

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Gogebic Community College

Project Details			
Title	Outstanding Opportunities for Improvement.	Status	COMPLETED
Category	Any Category	Updated	12-18-2014
Timeline		Reviewed	04-06-2015
	Planned Project Kickoff 01-11-2014	Created	01-08-2014
	Actual Completion 05-01-2015	Version	1

1: PROJECT GOAL

A: The Goal of this Action Project is to specifically address the questions in our Systems Portfolio that received a OO rating in our Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. Ten questions received this rating. Addressing these questions directly, represents an efficient way to manage our perceived deficiencies. We will then turn our attention to those questions rated O.

2: REASON FOR UNDERTAKING THIS PROJECT

A: Our responses to the questions posed in the Systems Portfolio were rated as SS, S, O, or OO (SS = very strong, S= strength, O = opportunity for improvement, OO = Outstanding Opportunity for improvement). While our latest portfolio received good marks overall, a number of our responses received a OO rating. We have formed a committee with representation from all areas of the College to review answers to questions with a OO rating. This committee will be charged with updating the response to these questions and more importantly, identify specific data that should be routinely collected so that we will have the background to adequately address these questions in the future.

3: ORGANIZATIONAL AREAS AFFECTED

A: The committee will have representation from all areas of campus.

4: KEY ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

A: As a result of this Action Project, we will improve the Systems Portfolio writing process and improve those areas of the College's operations identified in the Systems Appraisal as needing attention.

5: PROJECT TIMEFRAME RATIONALE

A: We would like to address these opportunities as soon as possible and believe the committee can complete its work by the middle of the Fall 2015 semester.

6: PROJECT SUCCESS MONITORING

A: The committee will meet periodically to discuss progress and work on additional questions.

7: PROJECT OUTCOME MEASURES

A: Institution-wide consensus as to the adequacy of the revised responses is a first step. We also seek to improve writing and review processes for the Systems Portfolio.

Project Update

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

A: Project Status: In Progress
Original Project Start Date: January, 2014
Originally Projected End Date: October 2014
Anticipated Completion Date: June 2015

The Action Project Team began meeting in January 2014 to review the questions in our Systems Portfolio which received a OO rating in our Systems Appraisal (there were 10 questions receiving this rating). After the project was started, we decided to expand our project to questions receiving an O rating. A template was developed for this process showing the question, original response to the question, the Systems Appraisal feedback and a place for comments and updates. This allowed our committee members to send in their feedback prior to our meetings. During our discussions it was decided that we should place most of our efforts on our process related questions. The rationale for this shift was that results follow process.

By targeting those areas which received less than satisfactory marks in our systems appraisal, we are confronting the systems and processes which are in need of the most attention.

2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: The original intention of this project was to appropriately document our effective practices and update our practices where they are found to be incomplete. The "deliverables" will include a more accurate and improved Systems Portfolio which will be posted on our Website in June 2015. The Quality Checkup team which visited the College in the spring of 2014, commented that we are "systematic and doing things right" but need to improve our documentation of our processes.

3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

A: This year we have:

- Reviewed the questions which needed to be addressed.
- Developed a template so that multiple people could participate in updating the questions they feel most comfortable in answering.
- Began incorporating our feedback into the new Systems Portfolio.
- Attended a Strategy Forum during which we outlined two new Action Projects. The need for these projects was identified during discussions related to this project. Specifically, we will be updating our Institutional learning outcomes and linking them to Instructional Division learning outcomes. The other project will focus on Institutional Culture as it relates to assessment. These projects will be posted to the Action Project Directory in the spring of 2015.

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: It was determined that the CQIN team members should lead this project. The CQIN (Continuous Quality Improvement Network) teams include a cross section of the Colleges' employees. These are faculty, staff, and administrators who have attended one or more CQIN workshops the college has participated in (CQIN, Atlanta, CQIN Boston, and CQIN St. Louis). We usually send seven staff members to these meetings.

5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

A: We believe that our approach to this project reflects an effective practice in that it has involvement from all areas of the college, has tied together professional development with a project necessary to the institution, and will result in a document designed to accurately reflect institutional practices.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: Our major challenge is always finding time to meet that doesn't conflict with class schedules or other committee meeting times. This challenge was recently addressed by not scheduling any classes from 12:00 to 1:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays in the upcoming semester. This will provide 12 hours each month with no schedule conflicts during which the various institutional committees can meet.

7: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

A: The next steps are to incorporate the committee feedback into our Systems Portfolio this spring. Although we are not required to submit a portfolio to the HLC until the end of the 2017-18 Academic Year, we will continue to update our Systems Portfolio each year. We understand that the Portfolio format itself will undergo substantial changes beginning in June of 2015. We will be using the new format after this project is completed (for our June 2016 update).

8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

A: None.

Update Review

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

A: It is interesting that the College decided to focus on the Outstanding Opportunities identified to help with improvement efforts. It sounds as if the College used a good approach for improvement, working on those areas identified by the reviewers. Unfortunately, no specifics were included with this update. Using the new AQIP Categories, this project would fall under Category Six: Quality Overview.

2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: Without specifics as to what the College chose to improve, it is difficult to determine whether goals and deliverables were met. Given the comment by the Quality Checkup team about needing to document processes, it would be helpful if the College focused on better documentation of this Action Project as well. The College may want to consider process mapping to help with understanding processes. Additionally, a focus on creating specific, measurable goals would benefit both the college and any peer reviewers who are seeking to offer more specific input.

3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

A: It is clear that GCC is working on their AQIP processes and that some accomplishments have been made. The College participated in a Strategy Forum in which two new Action Projects were created. It is of concern that the focus seems to be on writing a better Systems Portfolio, rather than improving processes to benefit students and the community. Documentation should be secondary to continuous quality improvement practices.

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: Again, this response is overly broad. While GCC appears to have broad involvement, the reviewer is unable to determine if that is factual since specifics were not listed. The College may want to consider listing the positions of the staff who are involved, and what departments or areas they fall into.

5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

A: Given that the responses in this Action Project are very broad, that no objectives were identified, and involvement was listed only in the broadest terms, this Action Project does not reflect effective practice on the part of the College. The writing in this Action Project does not reflect a "document designed to accurately reflect institutional practices," rather it appears to indicate that the college does not document practices at all effectively.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: Certainly, meeting times are always a challenge, however the project appears to have other challenges, as well. The reviewer is

unable to determine if the college successfully made improvements to the areas identified as OOs. Since that form of evaluation will not be used moving forward, the college should take a long look at its approach to quality processes and process improvements.

7: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIME LINE

A: While the practice of continually updating the College Systems Portfolio reflects good practice, the new format is significantly different in both its structure and in the prompts to which the college will be required to respond. The College may want to consider re-writing a section or two per year (in the new format) as it gets ready for the next Systems Portfolio deadline.

8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

A: none

Project Outcome

1: REASON FOR COMPLETION

A: This project has been closed because it achieved its objective of taking a deeper look into the systems and processes that were seen as Opportunities or Outstanding Opportunities for improvement during our last systems appraisal.

2: SUCCESS FACTORS

A: A team from across campus met to discuss and explore the areas found to be opportunities for improvement in our systems appraisal. If found to be a real issue, these Opportunities were addressed. If however these Opportunities were simply a failure to properly address the question in the Systems Portfolio that was noted as well.

3: UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS

A: There were two aspects of this project that could be categorized as less than successful. First, it was difficult to form a committee to deal with such a wide range of issues. In retrospect, a number of smaller committees would have been more efficient. Second, the true nature of this project was lost on the reviewer. The reviewer was of the opinion that we were doing this project to improve our Systems Portfolio rather than address systems which needed attention. This could not be further from the truth. We used this project to address areas of concern.