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## Action Project

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**Title:** Define and Initiate an Academic Support System Promoting Student Success  
**Version:** 2

**Institution:** Midstate College                      **Status:** Active  
**Submitted:** 2010-11-29                      **Category:** 1-Helping Students Learn

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### Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2010-02-26  
Target completion date: 2012-02-24  
Actual completion date:

### Project Detail

#### Project Goal

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

The action project will define and outline processes and establish outcomes for the new Academic Support System. This will involve developing comprehensive tutoring processes across college staff (faculty, support staff, administration, etc.); establishing a flow chart; identifying key resources and their respective roles; and developing assessment methods. Expected outcomes will be a reduction in the number of courses retaken and improved course completion rates.

#### 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

Our internal stakeholders have identified Helping Students Learn as an area needing attention. The annual Student Opinion Survey results indicate the need for improved tutoring services and support the creation of this action project. In the past three years, the Higher Learning Commission feedback has also indicated this is an area which could be strengthened. Additionally, two teams of staff and faculty reviewing the systems portfolio identified this as an area which would benefit from an action project.

When administration reviewed the recommendations, a decision was made to hire two full-time faculty with expanded roles to work as Student Success Director and Student Success Coordinator. They both started working full-time beginning in early 2010. This action project will help establish a system of

student academic success resources that will significantly impact the institution's effectiveness to target students in jeopardy and identify effective methods, such as tutoring, to foster the learning process.

### Organizational Areas Affected

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

The following departments and employees will be engaged in this action project: Faculty, Administration, Program Directors, Department Assistants, Student Success Coordinator, Student Success Director, Student Records, Chief Academic Dean, Director of Assessment, Student Affairs, Librarian, and Director of eLearning.

### Key Organizational Process(es)

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

Key organizational processes: (1) tutoring methodology; (2) communication strategies; (3) task performance initiatives and flow chart development; (4) key resources and range of responsibilities identification; (5) develop methodology and assessment processes to measure: (a) course completion rates (baseline and targets); (b) course retakes; (c) effectiveness of the Academic Support System (parameters to be defined).

### Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The projected project completion is two years. The first stage of the project will focus on the development of the Academic Support System. Work will begin immediately on developing the tutoring processes and key resources. The action project team will create key documentation, communicate about student academic success services, and identify key resources to facilitate student academic achievement. The action project team will develop the means to track the usage of tutoring services and provide a stream of data relevant to assessing the effects of services. In the second stage the team will focus on continued implementation of the processes including improving awareness, evaluating early data, and defining effective results. The Midstate College Academic Support System will act as a means of "checks and balances" to continue to offer efficient and effective services to students.

### Project Success Monitoring

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

This action project will be managed by a cross-functional team. Action project team meetings will be held bi-weekly and minutes of the meetings will be kept on an internal share drive and will be accessible to all staff and faculty. As the Academic Support System is developed, processes are refined, and new documentation is created, the Student Success Director and the Chief Academic Dean will disseminate this information to key stakeholders via meetings,

orientation sessions, bulletin boards, email, newsletters, etc. Vital publications, such as student and faculty handbooks, and job descriptions of key resources will be updated as needed. The Director of Assessment will play a significant role as the data collection begins and is evaluated. This information will be reviewed by the cross-functional team for continued evaluation, and adjustments will be made to processes as needed.

### 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

Targeted outcomes include: (1) revised job descriptions for key personnel to focus on essential outcome elements; (2) improved course completion rates; (3) reduction of the number of courses retaken; (4) documented data to facilitate and assess the effectiveness of the Academic Support System.

## Annual Update

### Project Accomplishments and Status

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

This action project was incepted March 2010. Accomplishments thus far are forthright; those accomplishments are presenting additional challenges and leading to additional avenues of exploration and planning. The primary task has been the development of the Office of Student Success (OSS). Two full-time employees oversee and manage the initiatives of this action project. The focus has been on academic counseling to students who are on probation and/or those receiving D's or F's at midterm. Positive results are visible in follow-up on students' success in their individual classes. Data is also being collected and analyzed regarding tutorial requests and follow-up. An attendance policy has been implemented regarding follow-up with sporadic attendance in the first four weeks. An administrative drop policy has also been adopted and communicated campus wide. We are currently gathering data to evaluate intense attendance monitoring and impact on student attendance. A brochure regarding the Office of Student Success has been developed and distributed campus wide. This brochure will be tailored and updated to meet current service needs as warranted.

### Institution Involvement

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

Monthly meetings are held with an appointed action-project committee comprised of members from key staff at various levels. Minutes are distributed to the committee and housed on the shared drive. Full-time and adjunct faculty are critical to the project's success; therefore, presentations regarding tutoring and OSS services are presented at faculty meetings and at staff in-services. A Student Referral Form has been updated and is distributed at the beginning of each term. This serves as a means of referral for tutoring and/or other academic support. Various members of faculty and staff are recruited to assist with

“specifically identified” seminars and projects. Up-to-date status reports are given at AQIP Core meetings. eLearning will be included in tutorials and contact as well.

### Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The data that has been collected regarding current tutoring needs indicates that there are “trends” in the courses that have the highest number of tutorial requests. As a result, plans are being formulated for tutorial labs in specific subjects including, but not limited to, math, writing, and accounting. It is foreseen that these labs will be held weekly at specified hours. There are also plans for workshops to include: study skills, test taking, basic computer skills, etc. and seminars to include MLA/APA documentation, note taking, etc. These will be offered to both day and evening students.

### Resulting Effective Practices

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

This project is in its infancy (at the half way point of year one of a two-year project). At this time data supports the importance of early student follow-up and rigorous contact with students in jeopardy—grades, attendance, etc. Inclusion of existent faculty (both full-time and adjunct) is a strong component of the success of this project.

### Project Challenges

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

Difficulties identified are the availability of tutors at specific student-identified needed time slots. At this time, we are not in need of any assistance from AQIP.

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