

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	Implement offerings that appeal to adult returning learners through the "Learn your way" brand	<b>Status</b> ACTIVE
<b>Category</b>	2 - Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs	<b>Updated</b>
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 08-22-2014	<b>Created</b> 08-22-2014
	<b>Target Completion</b> 08-22-2015	<b>Version</b> 2

### 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

**A:** Utilizing the Adult Population Survey completed in the Marketing Phase of this on-going project, analyze the responses and determine themes that emerge from the data. The goal is to build upon the action plan that created a branded set of offerings called "Learn your way". The committee will develop the next action plan in this series that builds upon the existing work. In this iteration, the committee will identify actionable items from the survey, identify programs that have a strategic appeal, and identify opportunities with potential to create alternative revenues for the college.

### 2: PROJECT RATIONALE

**A:** After reviewing K – 12 demographic information for the 30 school districts we serve, there is a steady decline in school age population from the senior years through the fifth grade year where the numbers begin to grow again. Demographic information currently shows that in 2014 -15 there will be 1,386 12th graders and that this number will decline to a low of 1,218 by the fifth grade class. While we understand that a variety of economic trends could reverse this trend, it is obvious that we need to recruit other age groups if we hope to maintain current enrollment numbers. The college does a good job of attracting these students with roughly 25 percent enrolling right after graduation with an increase to about 33 percent of the graduating seniors by three years out from graduation. We understand that to hold enrollment steady to potentially increasing we need to attract more returning adult learners. Southwest Tech needs to create more flexibility in when programs are offered in order to attract these adult learners with or without previous college credit. Through process mapping completed as a result of participation in a Trade Adjust Assistance, Community College Career Training, Round Two grant, we have strengthened our Credit for Prior Learning processes. These processes have led to better articulated processes, policies, and procedures for assessing Credit for Prior Learning. This led to development of an Adult Population Committee that is part of a larger project called the "Learner Success Initiative" The Adult Population Committee was tasked with creation of an action plan for Learner Success that compliments one of our strategic direction; "increasing college access". The result of this first action plan was development of a branded identity for programming that is designed to appeal to an adult market. "Learn your way" has become the branded identity and Southwest Tech developed a landing page on the college website. Students landing on this page will see programs that are offered in flexible scheduling formats convenient for busy working adults. We have identified these flexible formats as on-line, evening/weekend, or hybrid offerings. We have incorporated interactive television offerings (ITV) at our Outreach Sites as another way of being flexible to our adult population. Our service region quite large (100 miles north to south, 80 miles east to west) and we have one campus site. In addition to this one campus we have several attendance sites for Adult Basic Education offerings (see action project Expand Academic Offerings to Students at Adult Basic Education Locations).

### 3: PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

- A)** Survey response analysis will be completed by Mandy Henkel, Institutional Research by the end of September.
- 2) Mandy and subcommittee will present to Adult Population Committee in early October.
  - 3) Based on Survey results, APC could begin developing an Action Plan by the end of the Fall semester
    - a. Opportunity One: Address actionable items that could be implemented without program modification or addition
    - b. Opportunity Two: Address actionable items that could be implemented with program modification
    - c. Opportunity Three: Address actionable items that could result in new program opportunities
    - d. Opportunity Four: Address other opportunities resulting from these actionable items

- 4) It may be possible to present some actionable items to full Learner Success Committee during spring semester. Others may take significantly more research/discussions.

#### 4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: The adult population committee will provide leadership in implementation of programs that will appeal to working adult learners. These implementation plans will provide programs offered at convenient times to serve adults. This implementation plans will lead to processes meant to inform key budgeting, recruiting & marketing processes. The college expects marketing will be an area impacted by action plans and developing sufficient financial resources will require careful planning. Budgeting processes require sufficient lead time to identify and are reviewed by the CEO, CFO & CAO of the college. The state of Wisconsin operates on a biennial budgetary process so state funding will be a known amount for the 2013 - 14 & 2014 -15 Academic year. This provides a stable planning basis on which to implement action plans for this time period. Continuing plans call for budgeting after this period to be conducted in an ongoing manner based on budget availability.

#### 5: PROJECT CONTROL

A: The college closely tracks enrollment by program on an annual basis. The Vice President of Student & Academic Affairs works with individual deans to monitor the viability of all program offerings. Those programs that are branded "Learn your way" are tracked and additional efforts are extended to market these offerings. Since this is a relatively new initiative, the upper administration of the college is aware that enrollments may be small initially. Therefore; time and marketing effort will be expended to make these offerings viable. The goal for any program offering is to have 15 enrollments per offering. The timeline expectation is that we will reach that goal within three years. Since we believe that providing adult returning learners is important both to the adults served and the college as a whole, we see this effort as an ongoing effort that will be continuously monitored.

#### 6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: We assume that the biggest challenge will be to recruit adults into these offerings. We have not been known as a college that has offered many flexible offerings designed to meet the needs of a returning adult student. We are committed to marketing to spread that message and have developed a landing page on our redesigned webpage that points students at offerings branded Learn your way. The other challenge we expect to encounter is how faculty react to these offerings. Since it is different from our traditional offerings it may be greeted with some skepticism. We are working with faculty that have a genuine interest in putting programs into on-line formats or evening/weekend formats as a first step. These early adopters should provide data that will convince others of the importance of pursuing this demographic of student.

#### 7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A: None at this time