

## The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

### University of St. Francis: A Strategic Approach to Retention

Project Details	
<b>Title</b>	A Strategic Approach to Retention
<b>Category</b>	3-Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b>	02-16-2004
<b>Actual Completion</b>	
<b>Status</b>	COMPLETED
<b>Updated</b>	08-28-2007
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<b>Last Modified</b>	01-12-2010

  

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

**A:** Improve student retention through the development of a systematic approach and response to retention issues. The design will reflect a university-wide commitment to quality student life and learning, emphasize the importance of the individual student, and incorporate the consistent use of data.

  

**2: 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:**

**A:** Though the university recognized the importance of retaining students, its past approach to retention involved trying strategies based on their success at other institutions, not based on data of our students' needs or desires. Neither the approach nor the data was coordinated. Responsibility was splintered and therefore, often not accepted or recognized. The university's strategic plan includes the objective to improve retention within the "framework of a welcoming community." To accomplish this objective, a retention approach based on good data is required. Ownership of the retention and strategies must be established. Finally, in order to be a welcoming community who retains students, the entire university must become involved in contributing to the importance of the individual student.

  

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

**A:** Every member of the university has a role in retention. This plan will establish a network structure that will bring in each area. The core areas involved will be Admissions and Enrollment, Academic Affairs including Academic support and Advising, Student Affairs including Resident Life and Student supports, Institutional Research and Business services.

  

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

**A:** Data collection and analysis--coordination of enrollment information and student information services with institutional research and retention. Enrollment services --Prospective persistent student profile Teaching & Learning--student academic success from courses, experiences, and supports University Student Services--services for students throughout the university such as financial aid, registrar, housing, food, recreation, and health care

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

**A:** · Minutes of all meetings will be placed in a common drive on university computer system. · Chair of the QSLL strategy committee will report each semester to the President's cabinet. · Annually, a report will be presented to the Academic Assembly, the faculty's governance body.

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

**A:** Data collection and analysis—Monitor and track persistence and persistence factors of undergraduate, transfer, degree-completion, and graduate cohorts. Administer Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey and NSSE. Identify students and populations at risk, and barriers to success. Create profile of a successful student. Enrollment services—Track persistence of students based on entering factors Teaching & Learning--Monitor NSSE, Early Alerts and Mid-term Warnings, Probation Lists and D,F,W course rates. Use results of Freshmen LASSI and CIRP to identify potential risk students or behaviors. University Student Services—Student Satisfaction Survey and department customer service surveys

**7: 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:**

**A:** We will track: Student Satisfaction, Engagement, and Retention, as well as Employee Participation. 1. Retention rates of students from first semester to second, from first year to second year, and each year through year six. 2. Student graduation rates 3. Alumni surveys 4. Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey 5. NSSE 6. The number of employees who choose to be involved with retention activities. 7. Employee participation in FSSE and IPS.

**8: Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc):**

**A:** – Establish baselines and system: 1. Establish a system of teams to deal with retention issues. This system will consist of a core strategy team, and three teams based a student cohorts of undergraduate, graduate, and degree completion students. A pool of consultants from throughout the university will also be employed. 2. Develop a process to respond to data and initiate strategies aimed at improving retention. 3. Develop a universal (university-wide) long –term goal and a short-term goal more narrowly targeted for addressing an issue that deals with retention. 4. Begin a profile of the successful traditional undergraduate 5. Administer NSSE and FSSE for a base line. 6. Complete retention data view for first-time undergraduate students– Create an environment with a focus on unity and team building 1. Create and begin to implement strategies to fulfill the goals. 2. Assign ownership of strategies and their segments 3. Complete retention data view for transfer undergraduate students 4. Identify second short-term goal 5. Improved satisfaction rates on Noel Levitz, decrease satisfaction gap where gap is greater than 1.0. 6. Increase employee participation rate in Noel Levitz by 5% 7. Increase of 1% in overall retention1. Complete retention data view for graduate and degree completion students 2. Continue with second phase of strategies for long-term goal. 3. Identify third short-term goal and addressing strategies 4. Begin profiles of other successful student types 5. Increase in student engagement. 6. Increase in faculty participation in FSSE. 7. Increase of 1% in overall retention