

Project Details

Title	Promoting Student Success in Gateway Courses	Status	DRAFT UPDATE
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated	
Timeline		Reviewed	
Planned Project Kickoff		Created	11-03-2012
08-21-2012			
Target Completion		Last Modified	11-15-2012
05-31-2013			

- **1:** Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:
- **A:** The goals of "Promoting Student Success in Gateway Courses" are implied in the title. The first goal is to assist the students in seven Vincennes University courses with high enrollments and traditionally low completion rates. The second goal is to encourage thinking about improved retention in other gateway courses, and another goal is to use data as a tool to improve retention understanding and predictions.
- **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:** The project goals are high on VU's list of current priorities because VU is committed to student success as a "premier learning institution." The sixth value and indicator of success described in VU's "Premier Learning Institution" document addresses "Academic and Student Support Services": *The institution provides a comprehensive array of academic and student support services to meet the instructional and personal development needs of students. Special efforts are made to ensure that these services are of the highest quality possible, are made well known across the institutional community, are made available at times and in locations convenient to students, and are provided using a variety of delivery methods to meet the various learning styles and needs of students.* The project is also important because of Indiana's new completion agenda and outcomes-based funding formula. VU is also working to develop better data intelligence; the assessment of this project is a key to that overall goal. VU hopes the project can serve as a model of data used for explaining and planning student success strategies.
- **3:** List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:
- **A:** The academic programs directly affected by the project are accounting, business, psychology, sociology, reading, and English. The students affected

are both majors and general education students. Four types of projects will be part of this experiment:

- Supplemental instruction will be piloted in some sections of Introduction to Psychology and Principles of Sociology
- Themed English Composition II sections will be piloted in an effort to find content that engages students in writing projects
- A form of required lab time, led by instructors and student leaders, will help Accounting students succeed in a gateway program course
- Linked courses (Developmental English, Developmental Reading, and Intro. to Business) will be used to increase success in the developmental and gateway courses.

VU hopes that an indirect effect will be faculty in other areas will consider similar student success projects. Assuming more of these projects develop, the University will be affected as retention is improved.

- **4:** Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:
- **A:** The key organizational processes that will be affected by this project are student learning and measuring effectiveness. VU's mission is to be a premier learning institution. The project should encourage creative consideration of means of achieving greater student retention and success. The project should also strengthen the institution's use of assessment data to make strategic decisions. The project is based on data that indicates these courses are barriers to success, and the impact of the project on learning will be measured in terms of data showing improved student course completion. This data can also be used for planning future projects and follow-up on students' retention and degree completion.
- **5:** Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):
- **A:** The project is intended to be a one-year project, with follow-up on program and degree completion. The project is being implemented in the affected courses during the 2012-13 academic year, and data will be collected to determine the success of the projects. While the projects will continue beyond the first year and the original plans might evolve, the project is intended to be a short-term project to "get-the-ball-rolling" on supplemental instruction, paired courses, and other student engagement and success activities. The results of the individual projects will determine needed improvements or answer continuation questions.
- **6:** Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

- **A:** Assessment data will determine the success of the project. Students in the project courses and sections will be compared to students in non-project sections and success data from previous years. Improved retention should be easy to measure using both coursework and final grades. Students in all the project courses will also be surveyed to measure levels of engagement and attitudes about their success and the courses. Students will be tracked to compare retention and completion rates of students working through the experimental course sections and beyond.
- **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:** As noted in #6, increased student success and retention in the gatekeeper courses participating in the project will be one direct measure. Long-term retention and success will also be tracked. A second, more indirect measure of the project's success will be the dialogue about success that the project creates and other faculty and staff efforts to increase success in other gatekeeper courses. To encourage the conversation, participating faculty will be surveyed (or asked to do a reflective writing project) so their experiences can be summarized and compared. The teacher/student experience and student learning and success results will be shared with University faculty and staff.