

Title: First Year Student Initiative: Phase 2

Version: 2

Institution: South Central College

Status: Active

Submitted:

Category: 2 – Meeting student and other key stakeholder needs

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 9/1/2015

Target completion date: 5/30/2015

Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The goal of this project is to develop a student ambassador program to assist with creating a welcoming and informed environment. Student Ambassadors will support the mission and vision of South Central College by welcoming and serving students through participating in a variety of student events and other means.

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

Low student persistence and completion rates create challenges at any college (i.e., financial stability, planning/scheduling, pedagogy, graduation rates, ability to meet workforce needs, etc.) Many factors contribute to college persistence rates (financial aid; student services; first year experiences; student engagement; college readiness). Research shows a link between engagement, learning and persistence.

South Central College needs to continue to improve persistence and completion rates at the college. South Central College recognizes that a contributing factor impacting persistence and completion rates is the degree to which the college encourages and practices a supportive culture on our campuses and enhances student engagement, especially for first year students. There is opportunity to provide additional support and guidance through a student ambassador program focusing on welcoming, informing, and engaging students on campus therefore aiding in the possibility of persistence and completion.

Although the initial survey results provided by the AQIP FYI Phase 1 team indicated an area for improvement was advising, the committee has decided not to focus on that aspect due to the major changes in Admission staffing after the survey was completed. Instead, the committee will focus on creating opportunities to increase engagement, connections, and college pride among students through the use of student ambassadors. Student comments provided from the FYI Phase 1 survey indicated that students were looking for additional interactions and connections with current students at STAR session, campus visits, and during the first weeks of classes.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

Student Affairs Department; Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Strategic Initiatives; Academic Programs;

Student Support and Engagement Initiatives

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

Student Orientation and Onboarding; services to first year students; delivery of student support services.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The project time frame is 9 months. This will allow for development of the student ambassador program as well as a period for a pilot session in Spring 2016.

Project Success Monitoring

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

The project will be monitored by the sponsor and the AQIP steering committee with a mid-project progress report, a possible annual report, and a project completion report.

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

Objective 1-

Objective: Improve the perceptions of new students and staff that the South Central College community has a welcoming environment

Measure: Improved ratings offered in qualitative surveys conducted with 1st year students and employees of South Central College

Criteria for Success: Ratings will improve year-over-year by 5% and the gap between employee ratings and student ratings will improve year-over-year by more than 15%

Objective 2-

Objective: Increase satisfaction of students regarding the ability to get their unique questions answered

Measure: Improved ratings offered in qualitative surveys conducted after STAR sessions

Criteria for Success: Student ratings will improve to a 95% positive rating from the previous semester with regard to getting their unique questions answered at STAR sessions

Objective 3-

Objective: Increase satisfaction of students regarding getting questions answered in a timely manner

Measure: Improved ratings offered in qualitative questionnaires submitted either online or in person by people that visit the Student Affairs Centers

Criteria for Success: Qualitative ratings will improve to 95% satisfaction

Objective 4-

Objective: Achieve a 95% satisfaction rate of staff that were previously impacted by the activities being conducted by the

student ambassadors via a new survey

Measure: Qualitative ratings that show 95% satisfaction of SCC employees indicating that student ambassadors have a positive impact on the college community/image.

Criteria for Success: Staff indicate that the student ambassador program has played a role in increasing their satisfaction in working at South Central College and that this is a contributing factor in South Central College offering a welcoming environment