**Project Details**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Improving mathematics success rates through proactive faculty engagement.</th>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>1-Helping Students Learn</td>
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| Timeline | Planned Project Kickoff 04-01-2009  
Target Completion 06-30-2011 |
| Status | DRAFT UPDATE |
| Updated | 09-14-2010 |
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| Version | 1 |

1: **Project Goal**

A: To increase successful grade rates of A, B, and C in developmental mathematics and to increase successful enrollment and passage in College Algebra.

2: **Reasons For Project**

A: We have studied grades in developmental and gateway courses. All four courses in the developmental math curriculum ranked highest in non-successful grades of no-credit and withdrawal with such rates in excess of 50 percent of all grades. Many students struggle with getting successfully past developmental math in order to enroll and succeed in College Algebra, which is needed for graduation in the high enrollment Associate of Arts and Associate of Science.

3: **Organizational Areas Affected**

A: The instructional divisions most affected by or involved in this action project are Academic Success and Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences. Academic Success houses developmental math courses, and Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences houses college-level math courses.

4: **Key Organizational Process(es)**

A: The key organizational process to improve by this action item is faculty communication about curriculum development, alignment, and delivery between developmental and college-level math courses.

5: **Project Time Frame Rationale**

A: The project will begin in April 2009 with a facilitated group session that brings together both developmental and college-level math faculty to discuss the reasons for low success rates in math. Follow-up sessions will focus on ways to address the problem across the college curriculum and will be conducted during the fall 2009 semester. During spring 2010, implementation plans will be formulated for immediate action. In year two (academic year 2010-2011), specific curriculum and policy solutions derived from year one's process will be implemented and evaluated.

6: **Project Success Monitoring**

A: At the end of year one for this action project, at least one faculty-driven solution will be developed and prepared for implementation across the math curriculum in 2010-2011. We feel that faculty involvement is crucial for improving math success rather than implementing a top-down approach from the administration. During year two, the proposal will be implemented, and effectiveness will be evaluated using data from fall 2010 and spring 2011 compared to prior years. Analysis will take place at the end of each semester.

7: **Project Outcome Measures**

A: Initial success will consist of arriving at a combined developmental and college-level faculty solution proposal for the problem. In the second year and beyond, overall indicators of success will be lower D, F, W, and I rates and thus higher A, B, and C rates in...
developmental and college-level math courses.

8: Other Information

A: The Vice President for Instruction and a faculty representative on the college’s AQP committee will lead the project through the first year of faculty planning. Both full-time and part-time faculty in developmental and college-level math will be engaged in planning and implementation.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: During April 2009, there was a facilitated AQP brainstorm meeting between full-time and part-time developmental math and college-level math faculty. The goal was to discuss reasons for low success rates in mathematics and to identify areas for improvement critical to student success at the various levels in the courses. The group initially explored proposing a dedicated math laboratory as an option; however, space and budgeting issues are issues at this time. Furthermore, turnover in academic leadership (vice president for instruction and dean of academic success) slowed subsequent follow-up meetings.

Each group explored different curriculum strategies such as supplemental instruction, learning communities, emporium model, and hybrid traditional/online learning individually and implemented them as the result of various grants and initiatives.

In an effort to get the action project back on track, the faculty, chairs, and deans from both college-level and developmental math will meet at least once during the fall 2010 semester to explore new solution proposals and will seat a joint committee to meet more frequently on follow-up. Depending on the nature of any proposals, spring 2011 should serve as the beginning of policy implementation.

2: Institution Involvement

A: Full-time and adjunct faculty from college-level mathematics and developmental mathematics and the previous vice president for instruction were initially involved in the April 2009 focus group. Continued involvement of all math faculty is crucial to the success of this action project. The interim vice president for instruction and the deans of academic success and math and sciences will also be expected to provide ongoing leadership for the project.

3: Next Steps

A: Renewed faculty meetings will occur in fall 2010, and effective follow-up will be the charge of a joint faculty committee that will meet more frequently. The interim vice president for instruction, dean of mathematics and sciences, interim dean of academic success, department chairs, and all math faculty will be responsible for working collaboratively on this project, especially on any subsequent policy proposals.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Both individual departments have spearheaded initiatives in supplemental instruction, learning communities, emporium model, and hybrid traditional/online learning. Two years ago (prior to this proposed action project), the two departments worked together to revise placement testing scores. So far no effective practices have resulted from the joint faculty effort proposed for this action project; however, the two departments working together hope to have created an effective practice by the end of the next academic year.

5: Project Challenges

A: The College has faced challenges with regard to leadership turnover and loss of project momentum. Interim leadership in the positions of vice president for instruction and dean of academic success are on board with renewing this action project. The interim vice president, interim dean of academic success, and the dean of math and sciences will hold faculty accountable for ongoing meetings.
Faculty, however, will be free to brainstorm and propose solutions from their own ideas as to how to address the problem of lack of math success. The vice president for instruction will advise the group on logistical issues such as space and budgeting if proposals require such resources.

The College’s leadership strongly desires faculty involvement and ownership of learning-related action projects, and this action project was initially crafted to cultivate that faculty involvement and ownership. For this project to regain momentum and result in a policy solution, the formal academic leadership of the vice president and applicable deans will need to be highly involved in ensuring that faculty meetings take place, and faculty will need to participate openly and continuously in such meetings.

The College would like to discuss the possibility of receiving help from AQIP for this action project. Augusta Farver, interim vice president for instruction, should be contacted to arrange logistics of such a discussion between AQIP and PTC leadership and faculty. His phone numbers is (501) 812-2251.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Losing team leadership has a tendency to derail any positive efforts on a project; however, this project has begun with some large positives! The action project on which you are working shows evidence of Helping Students Learn (AQIP Category 1), Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs (AQIP Category 3), Valuing People (AQIP Category 4), and Building Collaborative Relationships (AQIP Category 9). It is a solid project with a small hiccup.

I applaud the effort that you are taking to get the action project back on track, but I would encourage you to think of more regular meetings (at least once per month) in order to build the momentum back to needed levels. Consider setting dates—one for the (new) kickoff, one for the end of proposal collection, one for the picking of the proposal to implement, etc. By having solid dates, the entire team will have extrinsic motivation to begin the project and bring it to a solid conclusion.

2: Institution Involvement

A: Those who were initially involved should continue to be involved—with the obvious exception of those who left the institution. It may be possible, however, to involve those former VP and Deans in consultative roles—if the relationship with them remains strong. Nonetheless, the involvement level demonstrates that Pulaski is a High Performance Organization specifically in the areas of Collaboration, Involvement, Leadership, and People. The use of adjuncts does not often happen, but it will help to get as many minds at the table as possible. On the flip side, however, adjunct professors seldom show the same initiative as full-time staff and faculty in action projects. It may be advantageous to involve some of the students and/or alumni who are going through/have gone through the program.

3: Next Steps

A: It will be good to meet more often and to begin the fall semester running…for that you are to be commended. I would encourage you to put more dates and objectives in place to be able to find some small wins. The project could benefit greatly from meeting published deadlines or celebrating the achievement of internal goals. For additional information or to see how other schools have done similar things, see the Innovations Exchange (http://www.aqip.org/InnovationExchange/) or the AQIP Resources for Institutions (http://www.hlcommission.org/information-for-institutions/resources-for-institutions.html).

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Sometimes “effective practices” can be misleading. It may be possible that the cross-departmental efforts that are required to spearhead this project are new, or, are being done in ways that have never
been done previously—that would be deemed an effective practice. It may be possible that the way in which adjuncts are involved in the project is new or different than has ever been done before. It may even be that the search for a new VP or Dean has been affected by this action project—resulting in new hiring practices.

I would challenge you to think about how the entire organization is changing for the better because of the challenges inherent in this project. After all, the resulting desire of all action projects is to develop an institution-wide continuous quality improvement culture. This encompasses more than just the administration-faculty dynamic. It also involves supportive operations, finance operations, etc.

### 5: Project Challenges

**A:** All institutions struggle with the balance between faculty and administration. Basically, it will be important for faculty to gain ownership of this entire project! Consider having a meeting with a neutral third party (perhaps human resource personnel), where the entire scope of the project is re-envisioned. It may be that the champions of the original idea are no longer at the institution or that the vision for the project has been lost in the transitions.

Realize that the project, as stated, has merit and will succeed if the needed attention is given to it. You are on the right path, even if the current progress is too slow or leisurely.

Please know that AQIP staff have been notified of your desire for assistance and that someone will be contacting you in the near future.