Project Name: Health Careers Admission and Retention

Deployment Champion: Dr. Vicky Stewart

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Opportunity (Purpose or Primary Reason for Project): The Health Careers programs for RN, Physical Therapist Assistant and Dental Hygiene typically have more applicants than program openings, resulting in long waiting lists and a lack of opportunity for all those who desire to enter these particular programs. In addition, these programs have a high attrition rate, typically during the 1st semester. Because each cohort has a required sequence of classes, these vacancies remain unfilled in some programs, resulting in lost enrollments for the college and lost opportunities for other students who had the desire to complete the program. Other prospective students become discouraged with the admissions process and abandon an education altogether, causing lost enrollments for the college and unfilled career aspirations for themselves. The opportunity is to improve the selection process and criteria for these three programs, in order to admit more students into programs in which they have the greatest chance of success.

Business Case (Budget Information): For every student that drops out of the program in the first semester, the resulting vacancy averages about 53 credit hours, or about $3000 per student. In addition, students who are held on a waiting list and ultimately fail to enroll in any program result in overall enrollment losses that could average 60 credit hours. These two scenarios represent lost tuition revenue to ICC, and lost state apportionment revenue. If five more students a year could be retained in health career programs, and five additional students could be enrolled in alternative programs, this would result in over $30,000 additional revenue to the college.

Goal (Expected Outcomes, Deliverables, and/or Results): Improve the admission and selection process into the RN, Physical Therapist Asst., and Dental Hygiene programs by developing new, more comprehensive selection criteria and providing curriculum alternatives for students not selected. Reduce the attrition rate of the named programs by at least 5% to 10% per program, and decrease the number of students who drop from a waiting list without enrolling in any program at ICC.

Scope (Constraints, Boundaries, and/or Key Risks): Examine the named programs first. If successful, the improvement could be replicated for other programs in the Health Careers department. Risks to consider will be to make sure the selection process is not discriminatory and is mindful of the goals of the diversity initiatives at ICC. There are two important components at work in this charter - the specific criteria, which affect attrition, that are used to admit students to these programs, and the process of getting a student into a discipline-specific applicant pool. Both components are within the scope of the project.

Timeline (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control): The department begins notifying students on the program waiting lists in March. This improvement project should be completed so that new admission criteria could be implemented prior to March of ’07. Suggested Timeline: Define: April ’06, Measure: May ’06, Analyze: June ’06, Improve: Sept. ’06, Control: beginning with fall class of ’07.

Primary Measures: ICC success rate data is available for all programs back to ’98 by fall and spring semester, showing how many students started and completed each program through the two year program period. Additionally there are national benchmark data sources available by program for comparison purposes.

Other (Additional Resources Needed, Critical Considerations, and/or Initial Concerns): The programs mentioned above typically have long waiting lists. Changes need to consider how people on the waiting list would be considered (under old or new criteria) and allow ample time to contact these students. The RN program instituted new criteria for fall ’06 which will need to be monitored.