

UPDATE ACTION PROJECT

Academic Assistance Resource Center

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

Academic Year 2009-2010 was the second year for this two-year action project. After reviewing the university's available resources, a location was chosen for the new Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). The Writing Center, the Math Lab and the CHAMPS program (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success) were combined in the lower level of the library and the Academic Center for Excellence was opened Spring semester 2010. Additional hours and student tracking were also initiated. After reviewing the remedial and 1000 level math and writing courses, additional funding was obtained to increase supplemental instruction for the basic writing course and the first two mathematics courses during the 2010-2011 academic year.

In 2007, the Faculty Senate formed an Admissions Task Force to review the university's admission requirements and probation policy. The Senate approved changes in the probation policy and introduced Conditional Admittance for the fall 2009 semester. At the conclusion of the Fall 2009 semester, a review of the Conditional Admittance procedures was conducted. Modifications of the procedures and processes were made for Fall 2010 after it was determined that the contract used for conditionally admitted students did not clearly indicate the conditional nature of the student status. A new contract was written with an academic hold placed on each conditional student for the spring semester. When a conditional student completes the contract, the academic hold is removed. Also additional resources were identified for conditionally admitted students.

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

The group that first started working on this action project during 2008-2009 continued their work during this past year. The group membership included faculty and staff from the AQIP Steering Committee and staff from a Student Services task force on retention. The members of the committee are the Dean of Students, the Assistant VP for Academics, the Director of Academic Advising, the Director of Learning Assistance, the faculty supervisors of the Writing Center and Math Lab, the Director of Career Services, and the athletic coach that supervises the university CHAMPS program.

3. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The Action Project will be retired at the conclusion of this year's review but a new Action Project focusing on new and more effective resources for undergraduate and graduate students will begin Fall 2010. The identification of beneficial resources for all Concordia students is a critical step for the university. Since many of our graduate students are completing their programs off-campus, non-traditional resources need to be identified and implemented for their benefit.

Tracking of students receiving supplemental instruction in math and writing courses will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the additional instruction and determine if modifications in services need to be made. The university also needs to implement a quality control evaluation system to collect feedback from students using the Academic Center for Excellence. Finally, discussion is also occurring regarding the relocation of the Learning Assistance Center to the Academic Center for Excellence.

4. Describe any “effective practice(s)” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

The combining of two different staff/faculty groups working on reviewing student resources removed overlap, redundancy and improved efficiency. An increase in communication between university units was accomplished, especially within the offices of Students Services, Career Services and Academic Advising, during the work on this action project.

A new practice that was instituted through this Action Project was the review of conditionally admitted students that do not complete their contract. A committee composed of the Dean of Students, the Director of Academic Advising, the Director and Learning Assistance, and a faculty representative review the situation and determines the enrollment status of the student for the next semester. Previously, the Dean of Students had the sole responsibility of making enrollment decisions.

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

Many of the student resources are still located in different locations on the campus. Currently we do not have a large enough location to include counseling services, academic advising and financial aid along with the Academic Center for Excellence. The result is that communication about available resources to students, faculty and staff is still a challenge. Also facing the university is determining what type of coordination is possible for the currently non-centralized resources.