

## Action Project

Institution: Northeast Iowa Community College

Submitted: January 15, 2008

Timeline:

Planned project kick-off date: 8/1/07  
Target completion date: 10/1/09  
Actual completion date:

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

Creating a Quality Council to oversee planning and evaluation efforts

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

The goal of this Action Project is to create a Quality Council with responsibility for oversight of planning and evaluation at the college. Part of the process will be to integrate planning and evaluation into a seamless process. By creating a Quality Council, we will engage a broader college constituency in planning and evaluation, streamline the college committee structure, and embed quality into the NICC culture.

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:

Over the last few years, we have made considerable progress in planning and evaluation by writing a strategic plan and joining AQIP. We joined AQIP in 2002 and submitted our first Systems Portfolio in 2006. We wrote a strategic plan called Vision 7 (V7) in 2005. We are still in the process of implementing this plan.

While these were important steps for our institution, we still have much to do. This Action Project is high on our list of priorities for the following reasons:

- **No integration of planning and evaluation**  
Our strategic planning and AQIP accreditation efforts have moved us in the direction of informed decision-making and improved accountability, yet the two processes remain separate. We need to combine the two processes into one. Planning and evaluation need to function as one seamless action.
  
- **Limited engagement in planning and evaluation**  
We have taken important steps to improve planning and evaluation, but as we bring these processes together, we need to build broad, college-wide engagement. Until now, only a small number of administrators, faculty, staff, and board members have taken an active role in planning and evaluation. We need to create opportunities for all employees to embrace quality improvement, and for a broad-based committee to take charge of monitoring the streamlined planning and evaluation process.
  
- **Outdated committee structure**  
Like many colleges, we need to overhaul our committee structure, especially as it relates to planning and evaluation. We have some committees that are active, and some that are inactive. Some of our committees have clear roles. Others have vague or outdated roles, and some even duplicate the roles of others. We need to review our committees and their roles and relationships. Most importantly, we need to tie our committee structure to the streamlined planning and evaluation process by creating a central committee with appropriate subcommittees.

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

The following committees will play a key role in implementing this Action Project. Together, they will draw members from all levels of the College.

- ***Quality Council*** – This will be a new committee. It will have responsibility for promoting quality improvement and overseeing the coordinated planning and evaluation process.
  
- ***Quality Council Subcommittees*** – The Quality Council will have seven subcommittees, one for each area of the strategic plan. Together, the subcommittees will have representatives from all areas of the College. The chair of each subcommittee will report to and serve on the Quality Council.
  
- ***AQIP Strategy Team*** – This team attended the AQIP Strategy Forum in 2007 and will assist in establishing, training, and supporting the Quality Council. The team will also provide assistance in AQIP accreditation.

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

This Action Project will improve some important organizational processes:

- **Integration of planning and evaluation**

Planning and evaluation will be combined into a streamlined process, with evaluation results feeding into planning, and planning feeding into evaluation. Our new assessment plan will document benchmarks and outcomes. It will reveal which strategies work and which ones need to be altered or eliminated. This information will assist in future planning processes.

- **Broader engagement in planning and evaluation**

We will establish a Quality Council with responsibility for promoting quality improvement and overseeing planning and evaluation. Quality Council members will receive training in quality improvement principles and will use those to guide their work on the council and its subcommittees. They will also receive detailed information about the strategic planning and accreditation processes so that they can start the process of integrating them into one process.

- **Meaningful committee structure**

Quality improvement will be the guiding principle of our new committee structure. The Quality Council will oversee all planning and evaluation. The council will have seven subcommittees, one for each area of the strategic plan. All other committees will be reviewed to see how they fit into the quality improvement framework, and some may be revised or eliminated. This will create a meaningful committee structure centered on quality improvement.

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

This Action Project is a product of our 2007 Strategy Forum. As we reviewed the Systems Portfolio Feedback and identified areas of need, it became clear that integrating planning and evaluation was critical to moving the college forward in quality improvement.

We expect this Action Project to take approximately two years. This estimate is based on the following considerations:

- The AQIP Strategy Team conceived of the plan to combine planning and evaluation in May 2007. The team continued to meet over the summer to develop the concept. The team came up with the idea of a Quality Council with seven subcommittees, one for each area of the strategic plan.

- The plan was presented to all College employees in August 2007.
- The President appointed members of the Quality Council during fall 2007. The Quality Council is chaired by the AQIP Liaison and includes seven other members, one for each area of the strategic plan.
- The Quality Council will receive training in quality improvement principles from the AQIP Strategy Team in spring 2008. Additional training will be provided throughout the summer months.
- The Quality Council will establish subcommittees in collaboration with the AQIP Strategy Team during spring 2008. Each subcommittee will be devoted to an area of the strategic plan and will include representatives from throughout the college. The committees will receive quality improvement training and will be ready to commence work in fall 2008.
- The Quality Council will assume complete oversight of college planning processes and improvement initiatives during the 2008-2009 academic year. By the end of the year, the Quality Council and its subcommittees will be using an integrated planning and evaluation process.
- The Quality Council will make adjustments to the process before starting the second cycle in October 2009.

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

The President and Board of Trustees will monitor progress on this Action Project. Benchmarks will include establishment of a Quality Council and subcommittees, training in quality improvement principles, engagement by a wider College constituency, and establishment of an integrated and well-functioning planning and evaluation process.

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 will serve as indicators of success in achieving the goals outlined in this Action Project:

- Establishment of a Quality Council to oversee college planning processes and promote a culture of quality improvement
- Establishment of Quality Council bylaws
- Quality Council training in quality improvement principles
- Quality Council orientation regarding strategic planning and AQIP accreditation processes

- Establishment of seven Quality Council subcommittees, one for each area of the strategic plan
- Monthly review of quality improvement initiatives, with reports provided to the Quality Council by the chairs of the seven subcommittees
- Establishment of an integrated planning and evaluation process
- Meeting of all planning and evaluation deadlines

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