AQIP Action Project Annual Update Fall 2007: Faculty Academy

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

The goal of the Faculty Academy project was to systematize faculty training and instructional development into classes attended by a cohort of participants over course of about five weeks. During the Fall 2006 semester a cohort of fourteen new or newer, defined as three or fewer years of service at HCC, participated in Faculty Academy I. The five two-hour sessions were spread out over a ten week period. The topics covered in Faculty Academy I included: student learning outcomes, student learning style preferences, rubrics, classroom assessment techniques, writing assignments, library tools for faculty, technology, and student life issues. Presenters included Instructional Development personnel, Academic Support staff, Student Services staff, and senior faculty members. Faculty participants were surveyed upon completion of the program to find out if they were satisfied. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

During the Spring 2007 semester, Faculty Academy II was offered for more experienced faculty. Twelve faculty members participated in this cohort. The topics mirrored the sections to be included in the HCC promotion portfolios and included: creating a teaching philosophy, providing evidence of student learning, and engaging in professional development activities. Again, presenters included Instructional Development personnel, Academic Support staff, Student Services staff, and senior faculty members. Faculty participants were surveyed upon completion of the program to find out if they were satisfied. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

During the summer 2007, the Faculty Academy model was written up and presented to the HCC Instructional Development Center (IDC). The IDC has now taken ownership of the program and has begun a Fall 2007 version of Faculty Academy I for new or newer faculty and plans to offer Faculty Academy II for more experienced faculty during the Spring 2008 semester.

Finally, the team revamped slightly the college’s new faculty orientation nights by setting time aside for new faculty to meet with experienced faculty to discuss what they can expect from students at Heartland Community College. Exit surveys of participants indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the revamped program.

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

The team consisted of key personnel from across the college including full-time and adjunct faculty, instructional development, academic support, and student services. As some team members fell away for various and sundry reasons, new team members were actively recruited via formal e-mails and word of mouth.
3. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The next and final step before this action project will be retired is to perform a set of follow up interviews or surveys with Faculty Academy participants. In interviews, we would like to find out if faculty are using or have used any of the practices offered by the Faculty Academy courses in their classes. Once this is completed we can produce a final report and trust that the college’s Instructional Development Center will continue the program as part of its menu of offerings.

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

There have been two effective practices. The first is to have faculty encounter these teaching and learning workshops as a cohort. Interacting with the same people over the course of a semester encouraged comfortable yet frank discussions, the sharing of information about how everyone’s courses were going, and the ability to adapt the training or informational materials to individual faculty needs as they changed over time.

The second is to provide a formal, scheduled space for senior or experienced faculty to talk with other senior or experienced faculty about the teaching and learning process. Many participants noted that they were invigorated by the sessions.

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

We don’t really perceive any major challenges since the project is all but complete. Tracking down all the participants from the first semester’s cohort in order to interview them might be difficult since they were all adjunct faculty.