Project Details

Title	Assessing the role of USM's Academic Resource Center	Status	ACTIVE
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated	09-26-2011
Timeline		Reviewed	10-05-2011
Planned Project Kickoff 09-01-2010		Created	09-03-2010
Target Completion 09-01-2011		Last Modified	10-05-2011

- 1:

Project Accomplishments and Status

- A:

  - Over the past year, a committee composed of faculty and staff has continued to study current use of the ARC, its strengths and weaknesses, and other best practice models. We used the time to identify:
    1. target population (conditional admittance and probationary students)
    2. ways to gather and measure data to better determine both current and future ARC usage
    3. benchmarks to determine how ARC usage relates to achieving end goals related to retention and advancement (GPA by semester, Student retention semester-to-semester, vertical movement on degree track, achievement of an AA degree, pass/fail rates in remediation courses, and time to get off probation).
    4. Measurements to determine how the ARC's current resources meet or do not meet current and projected demand for these students.

Very shortly into the first year, the committee determined that we will need another year to refine these measuring tools (for example, we are still determining how to feasibly and efficiently measure ARC usage) and put data collection into effect, as well as get measurable results to verify the conclusions we believe to be necessary.

- R:

This Action Project was launched in 2010 to review the effectiveness of the Academic Resource Center (ARC), which provides tutoring and other forms of assistance to students in math, writing and other subjects. Progress appears

to have been made, although extending the time-frame an additional year to refine the measurement tools that will be used, may be excessive. The institution might consider collecting data using the measures it has identified to date, to determine their effectiveness in answering the questions to be addressed, rather than delaying any further. It is not clear that more refined measures will yield better results or what criteria will be used to determine which measures are best.

- 2:

Institution Involvement

- A:

  - The Academic Resource Center supports students in all of our academic areas. Committee members represent the ARC, mathematics, English, and Psychology, as well as representative of our First Year Experience program, Enrollment Management, and the Student Success Office.

- R:

The services provided by the ARC are important for students without adequate preparation to perform at the college level. It is not uncommon to discover that a larger number of students can benefit from such support services than those targeted through this project, and the University is encouraged to consider the results of their analysis with this in mind. This is consistent with the principles of high performing organizations in being learning oriented and using fact-based information gathering.

- 3:

Next Steps

- A:

Over the past year, a committee composed of faculty and staff has continued to study current use of the ARC, its strengths and weaknesses, and other best practice models. Our purpose for the next year is to determine how to improve the ARC's ability to serve our probationary and conditional admittance students. As previously noted, we used the first year to identify:

1. target population (conditional admittance and probationary students)
2. ways to gather and measure data to better determine both current and future ARC usage

3. benchmarks to determine how ARC usage relates to achieving end goals related to retention and advancement (GPA by semester, Student retention semester-to-semester, vertical movement on degree track, achievement of an AA degree, pass/fail rates in remediation courses, and time to get off probation).
4. measurements to determine how the ARC's current resources meet or do not meet current and projected demand for these students.

Very shortly into the first year, the committee determined that we will need another year to refine these measuring tools (for example, we are still determining how to feasibly and efficiently measure ARC usage) and put data collection into effect, as well as get measurable results to verify the conclusions we believe to be necessary.

Further, we will collect data and continue to meet regularly to evaluate the data and how it relates to our projections.

- R:

Having taken an additional year to complete this Action Project, it appears the institution is ready to proceed with its evaluation of the effectiveness of the ARC. The institution is encouraged to consider broadening its evaluation, for example, by increasing the target population to include *any* student using the services of ARC, rather than limiting their study to conditional admits and students on probation. This could be useful in determining other ways in which the ARC is effective and the role it plays in the life of the institution, as well as in overall student retention and advancement. This would be consistent with the principles of high performing organizations that focus on stakeholders and their needs, and fact-based information gathering.

- 4:

Resulting Effective Practices

- A:

Very shortly into the first year, the committee determined that we will need another year to refine these measuring tools (for example, we are still determining how to feasibly and efficiently measure ARC usage) and put data collection into effect, as well as get measurable results to verify the conclusions we believe to be necessary.

- R:

It is unclear if the institution considers this extension of time as an “effective practice” that is to be replicated in the future. It appears the additional time allowed is for more careful consideration of the parameters of this project. It might be useful for the institution to consider and analyze the process by which they decided to extend the timeframe for this project as a potential “effective practice,” for continuous improvement.

- 5:

Project Challenges

- A:

Very shortly into the first year, the committee determined that we will need another year to refine these measuring tools (for example, we are still determining how to feasibly and efficiently measure ARC usage) and put data collection into effect, as well as get measurable results to verify the conclusions we believe to be necessary. Although AQIP review would be appreciated, we see no need at this point for any additional AQIP help.

- R:

The institution appears to understand what needs to be done going forward and is making slow or leisurely progress towards completion. It is encouraged to remain open to the possibility that they do not know everything at this point, prior to collecting and analyzing the results of their review, and that the data may not prove statistically significant or explain all of the phenomena being studied. It may be useful to consider using an “Action Research” approach here, due to the nature of the questions being asked and to be answered. This is consistent with the principles of high performing organizations that are learning oriented and use fact-based information gathering.