

## ***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 College School of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts

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:** Engaging Visual Art Students Outside the Classroom

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math        STEM        Honors College        Other        visual art

**Retention Best Practice Executive Summary:** approximately 50 words (Please use additional pages for a detailed description)

Formed in the Spring semester 2008, the Richland College Student Visual Arts Club (SVAC) has grown from 3 to 25 members in just six months. Members range in age from first-semester college students to Emeritus students. Their registered discipline of study is studio arts, which includes 2D and 3D areas. The meetings are extra-curricular and involve workshops, demonstrations, hands-on activities, and visits to local galleries and major museums. In addition, the club partners with other community and college organizations. To date these students have participated in the Peace and Justice Club painting display project (Arts for Darfur), completed a Service Learning mural project for a downtown Dallas shelter, organized demonstrations for the Fall Club Fair and Oktoberfest at Richland College, and are currently working with Los Patos Listos on an upcoming Dia de los Muertos altarpiece campus exhibit. Club members will host a December 2008 art campus sale.

The SVAC is a viable, worthwhile student organization. It contributes to the whole student in these points:

- Provides contact with faculty and staff outside the classroom
- Develops a student-centered learning environment focusing on enthusiasm, energy, caring, and maintenance of a non-threatening atmosphere
- Increase participant's sense of self awareness, discovery, and knowledge of art. Students are actively engaged in experiential learning.

- Students become positive role models for peers - lead by helping and providing vision and support. Emeritus students bring life experience and mentoring prospects.
- Students bond and become support systems in their academic pursuits.
- Workshops and field trips offer students cultural enrichment they might not otherwise experience.
- Club activities help to identify campus resources.
- Club activities contextualize historical and cultural perspectives about the arts that bring relevance to the past and enable students to relate the arts to their present cultural environment.
- Professors work collaboratively to build a campus-based arts community.

In the end, student members are their own products. They expand interests and abilities, and develop character. They are engaged in a reflective, continuous improvement process and help peers do the same.

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

Club sponsors conduct student satisfaction surveys on a systematic basis:

Semester exit interviews will gauge student's continuing involvement and resolve any issues that represent barriers to returning.

Faculty observations and student feedback are solicited after each event.

**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.**

These results will be gathered at the end-of-semester evaluation.

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

- Dedicated faculty and gallery director to collaborate in club creation and supervision.

**Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):**

The costs of implementation are minimal.

