

Macon State College Customer Service Improvement Project Accomplishments 2008-2009

Despite significant institutional budget cuts, Macon State College continues to empower employees to take leadership in customer service and process improvement efforts. During the 2008-2009 year, the following programs were completed:

First, a trained team applied the Lean/Six Sigma DMAIC process to energy consumption by general-use and classroom computers during the time they were not in use. As a result, a structured “shutdown” of these computers was developed and resulted in an **annual estimated savings of approximately \$70,000**. The United States Environmental Protection Agency recognized the College for this energy-saving effort affecting 1,045 classroom and general use computers. This initiative had no negative impact on end-users as the green image is activated only when the computers are not in use.

Second, another trained team applied the Lean/Six Sigma DMADV process to the scheduling of campus facilities. As a result, campus activities were consolidated into a minimum number of buildings allowing for decreased power usage during evenings and weekends. Customers were moved from older, less energy efficient buildings into newer, more energy efficient buildings. User satisfaction was thereby increased and we **estimate an annual savings of approximately \$40,000**.

Third, our Lean/Six Sigma Graduation Audit project resulted in decreasing the turn-around time for graduation audits **from two-plus weeks to one to two days**. These results were accomplished using existing technology and were so successful we will implement the process in all campus schools to assure that accurate and timely information reaches the student in the most efficient means possible.

Fourth, our Financial Aid Targeted Enhancement Plan was designed to improve the work flow in the financial aid office by increasing the number of students who apply for financial aid early. Work flow improvement clearly enhances student satisfaction by decreasing the “wait time” experienced by students. An aggressive promotional campaign was implemented with the goal of increasing Student Aid Reports (SAR’s) received from new students by 10% and from continuing students by 15%. In fact, an **increase of 128%** in new student SAR’s was realized and an **increase of 36%** in continuing student SAR’s was achieved.

Fifth, since the 2006 implementation of our “Excellence in Customer Service” staff training program, each staff member has participated in formal, on-going and mandatory training programs that promote the provision of service that is courteous, helpful, accessible, knowledgeable and responsive and that encourage a culture of leadership by all employees regarding customer service and process improvement. This year, **all eighteen new staff members** completed the mandatory five hour “Connections” training program. Through pre- and post-tests, 100% of participants indicated understanding of the institutional expectations regarding customer service.

Sixth, **all one hundred and one student employees** of the College completed the mandatory “Partners” training program. Through pre- and post-tests, 100% of participants indicated understanding of the institutional expectations regarding customer service.

Seventh, in order to provide the very best service to the students and other customers of the College and to mitigate risk to the campus community, the training program “**Knowledgeable Response**” was developed by the “Excellence in Customer Service” task force, Plant Operations and the Office of Student Affairs. The title of the program is taken from two of the Governor’s Office of Customer Service attributes, knowledgeable and responsive. This program is designed specifically for the employees of Macon State College and has the goal of enhancing campus safety and security by providing members of the campus community information about how to respond in a knowledgeable manner to campus emergencies and concerns. An update on the H1N1 virus was included. One hundred and ninety five individuals participated. Through pre- and post-tests, 98% of participants indicated understanding of the institutional

expectations regarding their responsibilities regarding emergency, medical, and behavioral concerns. Further, 100% of participants indicated agreement that the program provided valuable information regarding emergency/medical/behavioral concern procedures. 99% of front-line staff would recommend the program to others.

Eighth, the results of the 2008 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provide further evidence of the College's progress toward the goal of Excellence in Customer Service as reported by our students. The greatest improvement we showed on any of the 85 NSSE questions was for this one: Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices. Responses 6 and 7 (on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being "poor" and 7 being "excellent") were selected by **51 percent of first-year students**, up 18 percentage points from 2005, which was prior to the implementation of our customer service training programs. This response rate is higher than the System-wide rate of 29% selecting responses 6 or 7.

In conclusion, our progress this year strongly demonstrates the on-going emphasis at Macon State College on leadership in customer service and process improvement initiatives in the best interest of our customers. The financial savings of more than \$100,000 annually, as well as the outstanding nationally-ranked performance measurements of the National Survey of Student Engagement, indicate a strong commitment by all members of the staff to a Faster, Friendlier and Easier environment. The results of these projects are responsive to the needs of our customers, measurable and can be used by other University System institutions seeking similar outcomes. This year, more than ever before, our staff members embraced their individual roles in process improvement and in the ultimate goal of higher education – to participate in the development of human potential and to transform lives!