

View Review

Action Project: Improve data collection, data processing, and information dissemination methods for learning support.

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A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The Action Project team has completed several steps towards program review and providing new reporting information. By better understanding the needs of faculty to have accessible information we have helped them help students learn. For example, we are developing reporting tools and analysis that will contribute to accurately placing students in courses, thereby increasing retention and decreasing failure rates. We are also standardizing program review across areas so that it can be done more frequently yet with less demand on faculty time. (1.1) Activated the proposed "Ten Member Team" to strategically plan data collection, processing and dissemination in support of a learning environment. We are rethinking how we approach standard reports and use them in daily work at the college. (1.2) Created an online procedure to accept and prioritize requests from various instructional entities for ad hoc and standard reports that will be incorporated into a catalog of reports available for all to use. (1.3) Created a user group (Banner User Group: BUG) that meets weekly to offer advice and prioritize requests from the academic community for reports and other services from the computer services group. (1.4) Shifted from using a hard copy class scheduling method to an online environment. Class scheduling is now done via the college Banner system. This will increase accuracy and decrease time on task for instructional staff and faculty. (1.5) Began work on a pilot tracking system for a group of students from a grant-funded mentoring program. This will be used as a pilot reporting system. It will be expanded to include a variety of other student cohorts as needed in the future. (1.6) Have begun analyzing program review documents from all programs for the purpose of finding common elements to incorporate into a real-time, on-demand, one-click program review.

Review: You have selected an excellent action project to work on, which will actually help you with other projects, as you have found with your project # 2 on improving student learning outcomes. Learning to collect, examine, and use data is key to implementing a quality organization. By focusing on standard reports and their use, you will decrease duplicated efforts, increase access to information, and increase employee understanding of the information presented. Creating an online procedure to accept and prioritize ad hoc and standard reports and then using a catalog of reports available sounds like a wonderful system, which will save time and streamline many processes. Using an online scheduling system through the Banner software will solve all kinds of previous scheduling problems. Also of note, your one-click program review could become a national model in the future. This is an ambitious project, that will challenge employees, but implementing and completing these systems will greatly advantage your college and the students you serve. This reviewer commends you for taking these issues on and working towards a project that will lay the foundation for continuous quality improvement.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The Action Project team is active in soliciting feedback and participation. The members lead by example and as a group work with other groups and individuals throughout the campus. Members have also been active in disseminating information to campus groups about survey findings and

encouraging vested groups to find programmatic responses to areas for improvement at the college. (2.1) Membership on the "Ten Member Team" represents a cross section of the whole college. Each member is responsible as a representative of his/her group to bring ideas and concerns from their group. (2.2) Solicitation and information is disseminated through academic divisions, grant administrators, and other support program directors. Everyone should be aware and interested parties will have opportunities for input and requests for services. (2.3) Committee meetings and work sessions are announced and are open to all interested parties. (2.4) Surveys and other assessment tools are being used to discover success and challenge areas. The findings are then used to formulate programmatic responses to areas that need improvement in accordance with our learning college mission and goals.

Review: The Action Project team appears to be dedicated to this project and is putting time and effort into involving other groups and soliciting feedback. You state that the team has been active in disseminating information and diligent in encouraging stakeholder comment and participation. The ten-member team represents a cross section of the college and these members are responsible for bringing issues and concerns to the team. This sounds like a practical and efficient system. Included in your plans is assessment of your efforts that again supports a quality improvement cycle. Does your ten-member team report back to an AQIP oversight group? Keeping all of your project teams connected to the whole is important and it appears you have already considered connections among projects. You might consider some activity that includes student feedback for this project such as a survey or conducting focus groups. Because all college operations are somehow tied to students their input can sometimes add a valuable perspective.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The Action Project team is continuing to work on providing the best and most timely information possible to support instruction faculty in the classroom. We are actively soliciting desired reports from faculty as well as formulating new analyses that will track students and analyze successes and areas for improvement from functional changes in student services to programmatic responses from a variety of groups (student services, instructional divisions, etc.). (3.1) Increase the activity of the "Ten Member Team". (3.2) Continue training staff and faculty to more fully use the standard reports and database environment. The goal is to make smarter decisions with better information. (3.3) Emphasize "planning tools" approach for support of academic decisions at the division chair and department levels. Develop a working knowledge of how reports currently are used and potentially could be used across departments and campus units. (3.4) Standardize a variety of reports and make them available to appropriate parties. (3.5) Determine what new standard reports need to be created for learning support. (3.6) Prioritize new reporting needs and begin developing and deploying the reports via a menu system and/or web environment. (3.7) Complete the program review analysis and create the one-click environment for all departments. (3.8) Devise an analysis to determine the effects of course prerequisites, placement test scores, advising strategies, etc., on students and their progress to assess the efficacy of current methods. This analysis will contribute directly to Action Project #2. By both measuring and addressing how well we place students into programs we positively impact student learning outcomes, retention and subsequently program review outcomes.

Review: Your next steps are well planned and appropriate for your project. Your activities are ambitious and will move you towards your goal of completion. The commitment you display to reaching your goals is commendable. Continuing training is a vital part of implementation and it is good to see that you include this process throughout. This reviewer likes your goal to make smarter decisions with better information; it fits well with a quality system. Again, you tie in to another action project is wise and will move you forward more quickly.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

The initial efforts to shift the paradigm for scheduling classes that were implemented last year have been successful. The procedure was a small approach to teaching teachers, division chairs, and others who create parts of the academic schedule to use the computer system for a variety of purposes other than just creating a schedule. We are now implementing other uses for accessing the database and academic users are increasingly excited about the prospects of having real-time, on-demand, one-click standard reports. As we navigate this process we expect to have developed a very "effective practice" that will help others in the higher education community address similar problems.

Review: This reviewer agrees that as your project matures, you will have a fine model of an effective practice. Developing and implementing a database of real-time, on-demand, one-click standard reports sounds very appealing and very accessible. Training your staff to get full use out of your powerful computer system and administrative software will garner many benefits over time and add to institutional effectiveness and efficiency. Your progress here is significant and when you complete your project successfully, your work should produce an effective practice worth sharing with the broader higher education community. We encourage you to inform AQIP as soon as you believe your efforts have achieved this additional level of maturity.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

Staff changes have most notably affected the pursuit of this Action Project, but we have a new and very energized group that will actively pursue the goals of this project. (5.1) The resignation of the Vice-President of Information Systems & Services and the promotion of one of the most productive members of the computer services team to handle those duties have created a noticeable vacuum in the productivity of that department. The position will be filled by the end of September and the demands created by our attempts to implement Goal 3 will be back on track. (5.2) The retirement and subsequent replacement of the Director of Institutional Research and Grants created a small glitch in the process. The new Director has been a quick study and will become a major contributor in pursuit of Goal 3. (5.3) The activity of the "Ten Member Team" was put on hold for most of the summer. Vacations, vacancies, absence of faculty, etc. made it impractical to try to continue the work of the team during the summer. All are aboard now that the fall semester has begun and we are running full-speed.

Review: You seem to be making excellent progress with your Action Project and have identified challenges along with solutions. We urge you to notify AQIP as soon as you have successfully completed this project to enable us to share your accomplishment with other schools. You will then be able to select your next Action Project that will move you towards a continuous improvement environment and reaching more of your goals.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review:

February 6, 2003

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