

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Columbus State Community College

Project Details			
Title	Improving Parking Management Processes	Status	COMPLETED
Category	6-Supporting Institutional Operations	Updated	09-14-2010
Timeline		Reviewed	10-15-2010
	Planned Project Kickoff 05-01-2009	Created	11-24-2009
	Actual Completion 10-12-2010	Version	2

1: Project Goal

A: As the types and uses of parking resources have become more varied (e.g., conferences at Center for Workforce Development, temporary permits for various purposes/vendors/visitors) and system changes in Colleague enterprise computing system have required various steps that can cause delay in student parking decal distribution, it is time to undertake a thorough review of the parking decal management system and related processes. Responsibility for parking is currently shared by Public Safety and Business Services. This project will focus on enhancing the efficiency of disseminating parking decals in a timely fashion and other options to include, optimizing class scheduling to reduce peak demand, promoting the use of public transportation and the width of parking spots.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Columbus State is a downtown campus with an enrollment of over 24,000 credit students per quarter. In addition, Columbus State is experiencing a 10% increase in enrollment. Facilitating efficient parking processes in serving the increasing number of students and college personnel is critical. In a little more than a year, we will be preparing to open the Delaware campus. Thoughtful consideration must be given to how parking will be managed at that campus, and if it will be managed similarly to the Columbus campus or not. If parking on both campuses is administered in a similar manner, it is important that the college take on this Action Project in 2009-2010 so that known issues can be resolved before the Delaware campus opens. Current issues identified: • Many parking decals are returned each quarter for incorrect addresses (est. 25%); • Some students receive two stickers, which presents potential abuse issues; • Parking citations issued for lack of permits require more labor to process, appeal, and to collect fines due to students who quit trying to obtain a permit, or who pay, but don't receive it; and • Parking decals are not printed for mailing (all are mailed, no access for pick-up in-person) until near the first day of classes to ensure that permits are issued to enrolled students. This requires the college to post a temporary permit on-line that is available to anyone, at no cost, or large quantities of temporary permits to be processed manually by Public Safety each quarter. There is a cost of doing nothing, including the cost of inefficiency of a labor intensive process of selling/distributing permits; sustainability concerns, burdens on personnel, use of paper and printer cartridges, reliability of equipment (the printer has failed in the past which delays the process), wasted postage costs and financial impact of current system; loss of permit revenue if students opt out and risk enforcement; loss of customer satisfaction; reduction in the ability to manage and enforce parking access, causing further access complications, i.e. unauthorized parking, which takes spots away from paying customers. Being a non-residential, commuting campus, access is very dependent on a seamless, user-friendly parking permit access system.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: • BAS • Public Safety • Business Services • IT • Information Technology • Communication Technologies and • PC Services

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The three key organizational processes that this Action Project is expected to change or improve are as follows: • The ordering, payment and distribution of parking decals • The issuance of temporary parking permits • The scheduling of courses While not necessarily a key organizational process, other components within these two processes or related activities that will likely be changed and improved include the following: •The integration between Datatel Colleague and the Bartender software that is currently used for the parking decals •Better utilization of existing parking resources, or even "increased" capacity, (e.g., using technology to track real time capacity, linking parking access to class schedules).

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Phase One: Short Term Improvements-Complete by October 30, 2009 1.Collaboration between BAS and IT for short term solutions to the process impediments, which will improve the current system until potential long term options are researched and analyzed. [capitalize on the work we have already started] 2.Establish baselines for future evaluation, such as flow charting the current permit process, and collect data on the number of permits sold in comparison to student enrollment. 3.Evaluate the impact of short term improvements after Summer 2009 registration against baseline data. 4.Make any process adjustments for Fall 2009. Budget-no additional funding Phase Two: Long Term Improvement (run concurrent with Phase One)-Complete by Jan. 1, 2010 1.Survey similar institutions which utilize technology to maximize cost efficiencies – assisted by consultant for parking studies. 2.Research system alternatives to the current paper sticker permit system – assisted by consultant for parking studies. 3.Present final proposal and recommendations, based on projected cost efficiencies. 4.Evaluate any new system based on prior baseline data. 5.Planning, selection of technology, and testing for planned implementation by summer quarter 2010. 6.Review existing research on CSCC parking and identify additional approaches to maximize use of additional resources. Budget - \$50,000.00 estimate, consultant

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: After a team is chartered for this Action Project, a timeline will be developed, building upon the two phases indicated in G above, with identifiable milestones, which will help to keep the project on track and ensure that satisfactory progress is made to meet the target completion.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A:

- Cost/Benefit analysis of any recommendations; while any technology-based recommendation may require a substantial capital investment, the associated benefits, many of which will be intangible versus monetary, must support any decision for such investments
- Reduced number of returned parking decals, if mail continues to be the only, or primary means of distribution;
- Timelier, more efficient distribution of parking decals once payment is made by student;
- Reduced need for temporary parking permits;
- Potential increase in permit revenue based on ease of acquisition (not due to increased parking fees); any increased revenue can contribute to debt reduction on the garage and support future lot maintenance and management;
- Less parking citations, less appeals, less collection of fines; increased customer satisfaction; fewer complaints regarding students parking in staff lots;
- Fewer phone calls/complaints to public safety and TIC which burden front line staff, and tie up critical telephone lines and radio systems;
- Less personnel involved in the process – more effective automation and less manually intensive;
- Increased compliance with parking policies, less abuse both by students who don't buy permits but avoid citations and by non-students who park on College property and walk to their offices
- Ongoing data collection and evaluation through real time data collection, which contributes to continuous improvement of parking management via data/trend analysis

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: As part of a comprehensive evaluation of parking operations and potential improvements, the team prepared and distributed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to several consultants for the purpose of seeking an independent assessment of the current state of the college's parking system. Only one consultant responded to the RFP. Upon completion of the team's evaluation of the proposal received and reference checks, this consultant, Walker Parking Consultants, was engaged. From November to December 2009, team members met with the consultant and commenced gathering requested data on the college's parking system. Information collected included: parking system policies and procedures, numbers of permits sold to students, number of parking spaces, parking capacity by time of day, cost of managing and maintaining parking, data on citations, etc.

In January 2010, the consultant visited campus to observe parking issues that occur during the first week of classes. Between January and May 2010 the consultant also benchmarked Columbus State with other similar institutions based on costs for employee and student parking and self-operating versus outsourcing. In addition, data were gathered on potential software systems to support self-operating, including an analysis on how each system might meet the requirements of CSCC.

In May 2010 the consultant held an exit meeting with the team, including sponsors, to discuss the draft report with recommendations. Cabinet reviewed the executive summary in August, and has authorized the Senior Vice President of Business & Administrative

Services to engage resources to determine the best path for implementing changes to the system that will yield improvements.

The consultant has been further engaged to assist with a survey of faculty, staff and students, as well as focus groups. The team is in the process of completing applications required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to conduct the survey. The survey and focus groups are tentatively planned for October, after the start of autumn quarter. The results of the surveys and focus groups will also assist in determining next steps and which of the consultant's recommendations will be pursued for implementation.

As reported in our August 31, 2009 update, the following short-term process changes were enacted very early during this project:

- The reassignment of ownership for the generation and printing of parking stickers to the IT Help Desk from Public Safety during Spring quarter 2009.
- A consistent schedule of running the parking sticker process was developed to ensure that stickers are created and mailed to students on a regular interval.
- The decision to track parking sticker purchases on a daily basis and to provide a spreadsheet (via a shared network drive was created to allow this information to be centrally accessible to the TIC and Public Safety) to TIC and Public Safety which lists the sticker generation date and mail date.
- The returned parking stickers are now being logged and provided in spreadsheet format to these same groups to allow for greater communication on parking sticker status.
- The returned permits are forwarded to Public Safety, which then sends an email to students informing them of the returned permit. The logging of returned parking stickers includes a description of the reason for return, a comparison of the address vs. Datatel Colleague's listed address and return date. This information is also available to TIC and Public Safety.
- An informational video has been prepared and posted on the college's front page to inform students about available parking on campus, with vivid maps and video footage. This information will be further updated for Autumn quarter to make clear to students when parking is at peak capacity to encourage alternative means of transportation and car-pooling.

Since last year's update, several additional short-term "fixes" have been undertaken, or are in process, in an effort to increase capacity and compliance with parking regulations. For much of FY2010, additional spaces were leased from Fort Hayes and from Franklin University. Parking was permitted on some grassy and gravel areas around campus. Some of these areas are now being paved and an additional lease has been engaged to enhance capacity, though the spaces first have to be constructed. With the first classes to be offered at the new Delaware Campus in Autumn 2010, discussions have taken place regarding how to handle parking at this campus. This will be the college's first experience with parking reserved for vehicles qualifying under "green" standards. Plans have also been made to change the look and color of student decals that will be issued beginning Autumn 2010 to more easily distinguish current decals. A plan will also be developed to replace employee decals during this academic year.

2: Institution Involvement

A: To ensure that this project remains an institutional priority, it was accepted as an approved college project through the college's integrated planning process undertaken by Extended Cabinet. Project sponsors, Senior V.P. - BAS, Terri Gehr, and VP - I.T., Hamid Danesh, chartered an official project team to research short term and long term solutions to optimize the permit purchasing process. In addition to an AQIP liaison, other appropriate stakeholders were identified to serve on the project team, including those personnel with oversight roles in the following impacted areas: 1) Business Services, where transactions are processed, 2) Public Safety, responsible for permit enforcement, 3) I.T., for system support, and 4) the citation appeals committee. The Telephone Information Center (TIC) has been consulted for information and for assistance in implementing short-term process changes as discussed above. As discussed above, the consultant has been engaged to conduct a survey and focus groups of faculty, staff and students to get broader input.

3: Next Steps

A: With Cabinet's approval, resources will be devoted to constructing and implementing an updated parking system. In the meantime, the team is also planning to get broader input from the campus through a survey of employees and students, as well as focus groups, to inform a measured approach. These activities are projected for October 2010.

In the meantime, the College is considering a re-design of the parking stickers for employees and students in order to reduce the number of people parking illegally on campus using old decals.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: In changing the offices responsible for mailing out parking stickers to students, the feedback has been that there have been fewer complaints, less returned mail with wrong addresses, and less student traffic in the Public Safety Office inquiring about the status of their parking passes. New parking areas have increased capacity by almost 10% giving us approximately 400-500 additional parking spaces for students and employees.

5: Project Challenges

A: The college and the team members have had many priorities competing for resources since the last update. This team had planned to conduct the campus survey and focus groups in late Spring quarter. The time needed to obtain IRB approval as well as other projects delayed the survey at that time. It was then decided that Autumn quarter would likely produce better feedback than Summer quarter as there are typically fewer complaints and capacity issues in the summer. With a transition in presidents (July 1, 2010), we have kept this project at the forefront and the new President, Dr. David T. Harrison, has supported the continuation of the work by authorizing resources to be allocated to beginning the work of transforming the system. A devoted resource will help focus a plan and its implementation for a system improvement.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Columbus State Community College has a comprehensive project, tied to AQIP Category 6 Supporting Institutional Operations, to improve parking management. It involves securing an independent consultant to assess the college's parking programs and needs. As a result, processes have been streamlined so that the management and distribution of parking stickers is cleaner, faster, and more accurate. Parking capacity has been enhanced and new green standards have been included. Additional categories emphasized in this project are AQIP Category 4 Valuing People and AQIP Category 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs since the college community was asked to share their needs and concerns regarding parking. These concerns were or are being addressed. Likewise, there is an emphasis on AQIP Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement as the project is looking forward to additional ways to meet the community's parking needs.

The completion date of January 2010 does not seem accurate as the project is still ongoing. That date needs to be reviewed.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The project team, to ensure that this work remains a priority, has focused on AQIP Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships. The project was accepted as an approved college project through the college's cabinet. Likewise, leaders from affected areas (business services, public safety, IT and citation appeals) were included in planning. This collaboration also shows an emphasis on AQIP Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement. The project leaders are not satisfied with the progress made to date but want to continue to improve the situation. Valuing people (AQIP Category 4) is also clear as the project seeks to gain feedback from as broad a portion of the community as possible, including students, faculty, and staff.

Despite its original completion date, this project is making progress and shows the college's commitment to improving its parking situation.

3: Next Steps

A: Next steps show an emphasis on AQIP Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement. As project leaders seek resources to construct and implement an updated parking system, they are valuing people (AQIP Category 4) by collecting survey information from the college community, and they are making changes that require fewer resources (redesigning parking stickers). A goal, to reduce the number of people parking illegally on campus again shows that the institution values people. It is making sure that those who are in need of parking and are supporting the institution are able to access convenient and appropriate spaces. Likewise, there is a recognition of AQIP Categories 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives and 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs. In order to be free to learn and teach, students, faculty, and staff need secure and convenient parking.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Effective practices and improvements are substantial. There is increased accuracy in delivering parking stickers to students, faculty, and staff. These process improvements show AQIP Category 4 Valuing People and an emphasis on AQIP Category 5 Leading and Communicating. Accurately communicating with the college community about parking has reduced complaints, resulted in more accurate mailings, and has likely freed students to focus on learning. Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs (AQIP Category 3) is also addressed through increased parking capacity. Increases are almost 10% to date. This project is making important changes for the college.

5: Project Challenges

A: The greatest challenge is the competition for resources. This can be especially strong given the current economic climate. Likewise, the college recently appointed a new president. This change in leadership caused a pause in the building project but it seems to be shortlived as there is now renewed support for continuing the work.

This is an effective project that will likely help accomplish other distinctive objectives (AQIP Category 2). The timeline needs revisiting, especially due to the leadership change and the way that work has expanded as additional stakeholder needs (AQIP Category 3) have been addressed. Parking can be a sensitive issue, yet this college has handled it well by valuing people (AQIP Category 4) and communicating progress (AQIP Category 5).

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: The project team has accomplished the major goals it had set out to fulfill. Several "quick fixes" to the way parking decals and information about parking were disseminated to the campus have improved both efficiency in distribution of parking permits, as well as developing a better understanding of, and coordination with, the academic course scheduling office. The administration of parking was a function that had functions in Information Technology, Business Services, and Public Safety. Recognizing the need for coordination, the project team recommended that parking system management be administered under Public Safety, and the Director of Public Safety will be appointing a parking management coordinator who will implement recommendations from the project team study.

2: Success Factors

A: Two primary benefits of this project have been: 1) the improvement of parking permit distribution through some "quick fixes" that were the result of improved communication among college offices, and with students, through the use of trends in parking and scheduling that had been tracked through our college data base; and 2) the receipt and use of exhaustive independent feedback through a parking audit to establish benchmarks, establish the current state of parking, identify gaps, and develop recommendations.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: The project team had two challenges, a shortage of time to fully complete the project plan, and lack of human resources. As a result, a student survey that was supposed to be administered and analyzed earlier in the year had to be postponed. In retrospect, this delay has actually proven a benefit. Now that responsibility for coordination of parking has been assigned to a department and individual, this survey will be one of the first tasks to be completed.