

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Gogebic Community College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	Data Needs and Access	<b>Status</b> COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	7-Measuring Effectiveness	<b>Updated</b> 09-10-2009
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b> 09-21-2009
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 07-20-2007	<b>Created</b> 11-24-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b> 04-01-2010	<b>Version</b> 1

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The goal of this action project is to assist departments across campus in identifying their data needs – in reference to data used in decision making. A dashboard will be developed for each department. Each department will then be assisted in identifying how best to access the data within their dashboard.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** Gogebic Community College is converting from a mainframe information system to a networked information system. The network will provide increased access by all areas of the college to data and subsequently to information for decision making. Data and resulting information are currently used for decision making but the broad access and ease of interpretation are new elements brought about by the conversion.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The entire college community including all departments and divisions would be involved in and affected by the action project. An attempt would be made to address the data needs of the entire college community.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** The critical processes would include data access, interpretation and decision making. Currently, the college community has to place requests for data from computer services. Computer services then runs queries to provide the data needed. This is very labor intensive and time consuming. With an awareness of data needs and a system which allows individual access to data, the departments and divisions can develop regular dashboards where data can be accessed and used.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** This action project will be completed in 18 months from the start of the action project. This timeline will be divided as follows: I. Identification of decisions made within departments/divisions and the data/information needed to support those decisions. 10 months Outcome: For each department/division within the college, four areas (or less) of decisions making will be identified along with correlating data needs to support those decisions. II. Mechanisms and formats will be developed to access the data needed for decision making. 8 months Outcome: Each department/division will know how to access and interpret the data elements that they need for decision making.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** The outcomes and timelines listed in G above will be used to monitor the progress of the action project. If the outcomes are not being met consistent to the timelines, then the team needs to evaluate the situation and take corrective action.

### 7: Project Outcome Measures

**A:** I. Outcome: For each department/division within the college, four areas (or less) of decisions making will be identified along with correlating data needs to support those decisions. II. Outcome: Each department/division will know how to access and interpret the data elements that they need for decision making.

## **8: Other Information**

**A:**

## **Project Update**

### **1: Project Accomplishments and Status**

**A:** This action project was initiated to help departments across campus identify their specific data needs and improve access to the needed data. GCC has completed its conversion from a mainframe information system to a networked information system. The resulting implementation of a web portal for faculty staff and students called the JICS (Jenzabar Internet Campus Solutions) system has resulted in a number of improvements in the area of data access and use. For students, the JICS system gives immediate real time information regarding their academic record, financial aid, bills, grades, and web registration. Faculty can now access their class lists electronically from their offices rather waiting for paper copies and updates to arrive in their mailboxes. Student advising in faculty offices has been improved because the faculty can now access their advisee's student records including degree audits and "What If" scenarios for changes of major from their offices. Faculty can also enter their grades online, access their departmental budget information, and access their college email from home. The Campus Emergency Notification System which alerts faculty, staff, and students in the event of a campus emergency or campus closing due to severe weather has also been implemented as a result of this project. The JICS system gives the Business office easier access to all financial data and has general ledger query capabilities. Purchase requisitions can now be processed and approved electronically. Training on the JICS system has been conducted for faculty and staff during All Staff meetings and is conducted for incoming students during student orientation. GCC has also recently hired a full time assistant registrar/ institutional researcher to assist the college in determining future data needs and facilitating data use and interpretation.

### **2: Institution Involvement**

**A:** Everyone on campus was in some way involved in this project. The Data Team which is directly responsible for this Action Project has sought input from the entire staff regarding their data needs and have arranged for all students and staff to be trained in the use of the JICS system. During our recent Systems Portfolio update process, the teams assembled to update the nine Systems Portfolio categories were surveyed to determine their data needs for the current update and asked to consider what data elements would be useful during future updates.

### **3: Next Steps**

**A:** 1. An enhanced template to be used during the program review process is being developed. This template is intended to ensure all necessary data elements are incorporated into program reviews, standardize the presentation and interpretation of data, and provide access to raw data for expanded study and interpretation of emerging trends. 2. Comparative data regarding enrollment and attrition rates will be developed and made available to individual faculty and departments. 3. Provide the necessary training our new institutional researcher will require for performance of job responsibilities. 4. Online bill payment option for students.

### **4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:** In addition to the more timely and useful information provided to students and staff in sections A & B (above), many of reports can now be run in individual offices by staff. This reduces the waiting time for information which would occur if all reports needed to be submitted to Computer Services. For those reports which require the involvement of Computer Services, a Data Request form has been developed and used to facilitate the data request process, assist the registrar in clarifying their needs, and accelerate the response time.

## 5: Project Challenges

A: Data requests by individuals are not always refined so as to provide meaningful data. A common language and understanding of the process will take time to develop. In addition, the changing needs of the state government, federal government, and other college stakeholders in regards to data and data reporting remains challenging.

## 6: AQIP Involvement

A:

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## Update Review

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### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The implementation of a networked information system is a huge accomplishment and should be celebrated. The goal of the Action Project – to identify data needs – is still underway; however, and will need continued support. The assistant registrar/ institutional researcher should take the lead in helping identifying data needs.

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The Data Team's inclusive approach to identify data needs is to be applauded. It is unclear whether their efforts resulted in positive outcomes.

### 3: Next Steps

A: The development of a template that is associated with an existing process, such as program review, is an excellent next step. The standardization of presentations and interpretation of data will serve the College well.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The new efficiency of data gathering should be celebrated as this Action Project comes to a close. The managers of this project should ask which elements of this effort could be emulated as "effective practices" for other Action Projects.

## 5: Project Challenges

A: The remaining challenges should be considered as Action Projects in and of themselves. A large project such as Data Needs and Access often identifies smaller projects which can be approached in systematic ways which fosters continuous improvement throughout the institution.

## 6: AQIP Involvement

A: 9788

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## Project Outcome

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### 1: Reason for completion

A: Although there is more work to do regarding this action project, it is our belief that the primary objectives have been achieved and that the remaining issues would be better addressed as part of a new action project.

## 2: Success Factors

**A:** Access to data across campus has been greatly improved by the implementation of our networked information system (JICS). For example:

- Students can access real time information regarding their academic record, financial aid, bills, and grades.
- Faculty can enter grades, view class lists, access departmental budget information, and view their advisees' student records online.
- The Business office has easier and timely access to financial data.
- The Campus Emergency Notification System which alerts faculty, staff, and students in the event of a campus emergency or severe weather closing is now operational.

This project has also resulted in the hiring of a full time Assistant Registrar/ Institutional Researcher which will help in the continuing identification of data needs.

## 3: Unsuccessful Factors

**A:** The rather large scope of this Action Project has made the goals difficult to achieve in a timely manner. We still have issues related to the identification of data needs. Many of our continuing challenges stem from a lack of a standardized process for requesting data not easily accessible from individual offices.