

Project Details

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| Title | Develop and implement a process to track student progress and achievement. | Status | REVIEWED |
| Category | 1-Helping Students Learn | Updated | 09-13-2010 |
| Timeline | | Reviewed | 09-29-2010 |
| Planned Project Kickoff | 05-13-2010 | Created | 03-10-2010 |
| Target Completion | 05-13-2013 | Last Modified | 09-29-2010 |

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: A twelve member cross-functional team was assembled and met for the first time in August, 2010. The project was explained to the AQIP Outcome Assessment Project team. Research teams were set to research Assessment software options for the college to track student progress and achievement. The state's Technical Skill Assessment requirements and the Core Abilities project were also reviewed.

R: Although the Action Project team has just started, it appears the groundwork is in place to begin work on this important project. The team is off to a great start. Having a cross functional team is important so that Moraine Park Technical College receives input and has a conduit to share information throughout the college, and the Higher Learning Commission commends the inclusion of stakeholders from different areas of the organization. This inclusion incorporates many principles of high performing organizations: COLLABORATION, INVOLVEMENT, INFORMATION and PEOPLE. The processes, results and improvements resulting from this Action Project could also be included in the AQIP portfolio in Category 1: Helping Students Learn, and Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.

The College might want to consider a pilot program for the implementation of assessment software. Early adopters of the technology could act as faculty advocates, and often these changes are better received from peers than from a committee. The college could also consider contacting other institutions to investigate what software packages are already in use. This could provide a nearby mentor to aid in implementation. A consortium could be considered to share costs related to purchase and ongoing training. The college would be well served by creating and using a rubric for evaluating the software options, and ongoing costs after the initial purchase are an important consideration. Consider how software interfaces with existing operating systems, such as Peoplesoft, Banner, Blackboard, and others. Training costs and plans for training should be included, not just the initial software selection.

The team is wise to consider state reporting requirements and core abilities and how software selection will aid or complicate the efforts to collect and report data.

2: Institution Involvement

A: Members of the twelve person team include faculty, staff, and administrators; each volunteered for the research team they were interested in. The research teams include: Weave, Learning Outcome Manager (LOM), Innovation Exchange, TracDat, TaskStream, I-Ready and the Higher Learning Commission.

R: The college is fortunate to have many qualified volunteers step up to fulfill this important mission. Team members should identify and develop methods to communicate progress college-wide to create early buy in from those who will be impacted at a later date. To promote faculty support, the College could consider focusing on language that incorporates teaching and learning outcomes, and improving student learning through data gathering and interpretation, rather than approaching this as an exercise in compliance and assessment. This aspect of the Action project can also be discussed in the AQIP portfolio Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations.

3: Next Steps

A: Per the action project declaration, the team is researching best practices in assessment of program and institutional outcomes. The team broke into smaller teams to review/define various methods, processes/outcomes and products.

R: We applaud the Action Team in seeking best practices as the Action Project develops. Please contact the Higher Learning Commission if the team needs assistance in locating resources and best practices. Moraine Park Technical College might consider joining the HLC Assessment Academy to network with other colleges who are undertaking similar activities and to take advantage of the various resources the Academy offers to colleges who seek to improve assessment at various levels.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Since there has only been one meeting, there is nothing to report in this area.

R: Even though the Team has just started meeting, the College should consider what benchmarks will be used to demonstrate progress and success. Things to incorporate include: what data will be gathered, from whom, who will gather it, how often, where will the data live, who will it be communicated to, who will have access to the data? The College will need to define the parameters for selection and success early in the process. The larger college community will also need to determine how use of this software and the resulting data will contribute to continuous improvement in student learning, program review, and curriculum development. Once again, if the Team needs help identifying best practices, please contact the Higher Learning Commission for resources and ideas.

5: Project Challenges

A: Again, it is still too early to address this question.

R: The college is off to a great start, and it appears that everything is in place for a successful Action Project. Although there have been no challenges to date, the Team might want to consider contingency plans. For example, if the College cannot afford the software that is the number one choice, a fallback plan might be in order. The Team could recommend alternatives such as a number two choice, another selection process, a delay, or a reallocation of resources. This leadership could prove valuable to the college if difficulties arise.