

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Central Arizona College

Project Details		
Title	General Education Assessment	Status ACTIVE
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated 09-30-2011
Timeline		Reviewed 10-20-2011
	Planned Project Kickoff 09-01-2008	Created 11-24-2009
	Target Completion 08-30-2011	Version 4

1: Project Goal

A: Development and implementation of a comprehensive general education assessment plan.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Assessment at the course and program level exists in pockets throughout the institution. However, assessment of general education outcomes does not exist. The goal is to align existing assessment efforts at the course and program level to the general education outcomes. Assessments of general education outcomes not aligning with current assessment efforts will be developed and implemented.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The offices of Curriculum and Student Learning Assessment, Institutional Planning and Research, and Accreditation and Quality Initiatives are most involved in this Action Project. In addition, the Student Learning Assessment Committee is also heavily involved.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The CAC Curriculum Process includes a mandatory three-year review for all courses in the course bank. Assessment results will be used to identify gaps in curriculum and learning. The CAC Academic Program Review process will require review of alignment of program outcomes to the general education outcomes. Assessment results will be used to identify gaps in programs. A third process is the Assessment of Student Learning where results will be used to identify gaps in student learning.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Key to the successful implementation is the gathering of current assessment efforts throughout the institution. This will allow the team to identify gaps in assessment. In addition, the timeline is appropriate for involving necessary stakeholders and communication for successful implementation.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Progress will be monitored in multiple ways: Bi-weekly meetings of action project team, monthly meetings with college president to report and discuss progress, and subcommittee chairs providing updates during Student Learning Assessment Committee meetings. The Director of Curriculum and Student Learning Assessment and the Director of Accreditation and Quality Initiatives will collaborate to regularly report progress to the institution via existing communication venues. In addition, CAC's participation in the HLC's Assessment Academy will provide guidance and direction.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Correlation between general education outcomes and student learning. Students possess characteristics defined by general education outcomes. Gaps identified and used to improve on deficiencies. Course and program offerings support student achievement of general education outcomes. Partnerships support student achievement of general education outcomes. Student achievement

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A:
- The HLC Bi-Annual Report dated July 15, 2011 includes results from GEO pilots conducted fall 2010 through spring 2011.
 - Late spring 2011, CAC began creating a broad stroke, institutional level rubric which CAC subcommittee members and piloters continue to refine.
 - During spring 2011, the last two GEO subcommittees, Individual & Social Responsibility and Critical Thinking & Analytical Reasoning, built their rubrics and created plans for fall 2011 assessment. The new chairs participate on the GEO Executive Subcommittee and SLOC.
 - The Mathematics and Science Divisions continue to run pilots in the previously selected courses to compare results over time.
 - Cultural & Artistic Heritage (ART100 pilot fall 2010 and spring 2011) and Reading (RDG094 pilot fall 2010 and spring 2011) both netted evidence of improved student learning resulted. These breakthroughs spur broader participation and a desire to make additional quality improvements to raise the educational attainment bar.
 - Informational Literacy piloted ENG101 and refinement of the rubric has resulted.
 - The GEO Standards, the subcommittee determined criteria and the definitions of Exceeding, Proficient, Developing and Insufficient continue to evolve.
- GEO map templates were created for courses and programs spring 2011 and approved by the Curriculum Committee for implementation.

2: Institution Involvement

- A: GEO Subcommittee membership and SLOC membership again was based on volunteers from all constituency groups.

3: Next Steps

A: **• Revitalize Assessment Culture at CAC**

Send a clear message during All Faculty GEO Assessment presentation and discussion on 9/23/11 and during GEO Training sessions on Faculty Development Day 10/28/11 that GEO Assessment of student learning outcomes requires full participation of all faculty. With everyone involved asking meaningful questions to answer our most important questions about student learning and using the resulting evidence to make significant, quality changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and student services, we anticipate more degree-seeking students will attain proficiency in CAC General Education Outcomes.

• Promote Assessment Webpages

The Director of Curriculum and Student Learning Assessment and the Curriculum and Student Learning staff will assist GEO chairs by posting meeting calendar, agendas, minutes, rubrics, HLC/Assessment Academy reports, recommended white papers, best practice websites, GEO tools and support materials for committees to the Blackboard site and the website. Potential additions/enhancements will include: a) future plans, b) benchmarks, and c) goals/Operational Plans for the upcoming year, subcommittee membership/minutes, annual outcomes and results, a depository for CAC assessment forms, and an annual calendar to include meeting dates, reporting deadlines, and related timelines.

- a) Post 2011-12 version of the CAC Institutional GEO Rubric online; post revised GEO Standards, Benchmarks, and spring 2012 GEO Assessment Plans after approval by the Student Learning Outcomes Committee and the GEO Subcommittee chairs.
- b) Posted GEO Course and Program Maps to ACRES, Blackboard, and C&SLA website; all curriculum proposers are submitting GEO Maps as well as Major/Sequencing Maps to ensure students receive guidance regarding the most effective route to earning a credential. These efforts support student learning since students may be better-prepared for subsequent courses in the sequenced program.
- c) All GEO Subcommittee, SLOA Committee, and Curriculum Committee members are registered users of the Blackboard: Evidence

of Student Success website.

- **Expanding Assessment Efforts**

GEO mapping of all curriculum on a five-year curriculum review cycle began late spring 2011.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: As a result of the Mathematics GEO/MAT151 Pilots:

- a) **Two Face-2-Face course sections** were added fall 2011 accommodating 44 students.
- b) **Three online course sections** continue to serve 86 students during fall 2011.
- c) **Only full, 16 week sessions of MAT151** are offered fall 2011. The late start and intensive 4-week courses were eliminated.
- d) The Mathematics Division continues to assess MAT151 students using a **common midterm and final exam** with select questions aligned to the GEO Rubric and the course Measureable Student Learning Outcomes (MSLOs).
- e) Some faculty teaching online participated in **formal training on the online assessment program Quality Matters** which also uses the QM rubric. QM implementation strategies are yet to be determined.

As a result of the Reading GEO/RDG094 Pilots:

- a) **Change in textbook:** We selected a new textbook that better supports the Effective Reading and Critical Thinking GEOs that align with the course MSLOs.
- b) **Instructor Resources:** All Reading faculty access new teaching resources and suggestions to better prepare students to achieve the course MSLOs as well as prepare them for the GEO assessment.
- b) **Feedback:** After evaluation of the fall 2011 Critical Thinking GEO assessment in RDG094, the GEO analysis team in collaboration with the Reading Department and the Communication Division will determine if these quality improvement efforts and the resulting GEO evidence show student learning improvement.
- c) **Blackboard: Evidence of Student Success site:** Now that we have the CAC Institutional Rubric, and an established area to post our GEO meeting notes and reports, we plan to use this site to ensure transparency and strong communication.

CAC Plans for GEO Assessment:

Benchmark GEO results against peer institutions, including Cochise College, Yavapai Community College, Northern Pioneer Community College, Eastern Arizona College and San Juan Community College. Within CAC, we plan to compare data from 2009-2010 with 2010-2011 and analyze trends.

5: Project Challenges

- A: As we build a Culture of Assessment, we experience growing pains and the need to manage multiple priorities. However, the potential for gains in student learning, collaboration among cross-disciplinary faculty, and student retention and completion are worth the effort.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: Central Arizona College's list of recent accomplishments is impressive. Three key items it indicates are:

- The project is making reasonable progress.
- Clear milestones for this Action Project are identified and being tracked. This is aligned to AQIP Category 8 – Planning Continuous Improvement.
- You have several departments, organizations and committees involved. This is aligned with "Broad-based Involvement" a Principle of High Performing Organizations.

Since your accomplishments indicate you have at least identified milestones, if not a detailed schedule, it is time to look for the opportunity to plan the completion of this project. You have the last two pilot activities going on and have identified necessary next steps to institutionalize the concepts. Since you have passed the planned completion date use your planning skills to bring closure to the project.

2: Institution Involvement

- A: It is great that you have membership from all constituency groups as people volunteered for the action project. The next level of

maturity would be evaluating participation and ultimately that you are not only including stakeholders but taking into account their needs. This is aligned with AQIP Category 3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' needs.

A simple tool for monitoring this is a "Stakeholder Matrix." In your situation you would put the various committees/or departments on one axis and constituency groups on the other. You can then use the matrix to evaluate if there is proper representation and if it is active.

3: Next Steps

A: Including in your accomplishments are clear milestones and dates to move the project along. The campus is addressing both the culture and the mechanical aspects of organizational change. This demonstrates AQIP Category 5 – Leading and Communicating. It is time to start reviewing your most recent project plan for the expected outcomes and start planning to meet them. You have pilot programs, you have training, you have invested in infrastructure - you can now start to get results which will effect the future, ultimately aligning with AQIP Category 1 – Helping Students Learn.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: These are very tangible results from the Reading GEO/RDG094 and Mathematics GEO/MAT151 Pilot courses. This section of the Action Project Update is giving you the opportunity to look at the project from a higher perspective. A way of looking at this would be to ask what practices in these or your other pilot courses enabled you to get these results? If you take these practices and create one process you will create your own best practices for 1) running pilots and 2) using GEO to make changes. Both of these would make great potential topics at an HLC conference.

Your "CAC Plans for GEO Assessment" are aligned with where you should go and your Project Plan definition. Your internal comparison as well as the use of benchmarking is bringing your improvement to a higher maturity level with potential increased results. I would recommend that this be included in your next steps.

5: Project Challenges

A: At any institution, business or even with family you will always have to manage multiple priorities; however, Central Arizona College clearly sees the benefits of a Culture of Assessment as defined by this Action Project. The gains you noted represent the following academic quality improvement concepts: Helping Students Learn, Involvement of Stakeholders and Measuring Effectiveness. You are very close to changing the culture through effective project management, awareness of change management and stakeholder involvement. Use your successes to plan closure of the project, plan for the sustainment of the culture change and celebrate your accomplishments and effectiveness of this change. The institution is making "reasonable progress."