

Action Project

Institution: Northeast Iowa Community College

Submitted: January 15, 2008

Timeline:

Planned project kick-off date: 10/1/07

Target completion date: 6/1/10

Actual completion date:

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Develop and implement a college-wide assessment plan

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

The goal of this Action Project is to develop an assessment plan that integrates our strategic plan (Vision 7 or V7) into a formal assessment strategy. We will establish appropriate benchmarks that will allow us to chart progress in meeting the goals in the strategic plan. The benchmarks will allow us to use both internal and external comparisons.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Measuring Effectiveness

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now – why the projects and its goals are high among your current priorities:

We developed a new strategic plan in 2005, with the goal of having a plan that would be used, not just sitting on a shelf. The plan was based on numerous data sources and input from all members of the College. Since then, most College employees have become familiar with the plan, and the plan is used for all annual planning and budgeting.

Developing and implementing an assessment plan is high on our list of priorities for the following reasons:

- **No assessment plan for V7**
Developing a strategic plan was an important step forward. The plan includes seven vision statements (V7), and each of these has a number of goals and objectives. However, the plan, in its current form, is general in nature. It does not include benchmarks or measurable outcomes. In order for the plan to be meaningful, we need to develop an assessment plan that will allow us to chart progress towards goals.
- **Limited use of available data**
The need to develop an assessment plan comes at a good time. Over the last few years, we have implemented Datatel and established an Office of Institutional Research. This means that we are better able to collect, analyze, and use data. We have completed an environmental scan by Clarus, conducted our first Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and joined the National Community College Benchmark Project. We are in a good position now to come up with benchmarks and outcomes for our strategic plan.
- **Limited communication of results**
Because of broad goals and limited use of data, we have had limited experience with communicating results. In the past, we have communicated results without a context. We are now primed to collect and publish information about benchmarks and outcomes, and we will be able to provide both internal and external comparison data. We need to communicate these results to both internal and external stakeholders in order to improve accountability.

E. List the organizational areas – institutional departments, programs, division, or units – most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

All employees will be affected by the development and implementation of a college-wide assessment plan. However, certain committees and departments will be more involved than others in developing and implementing the plan. They include:

- **Quality Council** - The newly established Quality Council will oversee the development and implementation of the assessment plan.
- **Quality Council Subcommittees** – The Quality Council will maintain seven subcommittees, one for each area of the strategic plan. The subcommittees will be responsible for collecting and reporting data related to their area of the strategic plan.
- **Departments** – Department supervisors and academic deans will be responsible for collecting and forwarding data to the Quality Council subcommittees.
- **Institutional Research** - Our Institutional Researcher will also play a key role in collecting and analyzing both internal and external data.

- **Marketing** – Marketing will communicate benchmarks and outcomes to internal and external stakeholders.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

The Action Project will have a positive impact on a number of organizational processes:

- **Data collection and analysis**
Data collection will be targeted and meaningful. Instead of collecting a lot of data with no stated purpose, we will collect and extract data that measures progress towards specific goals in the strategic plan.
- **Strategic planning**
Having meaningful data will improve the strategic planning process. As we monitor benchmarks and outcomes, we will make adjustments to the strategic plan. We will identify which strategies are effective in meeting goals, and which strategies need to be altered or, perhaps, completely eliminated.
- **Marketing**
By having access to results, we will be able to improve our marketing efforts to both internal and external stakeholders. This will assist in building improved accountability and is likely to have a positive effect on recruitment, retention, new program development, program licensing and accreditation, and funding.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kick-off to target completion):

It will take several years to complete this Action Project because it is so comprehensive. However, after we develop, implement, and revise the assessment plan, we expect it to have a profound impact on the College and how we do business.

The expected completion date of June 2010 is based on the following considerations:

- The Quality Council was established during fall 2007. The Quality Council has already adopted bylaws and is now meeting on a regular basis.
- The Quality Council will be trained in quality improvement principles, starting in January 2008. Training will continue during the spring months.
- The Quality Council will establish a subcommittee for each area of the strategic plan in spring 2008. The subcommittees will receive training in quality improvement principles. They will become familiar with the goals in the strategic plan and will start the process of

reviewing available data sources.

- The seven subcommittees will draft assessment plans for their respective areas of the strategic plan during fall 2008.
- The Quality Council will integrate these plans into an overall assessment plan by December 2008.
- From there, the plan will be tested and implemented. The initial assessment will be completed by June 2009.
- Marketing will promote the results to internal and external stakeholders by August 2009.
- The Quality Council will monitor the initial round of data collection and analysis to see if any adjustments need to be made to the assessment plan. Following these revisions, the assessment plan will be implemented again, with the second round completed by June 2010.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

The Chair of the Quality Council will provide a progress report to the President and Board of Trustees twice a year. The Quality Council will have overall responsibility for developing and testing the assessment plan, with input from the seven subcommittees. The subcommittees will meet monthly to discuss their assigned goals, collect and analyze data, review current initiatives, and establish new initiatives to meet the strategic plan goals.

I. Describe the overall “outcome” measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

The following indicators will document success in achieving the goals of this Action Project:

- Establishment of a college-wide assessment plan based on the goals in the strategic plan (V7)
- Designation of responsibility for data collection for each area of the assessment plan
- Timely data collection for each area of the plan
- Timely reporting of data for each area of the plan
- Annual comparison of data with both internal and external data
- Documentation of communication methods used to communicate results to internal and external stakeholders
- Revisions made to assessment plan

J. Other information (e.g. publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

Our Marketing department will develop a variety of strategies to communicate results to internal and external stakeholders. These will include, but not be limited to: NICC web site, news releases, internal newsletter, and annual report.