

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Gogebic Community College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	Improved Student Learning Through Continuous Improvement	<b>Status</b> COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	8-Planning Continuous Improvement	<b>Updated</b> 09-04-2006
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b> 10-04-2006
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 05-07-2002	<b>Created</b> 11-23-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b>	<b>Version</b> 3

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The goal of this Quality Action Project is to improve student learning by identifying opportunities for continuous improvement of the college's programs and services, and supports staff professional development. Student learning is defined as the whole of the student's college experience, and improvement in any way that positively impacts upon the student is seen as supporting improved student learning. Inherent in this goal is the development of an open, non-punitive, and collaborative environment, and positive, constructive, and non-punitive evaluation and measurement systems. A strategy will be developed and implemented to guide this continuous improvement process.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** This is a "vital few" criterion because no comprehensive, institution-wide strategy currently exists from which we can identify areas for improvement and staff development, and establish a foundation and measure from which to establish quality processes and improve the way we help students learn.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The most affected areas: Instruction, Student Services, Business Services, Board of Trustees/ President. All institutional areas will be impacted by this QAP.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** Services (presently not assessed for improvement purposes,) programs (when instructional programs are regularly reviewed no forum presently exists for coordinating change across the curriculum), and all staff (evaluation systems are inconsistently applied and no professional development planning exists.) Positive change in all three of these areas would strengthen and improve services and programs, and better prepare staff to interact with and, in the case of instructional staff, create improved learning experiences.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** In order to keep the institution's attention and energies focused on the Project and its goals, there would need to be a continuous updating and flow of information. This will be accomplished through staff meeting updates; short, frequent e-mails commenting on the process; the Quip newsletter distributed every payday repeating and adding to information already distributed; and continuous feedback when comments and suggestions are solicited or freely offered during the process.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** Process measures would include measuring the development and use of new quality assessment processes within institutional departments/divisions; development, implementation and participation of staff assessment and professional development systems; and curriculum discussions and recommendations originating from a coordinated assessment of instructional program reviews.

### 7: Project Outcome Measures

**A:** Outcome measures would include percent improvement in service quality assessments, improvement in student and staff satisfaction surveys, greater budget allocations for professional development, initiation of broad based curriculum improvements, and improvement in selected student outcomes (grades, licensure examinations, success at transfer institutions, employability, etc.)

## **8: Other Information**

**A:** Begin development of a comprehensive continuous improvement measurement strategy that incorporates service, process, and program improvement, and professional development. As part of this strategy, inventory continuous improvement evaluation processes currently in use; identify service, process, and program evaluation and measurement opportunities; identify strategies that link staff evaluation to professional development needs; and consider appropriate measurement and implementation strategies. It is anticipated that a component of this strategy will include subcommittees of the QAP team developing specific assessment tools and improvement plans for specific application. Pilot test and conduct formative evaluations of strategy components as opportunities become available. Complete strategy development and begin implementation; the goal being to achieve 50% of staff and processes/programs as participating in this initiative. Develop and implement a formal formative evaluation process. Continue to implement strategy with a target of 80% of staff and targeted processes/programs participating in this initiative. Continue implementation of the formal formative evaluation process.

## **Project Update**

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

**A:** During the 2005-2006 academic year, the Student Learning Team worked on General Education Outcomes and implementation of COMPASS as part of the student assessment process. The Student Learning Team as well as those representatives from Instruction and Student Services selected COMPASS, a product of ACT, as the assessment instrument to be used for Entry and Exit assessments in reading comprehension, writing and math. Procedures were developed to phase out the current assessment instrument. Also procedures had to be developed and technical concerns addressed on how the assessment will be administered. COMPASS will also be used for the student profile entry survey. Questions were framed to collect aggregate data on students entering GCC. The information will be used to identify the characteristics of GCC students and their needs/goals/expectations upon entering GCC. General Education Outcomes recommended by the Student Learning Team were presented to the entire faculty for discussion, revision and approval. After obtaining input, each member of the faculty voted and the vote was unanimous to adopt the General Education Outcomes. The General Education Outcomes were then presented to the Curriculum Committee and approved for implementation across the GCC Curriculum. The Board of Trustees was informed of the General Education Outcomes.

### **2: Institution Involvement**

**A:** The Student Learning Team is composed of representatives from all segments of the college who are concerned with the effectiveness of student learning at Gogebic Community College. The Student Learning Team has received the approval of the Student Senate and Phi Theta Kappa for the student learning assessment process. Students also provide input through student surveys. Faculty, staff and administration have been asked for their input and approval throughout the process of developing and implementing the assessment process.

### **3: Next Steps**

**A:** The Student Learning Team has specific objectives for the 2006-2007 academic year. • During the Faculty Orientation session at the start of the academic year, faculty will receive in depth instruction in the new assessment process. They will also be asked to identify courses and assignments where the General Education Outcomes are addressed. Evaluation processes to determine success in regard to the outcomes will be developed. • Student exit surveys will be conducted on paper this year with anticipation to automate the surveys next year. • The Student Learning Team will evaluate electronic portfolio software and make a recommendation on purchase. • During the 2006-2007 academic year, faculty will assist students in identifying articles for their portfolio and initiate a paper portfolio. • The student orientation sessions will instruct the students in portfolio development to meet outcomes.

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

**A:** Obtaining, incorporating and respecting varied opinions from the College community takes time but assures buy in by all areas of the College.

## **5: Project Challenges**

**A:** Challenges will be faced in education of the faculty and students in implementing the assessment process. Also financial resources will have to be assigned to purchase of the necessary software and staffing.

## **6: AQIP Involvement**

**A:** Thank you for your offer of assistance but we feel that we are progressing nicely with this action project.

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## **Update Review**

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

**A:** The goal of this action project is to “improve student learning by identifying opportunities for continuous improvement of the college’s programs and services, and supports staff professional development”. This is a very broad goal, and many different types of activities could be a part of it. Your focus this year seems to be on student assessment. Assessment activities are a key component of helping establish the educational baseline from which any student must begin on their educational path. Selection of COMPASS as the entry and exit assessment instrument for institutional evaluation in the areas of reading comprehension, writing, and math is a good start in putting a systematic process in place for student assessment activities. The addition of institutionally-specific questions to the entry instrument will allow information to be gathered to assist in directing students early-on to a beneficial pathway through your institution. The General Education Outcomes piece of the student assessment process will allow for course and program update, revision, and change. The fact that this has the unanimous approval of your entire faculty will ease the degree of difficulty you may have otherwise experienced in trying to get student participation in this outcomes assessment.

### **2: Institution Involvement**

**A:** One of AQIP’s Principles of High Performance Organizations is ‘involvement’. This speaks to the fact that broad-based faculty, staff and administrative involvement encourages better decisions and strengthens individual and group ownership of systems, activities, and initiatives. Your description of the involvement of stakeholders from key areas internal to the college, including faculty, staff, administration, and students, indicates adherence to this principle. As work on administration of the new assessment instrument moves forward, continue to use available print and electronic resources (including perhaps intranet exposure) to inform constituents, and to document and celebrate successes.

### **3: Next Steps**

**A:** Because of the breadth of this action project’s goal, and the centrality of improving student learning, it has most likely been difficult for your institution to select an end point for this action project. Improving student learning should not and will not ever end. However, this project is in its fifth year and needs to be retired. It appears that you are moving toward institutionalization and a natural time to retire this project during this year. The activities outlined may serve as the basis for a new project on student learning (AQIP requires that there be one project related to student learning at all times). As you consider a new project, keep in mind the new AQIP guidelines that call for projects to be 6 months to 2 years in length.

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

**A:** Collaboration among internal constituencies has many benefits – both short- and long-term. It often improves communication and understanding among groups, while it promotes support for a common institutional mission. Use of the ideas, opinions, and expertise of a broad-base of faculty, staff, administration (and students) to further your continuous improvement goals also illustrates the AQIP Principle of “Involvement”. Make sure that you celebrate the accomplishments associated with the activities of this action project as it reaches its conclusion – not only does it provide a sense of closure to a project, it also encourages participation in future projects.

**5: Project Challenges**

**A:** The time and resources you allocate now to make sure that all impacted stakeholders know what is happening with the new assessment process will pay off in the long run in terms of buy-in, understanding, and valid expectations.

**6: AQIP Involvement**

**A:**