

Institution Involvement

Individuals from pertinent administrative areas of the college participated in the planning and development of the action project and related training. As an all campus endeavor, every employee, including full- and part-time employees, will be involved through participation in the required training. The shared responsibilities mentioned enabled key individuals to focus on specific elements of the training such as providing the training as well as attendance and relevant paperwork. The end of session feedback could provide important information regarding participant perceptions of the training. Furthermore, the end of session feedback demonstrates an alignment with "Measuring Effectiveness" as well as "Planning Continuous Improvement."

Next Steps

Creating a tracking spreadsheet will provide the college with critical information regarding employee participation. Feedback received from the first training resulted in modifications to the training for future sessions. Both of these data collection steps align with "Measuring Effectiveness" and "Planning Continuous Improvement." The college indicates that there will be training sessions in October 2011; however, there is no indication regarding specific next steps for the remainder of the action project which is scheduled to end in May 2012. Consequently, the college may benefit from identifying key next steps as well as related timelines to ensure that forward movement is maintained. The college might consider recognizing individuals who participate in this training as well as other training initiatives by providing them with certificates of participation.

Resulting Effective Practices

Given the increasing importance and mandates regarding legislation that colleges must be in compliance with, this action project may serve as a best practice for other institutions in that it represents a systematic approach to training, feedback, and data driven
revisions. This is becoming increasingly more important as workplaces become more diverse.

5: Project Challenges

A: Financial concerns seem to permeate many colleges; however, it appears that PTC has considered various options and is moving forward with the most cost effective measure available at this time. The college has invested much time and effort into this action project and the resulting training materials that they might consider how they can share this best practice with other institutions in the state as appropriate. Perhaps there are opportunities for partnering with other institutions, thereby possibly making available shared resources to further this endeavor.

Key leadership will be an integral part in the overall success of the action project. Toward that end, if key leaders are not already involved it is important to get them on board so they can reinforce the importance of 100% compliance.