A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer: Improve success and increase retention of developmental learners

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer: This project can revitalize our developmental studies program and infuse basic skills throughout the curriculum. This project will identify, through pilot programs, the most effective strategies for working with developmental learners in Reading, Fundamentals of English, and Fundamentals of Math. Those strategies will then be incorporated into our developmental education curriculum and ultimately, infused across our college-level curriculum. By redesigning instructional programs and improving instructional methods, students will better gain the skills they need to persist in achieving their educational goals.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact: Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. 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: The stimulus for this project derived independently from several sources. Faculty recognized increasingly their students' struggle with the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Financial Aid officers noted increases in the number of students identified as low income. Student Services personnel observed dramatic shifts in the number of students identified as "at risk". As a result, HCC successfully applied for and received Title III funding, specifically to address the developmental learner. Our Conversation Day further validated the idea. Participants identified the need to overhaul our basic skills programs as one of our 17 Provocative Propositions and then one of our Vital Few. Subsequent to Conversation Day, and independent of the AQIP process, the Title III team started the process of identifying the specific objectives and performance objectives to be associated with the project. The AQIP team consequently integrated Title III efforts on behalf of the developmental learner into institutional efforts to pursue North Central accreditation through the AQIP process. Redesigning developmental education delivery systems will increase the academic success of the developmental learner, lead to increased persistence (to college level courses), and result in an increased number of developmental learners reaching their academic goals.
E. List the organizational areas - institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units - most affected by or involved in this Action Project: Academic Affairs: curriculum, teaching techniques, faculty development Student Services: advising, retention, financial aid, student behavior

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve: Organizational structure: to better manage this project, and as part of the Title III grant, a new structure, with accompanying staff, has been developed and incorporated into the College's organizational flow chart. In turn, those staff members have been integrated into pre-existing teams designed to address issues surrounding the developmental learner. Enrollment/Advising: proper initial and ongoing placement into developmental coursework Faculty development: expansion of faculty awareness of capability in teaching techniques needed to reach/assist developmental learners Support services: creation of "supplemental instructors" program of peer tutors, availability of labs in off hours, creation of learning communities

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion): As mentioned above, a new organizational structure, with accompanying staff, has been developed and incorporated into HCC's organizational flow chart. The project director principally accountable for oversight of this action project now reports biweekly to the president in conjunction with the president's regularly scheduled senior management team. Additionally, a developmental education specialist has been hired to be primarily responsible for the development and implementation of the specific objectives associated with the developmental learning project.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing: Process measures will focus on a series of pilots that will be developed and introduced over the three year action project. Pilots will be established in the areas of student tracking, advisor training, delivery of developmental education, supplemental instruction, linked or learning communities, and multimedia & computer assisted instruction (CAI/MAI or SmartRoom).

I. 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: The outcome measures will be tied to the process measures and simply track the number of participants completing student tracking, advisor training, delivery of developmental education, supplemental instruction, linked or learning communities, and multimedia & computer assisted instruction (CAI/MAI or SmartRoom). We may additionally track the use number and use of SmartRooms created and available for use by faculty.

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

- By September 30, 2004, 50% of all students will have been placed in the new student tracking system.
- By September 30, 2004, 50% of advisors will demonstrate competence in using the Student Tracking System as a result of professional development opportunities.
• Students enrolled in pilot Developmental Reading courses will successfully complete course work at a rate 10% higher than students in traditional developmental reading courses during the 2002-2003 baseline academic year.
• Development students participating in Learning Communities will persist from fall to spring at a rate 10% greater than non-participating students within the same academic year and compared to 2002-03 data.
• Developmental Reading faculty will incorporate the use of CAI/MAI and other learning strategies at least 25% of the time by September 30, 2005 as a result of faculty development activities.
• By September 30, 2005, 50% of advisors will demonstrate competence in using Intrusive Advisement strategies as a result of professional development opportunities.
• By September 30, 2005, 25% of faculty will incorporate learning style diversity strategies and effective teaching skills into their courses.
• Students enrolled in pilot Developmental Writing courses will successfully complete course work at a rate 10% higher than students in traditional developmental writing courses during the 2002-2003 baseline academic year.
• By September 30, 2006, 50% of advisors will incorporate intrusive advising strategies.
• Developmental Writing faculty will incorporate the use of CAI/MAI and other learning strategies at least 25% of the time by September 30, 2006 as a result of faculty development activities.
• Fifty per cent of Developmental Math faculty will have incorporated the use of CAI/MAI and other learning strategies by April 30, 2006, as a result of faculty development activities.

K. Project Leader and contact person:
Contact Name: Peter Gochis, Title III Activity Director/Intervention
Email: pgochis@highlandcc.edu
Phone: 785-442-6061 Ext.

Annual Update: 2006-09-07

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

By September 30, 2006, 50% of advisors will incorporate intrusive advising strategies. Sixteen advisors (55% of the total number of advisors) completed follow-up surveys in May of 2006, designed to indicate how frequently advisors utilize the intrusive advising competencies in which they were trained. Each participant rated their use of each objective on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing "often" and 1 representing "never. COMPETENCIES Mn SD

1. Assist students in ID/developing college goals. 4.00 .82
2. Help students develop the ability to make informed decisions. 4.38 .72
3. Utilize student motivation in making course selections.
4.25 .86
4. ID on-campus career development resources for students. 3.75 .77
5. Help students recognize and choose career prep options. 3.81 1.11
6. Help students form connections on campus. 4.06 .93
7. Help students feel less anxious, overwhelmed and confused. 4.38 .62
8. Help students with course selection. 4.81 .40
9. Help ensure that students take courses in proper sequence. 4.81 .40
10. Help students develop more academic confidence. 4.44 .73

As shown by the data and the charts, participants indicate regular use of all ten competencies. Helping students select courses and take them in the proper sequence are the highest rated items, each with mean ratings of 4.81. These two items also have the lowest standard deviations (.40) manifesting that the high ratings are very common across advisors. The lowest frequency of use deals with career development resources and decisions, although the ratings still indicate that such is not uncommon (3.75 and 3.81). Helping students deal with career preparation options has the highest standard deviation (1.11) of all ten items, suggesting that there is considerable variation from one advisor to another in how much time is spent with this function. All other items averaged a rating of 4.00 or above, indicating that they are frequently used. When combined with the high degree of gain in competence reported for the training sessions, this follow-up report indicates that the objectives chosen for the advisor training were practical and functional goals. It also provides clear evidence that the advisors perceive themselves to be frequently using nearly all of the competencies. Developmental Writing faculty will incorporate the use of CAI/MAI and other learning strategies at least 25% of the time by September 30, 2006 as a result of faculty development activities. The only two full-time developmental writing faculty members on the main campus use PassKey in their Fundamentals of English classes. Another regular adjunct instructor also uses this self-paced, web-based software. Just over sixty students are currently enrolled in these courses. PassKey was pilot tested in the fall of 2005 and selected as the CAI software for this course. The same two full-time instructors also participated in Title III training in the summer of 2005 in the use of instructional technology, research based effective teaching methods and adapting instruction to different learning styles. Fifty per cent of Developmental Math faculty will have incorporated the use of CAI/MAI and other learning strategies by April 30, 2006, as a result of faculty development activities. Three of the four full-time teachers who teach developmental math are currently using Hawkes Learning Systems and/or ALEKS math software. Over one-hundred-and-twenty students are currently enrolled in these courses. Two of the four teachers also participated in Title III training in the summer of 2004 and/or 2005 in the use of instructional technology, research based effective teaching methods and adapting instruction to different learning styles.

Review (09-08-06):

This project is a superb practical reflection of AQIP category (1), and the attendant positive application of the extant competencies. The participants ratings were a positive measure of the successes as a predicate to achieving the original goals. Moreover, the 55% survey completion rate reflects a higher than average group response, but presents an on-going challenge in
expanding the successful implementation rate for practical and functional goals already in evidence. The fact that the Advisors perceive themselves as integral participants in all competencies reflects AQIP category (2), "Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives". AQIP category (5), "Leading and Communicating", raises a follow-on challenge to enhance the interest and inclusion of the 45% advisory participants who may become motivated to future projects through the encouraging value of "Planning Continuance Improvement", AQIP category (8). This phase of the institutions five year laudatory effort to improve basic skills communication may be completed, but the gains of the AQIP process will be forthcoming for years. Your obvious institutional recognition of the inherent value in continuous monitoring of the action project through practical pilot projects such as, Involving Student Tracking, Supplemental Instruction and further Advisory Training is laudable and addresses AQIP category (3), Understanding Students AND OTHER STAKEHOLDER'S NEEDS. (emphasis added)

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

All 29 advisers were involved in the Intrusive Advising Training during the fall and spring of '05-'06. The lead developmental writing teacher pilot tested the PassKey software in the spring of '06. Both full-time teachers participated in reviewing the software prior to the pilot testing. All full-time teachers involved in teaching developmental math participated in demonstration of the Hawkes software. The lead developmental math teacher pilot tested ALEKS and PassKey in the spring of '06 and selected ALEKS as the better of those two. She is currently using ALEKS and Hawkes with different classes. All of the math teachers, both full-time and part-time were paid to participate in Hawkes training prior to the fall '06 semester.

Review (09-08-06):

The 100% faculty participation for this phase of your Action Project speaks well for the Advisory Aspect of the Developmental Studies program. As part of the AQIP category (1), "Helping Students Learn", the inclusion of new technologies will enhance the faculty's intellectual climate. The institutional commitment in funding the Hawks Training is a positive signal for the remaining two years of you Title III grant.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

Project concluded.

Review (09-08-06):

This specific Action Project may be completed. However, that completion and the attendant quality improvement opportunity for Developmental Learners opens new avenues for the advancement of your primary AQIP category (1) goals. It is also accompanied by an obvious challenge to expand AQIP category (2) through the inclusion of the 45% of the advisory group needing further encouragement. The subliminal institutional leadership challenge will be to expand AQIP category (4) "Valuing People" to reach the inevitable cohort in every institution who require special encouragement. Please don't forget the other aspect of AQIP (4) which encourages a pat on the back for those participants in leadership categories who have earned recognition.
D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project. Instructors will review data collected from the current semester in order to decide what software to continue using. In the CAI courses, the emphasis is continued upon "computer assisted" instruction rather than "computer delivered" instruction. I.e., the teacher continues to meet with the class, providing some traditional instruction and monitoring student work on the computers.

Review (09-08-06):

Kudos to the faculty members who have recognized that the insertion of new technologies requires the observance of age-old rules involving "change". Good things require time! Total acceptance by any faculty is a transitional process; not an event. Your emphasis on "computer assisted" instruction in its manifold forms will require patience in the application of quality improvements steps. This PROJECT may be completed, but now the steady application of implementation work begins and suggests a follow-on AQIP project whose methodology you quite clearly already understand in your total institutional approach.

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

Project concluded.

Review (09-08-06):

N/A A follow-on project in the AQIP spirit is suggested. The 100% participation by an enthusiastic faculty presents multifarious project challenges. You have made an excellent start toward a more robust curriculum for Developmental Learners. The AQIP process provides future facilitating vehicles for future success.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-08-06):

N/A For future consideration.
Timeline:
Planned project kickoff date: -
Target completion date: -
Actual completion date: -

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer: Improving the Invitational Culture on Campus

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer: Examine the campus culture, especially as it relates to living on campus. Design and implement appropriate training, activities, policies, and evaluation so that the campus culture is inviting to all students.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:
Primary Category: Valuing People

D. 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: Recent findings from a research project conducted on this campus indicated a need to improve the climate in campus housing. Students reported that disrespectful and intimidating behaviors exhibited by a small counter cultural group of resident students had a negative impact on their own sense of safety on campus. Further, they were concerned that untrained resident assistants sent an inconsistent message to residents living on campus, again, threatening their sense of safety. Students generally agreed that the housing policies are reasonable and that their sense of safety was enhanced when the policies were enforced. Students also recognized cultural differences between students from rural and urban areas and expressed a lack of understanding or naivety in dealing with those differences. Data for this research was collected from student exit interviews, a student focus group, and student interviews. Findings from the research project were confirmed by results of additional quantitative and qualitative data including the Student Satisfaction Survey, concerns expressed at Conversation Day, and by low retention rates in campus housing from fall to spring semesters.

E. List the organizational areas - institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units - most affected by or involved in this Action Project: Campus housing, student retention, student recruitment, safety and security on campus, campus climate, and maintenance issues will all be affected as a result of this project.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve: Housing orientation will be enhanced so that students realize HCC expectations for living on campus. RA and other leadership training programs will be made available for students leaders so that they are better skilled at conflict resolution, organization, teamwork, problem solving, etc. RA's will be required to offer programming for resident students as well as being provided with a budget to do so.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion): The retention team will be actively involved in collecting and reviewing all data related to this project. Processes identified in this project will be documented, reviewed, and re-visited as needed. The vice president for student services, housing director, and all related staff
are committed to enhancing the residential environment and are active members of the AQIP team and retention team.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing: Quantitative data will be collected, reviewed, and compiled so that data driven decisions can be made that will positively impact the campus culture. Qualitative data will be collected and coded to uncover the invitational and disinvitational aspects of people, places, programs, processes, and policies associated with campus living at HCC. Appropriate responses to the data will be addressed by the retention team.

I. 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: Student satisfaction will be enhanced as evidenced by decreased performance gap scores on the Student Satisfaction Inventory. Retention rates in student housing will be increased. The invitational environment on campus will be enhanced as a result of decreased campus fines.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.): By September 30, 2005 Performance Gaps in the Student Satisfaction Inventory for the following areas will be as follows:

- Campus Climate .65
- Safety and Security 1.00

By September 30, 2005, Performance Gaps on the specific housing questions in the Student Satisfaction Inventory will be as follows:

- Campus housing is well maintained. 1.25
- The housing staff (director(s) and RA’s) is helpful. .75
- Housing policies and procedures are reasonable. .75
- The atmosphere in and around campus housing is inviting. 1.0
- The housing staff is fair and unbiased in their treatment of all students living on campus. 1.0

By the start of the fall semester of 2005, campus apartments will be at full capacity. By the spring semester of 2005 (January), campus apartments will be at 75% capacity. By September 30, 2005 the number of returning on campus students will be 27% of the entire student body. By September 30, 2005 the percentage of students returning to campus housing will be 30%.

Develop programming opportunities for resident students. Create an enhanced invitational campus environment and collect baseline data on the following.

- Alcohol fines (campus and police)
- Educational environment fines (Trash, noise, visitation, pets, smoking)
- Destruction of Property Fines
- Theft
- Weapons/Firearms Violations
- Drug Violations (campus and police)
- # Students on Housing Warning Status
- # Students on Housing Probation Status
• # Students dismissed from housing Invitational and Disinvitational aspects of people, places, policies, processes, and places pertaining to campus living will be identified through qualitative research and reinforced or addressed as needed.

By September 30, 2006 Performance Gaps in the Student Satisfaction Inventory for the following areas will be as follows:

• Campus Climate .60
• Safety and Security .95

By September 30, 2006, Performance Gaps on the specific housing questions in the Student Satisfaction Inventory will be as follows:

• Campus housing is well maintained. 1.15
• The housing staff (director(s) and RA’s) is helpful. .70
• Housing policies and procedures are reasonable. .70
• The atmosphere in and around campus housing is inviting. .95
• The housing staff is fair and unbiased in their treatment of all students living on campus. .95

By the start of the fall semester of 2006, campus apartments will be at full capacity. By the spring semester of 2006 (January), campus apartments will be at 80% capacity. By September 30, 2006 the number of returning on campus students will be 29% of the entire student body. By September 30, 2006 the percentage of students returning to campus housing will be 33%.

Decrease the number of housing fines as compared to baseline year. Invitational and Disinvitational aspects of people, places, policies, processes, and places pertaining to campus living will be identified through qualitative research and reinforced or addressed as needed. By September 30, 2007 Performance Gaps in the Student Satisfaction Inventory for the following areas will be as follows:

• Campus Climate .55
• Safety and Security .90

By September 30, 2007, Performance Gaps on the specific housing questions in the Student Satisfaction Inventory will be as follows:

• Campus housing is well maintained. 1.05
• The housing staff (director(s) and RA’s) is helpful. .65
• Housing policies and procedures are reasonable. .65
• The atmosphere in and around campus housing is inviting. .90
• The housing staff is fair and unbiased in their treatment of all students living on campus. .90

By the start of the fall semester of 2006, campus apartments will be at full capacity. By the spring semester of 2007 (January), campus apartments will be at 85% capacity. By September 30, 2007 the number of returning on campus students will be 31% of the entire student body. By September 30, 2006 the percentage of students returning to campus housing will be 35%.

Decrease number of housing fines from year 2. Invitational and Disinvitational aspects of people, places, policies, processes, and places pertaining to campus living will be identified through qualitative research and reinforced or addressed as needed.

K. Project Leader and contact person:
A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project. Analysis of Year One data in Sept. 2005 indicated that we met or exceeded all but 2 Performance Targets on the Student Satisfaction Inventory. We fell less than .1 short in "the Housing Staff is helpful" and "housing policies and procedures are reasonable". Housing environment and property destruction fines were greatly increased, however that was due to more enforcement, rather than more incidents. Spring housing numbers were above the 80% performance target goal that had been set. A call effort was implemented to retain students for spring semester who had not enrolled by the end of fall semester. Of the 45 students reported by academic advisors, 25 were contacted in this effort and 48.9% enrolled after that phone contact.

Review (09-15-06):

Highland has established a clear plan with defined goals and benchmarks. This project involves a significant cultural shift that will take time. You are to be congratulated for making progress in this first year; however, Highland will have to adept at involving student residents and advisors in this cultural shift so that it can truly understand students' needs (AQIP #3).

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project. We have increased the programming opportunities available for students on campus and focused on creating additional services to improve the campus atmosphere. Our activities director has launched a variety of programs that are then delegated to Resident Advisors for execution. Other services utilizing current staff include on-campus security, new student & parent orientation hosted by Student Services staff, contact calls for retention by advisors and admissions staff, and an enhanced summer maintenance schedule.

Review (09-15-06):

What is not clear in this response is the inclusion of students in this Action Project. Their involvement would be essential in this project; however, this involvement is not clear. Stating that the activities director “delegates” to RAs implies a lack of participative involvement in developing solutions. Based on this response, it appears that Highland should involve more and broader participation in this projects—particularly students, resident advisors, residents, and, perhaps, other student leaders. The project’s success is based on Understanding Students’ Needs, AQIP Principle #3, and yet, they do not seem to be involved. Moreover, because this project entails a significant cultural shift, it will require their participation and buy-in to succeed.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project. Retention of students to the second year at our institution is still not meeting our Performance Target. We plan to focus efforts on increasing this figure. Overall students are more satisfied with the campus environment, and we
need to focus on personal contact to increase our retention. Surveys show that students are placing an increasing value upon advisors, and we would like to continue to develop efforts to work through them for discovering our at-risk students and maintaining contact with them so they do not fall through the cracks.

**Review (09-15-06):**

It is unclear if the reference to advisors is to resident advisors or faculty advisors. Probably it refers to resident advisors with whom students have the most and strongest connection because they are their peers. Cultural change requires change from within, and these resident advisors are the force within your residence halls. Involve them more in the planning, empower them to try some of their solutions, and build a recognition and reward system for them. Consider reward systems for student participation in residence hall programs. Perhaps, give out Highland Dollars or Coupons at each event. At the end of the year, these dollars can be turned in rewards—lunch tickets, reduced rent, or a room upgrade next semester. Such a system will reward participation and interaction and encourage retention.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project. Housing orientation was successfully implemented for the second year. The development of a Resident's Handbook and campus security has increased awareness of policies and created a safer environment for students. Contact calls to current students not enrolled for the next semester are showing an impact on retention rates.

**Review (09-15-06):**

Handbooks and security are useful and necessary first steps. However, they don’t necessarily Build Collaborative Relationships (AQIP #9) or promote cultural change from within. Calling students is more personal and, therefore, more effective in promoting change.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? Our challenge at this point is generating buy-in from advisors as to the necessity of personal contact and record-keeping to increase our retention rates. They are the most effective means of tracking students, and can provide invaluable information on students who choose to leave before completing their degree.

**Review (09-15-06):**

Highland is on the right track. First of all, you recognize the need to change your approach. Second, you recognize that advisors must be part of the process for this project to succeed. This reviewer suggests that Highland also needs to include student residents in the process. Students are both the drivers and the barriers for the success of this project. Student Satisfaction Surveys will provide important feedback, but surveys will not build collaborative relationships nor will they promote change from within. Highland is making progress and has established clear goals for the projects. Increasing involvement, participation and buy-in of the students and resident advisors is an appropriate next step for this project.
F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-15-06):