
Action Project

Title: Fostering Relationships with Area Businesses and Organizations
Version: 3

Institution: Midstate College **Status:** Completed
Submitted: 2009-11-24 **Category:** 9-Building Collaborative Relationships

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2004-09-20
Target completion date:
Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The goal of this Action Project is to create a process for establishing relationships with external stakeholders and to create metrics for measuring the effectiveness of these relationships and the resources provided to and obtained from them. As part of this project, roles will be developed for personnel to obtain feedback and monitor the process.

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

In 1999, the Illinois Board of Higher Education adopted *The Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities, and Excellence* as goals for higher education. IBHE has encouraged institutions to establish community partnerships and gain feedback from outside constituents. The completion of this project will be instrumental in fulfilling these requirements. The *AQIP Examiner Feedback Report* demonstrated an opportunity for improvement in the area of collaboration with business, industry, and community organizations.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

The organizational areas, institutional departments, and divisions largely affected by this Action Project are as follows: career placement assistance, admissions, program directors, advisory boards, alumni, academic departments, administration and students.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

Currently, departments within Midstate College interact independently with area businesses and organizations. As a result, the organization's collaborative practices are fragmented. This Action Project will create a unified cross-functional approach to stakeholder outreach. The following is a list of critical processes upon which the Action Project will focus: business outreach processes - create, distribute, collect, and analyze employer and student surveys; alumni association communication processes - deliver and collect information through various alumni communication channels (newsletter, email, mailing, phone campaign, and events); program director communication processes - coordinate employer externships requests with program directors and improve communication between program directors and employers serving on advisory boards; administration processes - negotiate partnership relationship criteria with area businesses; admissions processes - link existing enrollment processes with collaboration efforts; community organizational membership processes - manage and relate existing and future employee memberships to collaboration endeavors; placement processes - tie placement department efforts with collaboration activities; curriculum enhancement processes - bring students to employers by facilitating field trips; institutional research processes - identify collaborative practices currently utilized throughout the College.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The Action Project committee will remain invigorated through regular meetings, short- and long-term goals, additional personnel, creation of a permanent, cross-functional collaboration committee, and continual review and adjustment of the key processes. The project activities will be reported to external and internal constituencies through an annual Midstate College periodical called the *Reporter*.

Project Success Monitoring

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

This Action Project will utilize the following to measure progress: annual employer satisfaction surveys, internal and external stakeholder feedback, the compilation of statistical data related to businesses collaboration, the level of partnerships with businesses and organizations, and publication of business resources available for internal constituencies.

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

The outcome measures that will be tracked for this Action Project are as follows: number of institutions and businesses contacted, number of partnerships with area businesses and organizations, level of employer satisfaction, number of internships and graduates placed for employment with partnering businesses, pool of membership in advisory boards, enrollment increased by students with employer tuition reimbursement, number of resources obtained through partnering businesses, community involvement of internal stakeholders, number of on-site business tours taken by students, and quality and quantity of current industry information including profiles of entry-level careers.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

This action project is formally coming to a close this year. The momentum for creating community partnerships will continue with the assistance of top administration, the business outreach coordinator, and the cross-functional committee. This year's achievements centered on membership increases, new partnerships, partnership renewals, and increased commitments from community and business professionals to serve in capacities such as guest speakers and advisory board members. For example, in Spring 2007 a Design Analyst from the U.S. Postal Service gave a presentation on changing postage rates to students enrolled in our Office Skills course. Midstate College's advisory board memberships have dramatically increased this year. This year the CIS/MIS academic advisory board replenished its dwindling membership pool. During the past year Peoria Workforce Development renewed its contract with Midstate College and increased its level of partnership commitment to include career fair, workshop trainings, and career connection activities. Midstate College renewed its commitment to nonprofit organizations such as Dress-for-Success, Easter Seals, and Center for Prevention of Abuse. Staff and faculty professional membership and community involvement continue to grow.

Institution Involvement

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

Each year Midstate College holds an AQIP in-service to keep the entire institution engaged in ongoing action projects. Throughout the year the cross-functional committee met regularly to assist all ongoing partnership efforts. Surveys were completed by inside and outside constituencies to determine satisfaction levels and to compile data. This year instead of a commitment form, word of mouth, email, and flyers were used as tools to get staff and faculty members engaged and garner support for partnership activities. An example of the level of commitment shown by staff can be seen from the results of a 2006-2007 nonprofit fundraising effort. Staff and faculty helped raise 12% more funds than the overall commitment goal.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The momentum of this action project will be maintained by the newly designed community outreach position called coordinator. Midstate College will work on finding ways to expand the role of this position. Communication will continue to be a key factor in integrating this position with all college departments. Biannual meetings of the cross-functional committee will help to keep efforts from stagnating.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

Centralized data is being compiled for advisory board meetings and all advisory board meetings are publicized. Data is being collected for all staff and faculty memberships, event attendance, and employers who visit campus for recruitment, promotion, or as guest speakers. Partnership information is published in the Employee Newsletter. Regular emails are sent to all internal constituencies to keep them informed of partnership opportunities. Internal partnerships have been established between placement, community outreach, admissions departments to coordinate partnership activities.

Project Challenges

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

Because of the many departments and individuals involved with various outreach efforts, it continues to be a challenge to collect all relevant data for all activities in one central area.
