

DCCCD Retention Best Practice Submission Form

Across the district there are many successful practices that contribute to the retention of students. As the district begins to develop a greater emphasis on its retention strategy, all locations are asked to identify and submit information about successful retention programs and activities. Please complete the following information on selected practices.

College/Location: **Richland**

The Retention Best Practice is primarily supported by what college/location area:

Instruction X Student Services _____ Administrative _____

Combination of areas: (Please list)

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Retention Best Practice Title: **The Science Corner**

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math _____ STEM X Honors College _____ Other _____

Retention Best Practice Executive Summary:

In the Science Corner, students receive free tutoring in a space adjacent to science and engineering classrooms, labs and faculty offices. Instead of one professor in one office working with one student at a time, professors and tutors can work with numerous students and help the students engage with other students.

Please describe the evaluation measures utilized to support this initiative as a best practice.

An increased number of hours of tutoring are available to students.

We have seen increased participation of both faculty and students over time.

Provide a summary of the results, including data (such as trend lines over time) to show how it impacted retention and is a best practice.

The Science Corner currently provides 46 hours of tutoring for chemistry students, even though there are only 4 full time chemistry professors, with a total of 20 office hours available. Not only are more hours of tutoring available in the Science Corner, faculty report an increase in the number of students taking advantage of tutoring.

What would be needed to replicate the practice at other DCCCD colleges?

A space needs to be set aside and furnished with tables, chairs and a marker board. Faculty need to be willing to spend at least one office hour per week in that space, helping any student who is there. One person should co-ordinate and publish a schedule of hours in which help is available. If the college provides paid tutors, then they should also be placed on the schedule and utilize that space.

Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):

We were able to find tables and chairs that were not being used, so we just needed to buy the marker board and a dividing wall to delineate the area. Tutors who are hired to provide service at a central location need to be relocated to an area close to the academic program that they serve. If the college already hires tutors, there is no net cost increase.

Please submit this form to Dr. Sharon L. Blackman, DCCCD Educational Affairs by October 24, 2008

The Science Corner was created by moving tables, chairs, and a room divider into a hallway formerly occupied by 8 study carrels. Interested faculty identified space adjacent to academic areas that was suitable for student/faculty/tutor activities. The proximity to labs, resources, faculty, and other students is important. Full time faculty members are invited to conduct one or more office hours per week in this location. Others who can assist students are also invited to participate; volunteers (former students, retirees), adjunct faculty who would welcome a place to meet with students, and tutors who used to tutor in a location across campus. More “formal” activities are scheduled as well; science success workshops to help students identify resources and learn study skills specific to laboratory course, special tutorials on subjects that students routinely find difficult (graphing data from the enzyme lab), and workshops to address specific topics.

The Science Corner seeks to address not only the disorientation and under-preparedness that students experience but also the reluctance of students to seek help from professors in their offices. Many students are reluctant to “interrupt” professors in their offices. Drop-in spaces set up a neutral, less intimidating space where all faculty, full time and adjunct can meet students. In addition a community of learners is created that takes advantage of the fact that students learn best when they teach others.



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