

Action Project 2: Implement Selected Baccalaureate Degrees

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

In terms of its stated goal, the implementation of the University's seven baccalaureate degrees, this Action Project is complete. Even so, we do wish to expand upon our efforts during this past year.

First, the University graduated its first baccalaureate students in nearly 100 years when 23 (of 27) Homeland Security and 16 (of 18) Technology seniors were awarded B.S. degrees at graduation ceremonies in May 2007. Two of the remaining 4 Homeland Security 2006-07 seniors will graduate in December 2007: a 95% graduation rate by December 2007. The 2-non-graduating Technology seniors have indicated that they intend to finish the program: an 89% graduation rate thus far. In addition, while Homeland Security's retention lagged because of the loss of settled program leadership in Fall 2006, only 16 (of 25 in Fall 2006) juniors in Homeland Security did register as seniors for Fall 2007. The importance of settled leadership is evident in the Technology Program's retention: 16 (of 16 in Fall 2006) juniors in Technology registered as seniors. Further, Homeland Security has 34 new juniors, and Technology has 35 new juniors in Fall 2007. The third program implemented in Fall 2005, Health Care Management continues to move students toward graduation, but most of that program's students (7 in Spring 2007) are part-time and are taking their major's classes in late afternoon and early evening. Health Care Management added 10 new juniors in Fall 2007, a sign of the Program's potential for growth. Most of the Health Care Management students are currently employed in health delivery fields.

Second, as we indicated might happen in the annual update last year, the University implemented all four of the remaining baccalaureate degrees in Fall 2007. Under the leadership of Education Department Chair Jan Henry and baccalaureate chair Dr. Pam Garriott, the unique Special Education-Mild Intervention with concurrent certification in Elementary Education (a revision of the original Special Education-MI-only program; the revision was developed by Dr. Garriott and consultant, Dr. Isabel Lindner of St. Mary-of-the-Woods College in Terre Haute, IN) began Fall 2007 with 30 juniors. The Nursing baccalaureate began with 12 juniors (the maximum allocated to it by the Indiana Board of Nursing). Secondary Mathematics Education degree began with 3 students, and the Secondary Science Education degree began with 5 students. While these latter two programs would seem to have low enrollments, one should keep in mind that these are two of the most glaring areas of shortage nationwide, and that the call of industry, with its high salaries and benefits packages, is competing with Education for Science and Mathematics majors. It is, however, a good sign that there are currently 15 students in the Associate Degree Mathematics Education concentration.

Third, the Homeland Security and Public Safety Program took a giant step forward this past Spring 2007 when it found an extraordinarily prepared and experienced

replacement for the program chair who quit without notice in Fall 2006. The program has secured as a faculty person the services of Mr. Louis Caprino, immediately as his retirement as Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles FBI Office; Mr. Caprino oversaw the area of "Special Operations." Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI, served as a reference for Mr. Caprino via a telephone interview with the search committee. Mr. Caprino has had a distinguished career, and the program is now in his more-than-capable hands, and his very presence on campus at the end of last Spring 2007 encouraged many of our graduating associate degree students to stay on in the baccalaureate program.

Finally, in effect, this goal is fulfilled and should now be retired because all of the baccalaureate degrees have been implemented, have University support, growing student bodies, demonstrated success. Currently, there are 154 juniors and seniors in Fall 2007 for a goal that began in Fall 2005 in the various baccalaureate programs.

REVIEW

(9-29-07)

As this project has completed all outlined goals including the implementation of all seven baccalaureate degrees it is recommended that this action project be retired immediately following the receipt of this annual review. Vincennes conducted a streamlined implementation of all seven programs with three of the programs being implemented in the first year of the project and others being completed a year prior to last year's projection. Vincennes should be commended for completing all outlined objectives of this challenging project.

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

As indicated in the 2006 update, nearly 40 faculty persons were directly involved in the work toward implementing the three education degrees and nursing for Fall 2007. These faculty developed course materials, philosophy statements, course linking-"threads," and met the demands of accreditors to ready these degrees for implementation in Fall 2007, a year sooner than the "Fall 2007 and Fall 2008" projected in last year's update. In addition to these faculty, the full membership of the University's Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee (CAAC) examined and discussed at length the changes proposed in the original baccalaureate curricula, and gave approval to those changes and recommended them for Board of Trustees (Board) approval. Until the CAAC and Board acted, the finalized curricula could not be proposed to accreditors. To its credit, the CAAC gave thorough, but timely examination and approval of the changes. In addition, the chairs of the various programs worked above and beyond their normal responsibilities to prepare the accreditation-required documents and alliances required to move forward once the CAAC and Board had acted. In the case of the Education programs, Chair Jan Henry and Baccalaureate Coordinator Dr. Pam Garriott continued work not only with consultant Dr. Isabel Lindner, but also secured the aid of Dr. Patricia Swails, Dean of Education at Oakland City University in securing Oakland City as the University's partner in awarding the degrees until we have our first graduation class.

REVIEW

(9-27-07)

It appears Vincennes University had a highly committed group of faculty, staff, administration, and external stakeholders participating throughout the project. It would be highly beneficial to take the time to document and celebrate any best practices (relating to involving people) that were developed or implemented during this project. If applicable, these best practices should be applied to future action projects and shared with peer AQIP institutions as they could support actions relating to Valuing People.

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

We now regard this Action Project for implementation of the degrees as complete and ready for retirement and replacement. While the goal is complete, the University is continuing to provide faculty with tuition support as several Nursing faculty, in addition to the Chair, pursue doctoral degrees (See “E,” below).

REVIEW

(9-27-07)

With the possible acceptance of documenting any best practices developed during the project, all goals have been successfully completed. It may be a good idea to develop a way to evaluate if the new degrees are continuing to meet all expectations on a periodic time table. In this way opportunities for improvement can be identified prior to becoming problematic to the teaching or learning process. Additionally, it is a good practice to develop ongoing/sustainment measures for completed action projects as referenced in the Leading and Communicating and Measuring Effectiveness categories.

D. Describe any “effective practices” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

As described in the 2006 Update, we have found that the greater the transparency of effort, the more likely the effort will be a success. Because of the number of persons involved in Strategic Planning and AQIP and the similarity of effort, we drew together the goals of both in 2005. We have already reported this last year. But this transparency also opened the discussion to persons from the Registrar’s Office, Admissions, the Management Information Center, the Bursar, and the two administrative assistants who develop the printed and electronic course schedules and catalog, who pointed out and resolved the corollary impacts on the University’s daily operations. In addition to the “big picture” of the degrees themselves, these other VU persons provided the enabling “frame” for this big picture so that they could be presented to the public. To some extent, this effort ratified our basic AQIP and Strategic Planning philosophies – involve all stakeholders, not just those who seem to have the highest stake – for inclusiveness (more than 600 in the AQIP “Conversation Day” and nearly 100 in the Strategic Planning “town meeting” and subsequent

committees) in discussion. As a consequence, most major pitfalls and minor glitches” were avoided.

REVIEW

(9-27-07)

This action project has provided the secondary benefit of aiding Vincennes University in expanding its use of communication and collaboration that resulted in improving transparency of the process. This transparency is a substantial component of all continuous quality improvement processes and similar processes should be used in future action projects. Additionally, it may be beneficial to other colleges in AQIP if Vincennes presented an outline of how it achieved this success at the AQIP Colloquium during the NCA/Higher Learning Commission's Annual Meeting.

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

The challenge cited in the past continues: hiring doctoral level faculty for all programs. While the Science Division has a number of doctoral holders in its departments and these can play oversight roles, we do not have a person whose degree includes an emphasis on “science education.” In the Health Sciences, numerous persons have requested and received tuition support (more than \$40,000.00 since Fall 2006) for doctoral study – a “grow our own” approach – from the University Foundation and the University’s allowance of funds for general faculty professional development.

REVIEW

(9-27-07)

Finding and hiring qualified faculty is becoming a common challenge for today’s postsecondary institutions. This is especially true for the science fields. It appears the grow our own approach may be an effective option to deal with a limited hiring pool.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your needs here and tell us who [sic] to contact and when.

Since we regard the basic action project, the implementation of the degrees, as complete, we do not need help there. However, we would still welcome referrals of potential doctoral level faculty to Dr. Carolyn Jones, current AQIP Coordinator and Director of Curriculum [cjones@vinu.edu; 812-888-4176].

REVIEW

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Providing professional referrals is outside the scope of the annual review process. 8015