

Gogebic Community College, MI

Project: Institutional Learning Outcomes Update and Assessment Process

Version 2.0- Project

Q: What is the current status of your project?

A:

Q: Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A:

Q: Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

A:

Q: List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A:

Q: Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

A:

Q: Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

A:

Q: Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

A:

Q: Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A:

Q: In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

A:

Q: Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A:

Version 1.0- Project

Q: What is the current status of your project?

A: In-progress

Q: Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A: The project began in December of 2014 with the creation of new Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for GCC. Based on the creation of the ILOs, this Action Project has evolved into an instructional-wide assessment initiative. Gogebic Community College plans to continue this Action Project because of the importance of the initiative and the feedback from the Higher Learning Commission. The project is projected to continue into the Spring 2018 semester before it is completed.

Start Date: December 2014
Anticipated End Date: April 2018

Q: Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

A: After entering the student-learning outcomes, aligning outcomes with Institutional Learning Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and designating assessment methods for the student-learning outcomes, GCC faculty have planned and are administering outcomes assessments to at least one class this academic year. While one assessment project is the minimum, a number of faculty have committed to conducting multiple assessments this academic year. All of this information has been or will be entered into an outcomes database that can generate a number of reports from the outcomes and assessments entered. In the past, GCC has needed improvement in regards to outcomes assessment, as addressed by the HLC through a recent systems portfolio and site visit. This initiative demonstrates the college's understanding of and commitment to outcomes-based assessment, which is now an embedded practice at GCC, one that will continue in the instructional division and extend to other departments across campus.

Q: List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A: Project goals are based on the completion of a number of steps within a multi-year cycle. Again, this project relies on buy-in from faculty for the assessment initiative. Thus far, these are the steps:

- * Development of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs): **May 30, 2015.**
- * ILOs presented to the faculty, staff, and BOT for review: **August 2015.**
- * Faculty training for implementation of ILO/student-learning outcome assessment: **Fall 2015.**
- * Review of initial Project Progress and data collection process: **January 2016.**
- * Faculty-wide implementation of assessment process: **Spring 2016.**
- * All-faculty professional development to help create and implement student-learning assessments: **Fall 2016.**

Additional measures based on completion include:

- * Faculty session on progress and future planning of assessments: **January 2017.**
- * Faculty session on results of data from first-year assessments: **April 2017.**
- * Faculty session on developing assessments based on "global awareness" ILO: **Fall 2017.**
- * Faculty session on program assessment: **Spring 2018.**
- * Discussion of incorporating assessment measures into Student Services activities: **Spring 2018.**

Q: Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

A: During the past year, faculty across campus have worked to enter student-learning outcomes for each class they teach in the Outcomes Database. Additionally, faculty have taken part in a number of faculty development sessions geared toward outcomes assessment. Because the data are available, the college has been able to track the number of courses that have outcomes entered. As of the middle of September 2016, 70% of GCC courses have outcomes entered. Additionally, of the 33 full-time faculty at GCC, 26 have submitted documentation for outcomes assessments they plan on conducting during the 2016-2017 academic year, and additional faculty have said they plan to submit their assessment plans before the end of the Fall 2016 semester. This demonstrates higher-than-anticipated buy-in for the assessment initiative, which is still progressing.

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project.
Q: Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

A: The initial committee working on this project derived from members of faculty and staff at GCC. In addition to the AQIP coordinator, faculty participation derived from several different disciplines. Additionally, staff members from Student Services, Admissions, and Allied Health were part of the committee that worked on the revision of the ILOs. All employees of GCC had the opportunity to review and give feedback on the ILOs. Faculty-led assessments have been the focus of this project moving forward, yet the GCC president, deans of business and student services, and the institutional researcher have been a part of the assessment conversations. Additionally, an assessment committee, which contains members from across campus and departments, has and will continue to assist with the development of the initiative and the use of the information gathered. Also, the Student Services department is expected to take part in the assessment process in the upcoming academic year. Thus, this project has a number of different stakeholders involved.

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?
Q:

A: Developing new ILOs and initiating an instruction-wide assessment initiative has made the idea of and reasons for assessment a discussion point on campus. Faculty understand the rationale for outcomes assessment and see the benefits of assessment, understanding how it can and should be used for strategic planning and budgeting. Additionally, the work on the ILOs has brought about a discussion across campus, not just by the faculty, about assessment and the preliminary results GCC has received from the initiative. As for the faculty, the project has opened dialogue among faculty teaching within similar and even different disciplines about assessment, as well as about classroom practices, methods, etc. A number of faculty and staff have joined the Assessment Committee and played a crucial role in keeping the assessment momentum going, as well as providing insights into the assessment process. While the effects on student learning have yet to be documented, the discussions have started about how to incorporate various ILOs into the classroom, as well as throughout campus. GCC has learned the value of bringing in a number of different stakeholders into this process. The college also has spent time building this initiative into a process with various milestones, instead of one large project that must be taken on at once. That has proven to be beneficial.

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.
Q:

A: From the start, GCC has faced the challenge of gaining buy-in from all full-time faculty. While most full-time faculty have taken part in the initiative, one or two still have yet to participate. Additionally, GCC has a few adjunct faculty who teach classes not taught by full-time faculty. Attempting to get adjunct faculty involved in the assessment initiative has been challenging because adjuncts do not have the same level of access to the outcomes database as full-time faculty do. Still, plans are underway to get adjunct faculty involved in the process. Also, GCC wants to make certain the information from the assessments is used properly, utilized carefully. Thus, the focus on embedding this initiative slowly has worked so the college gains a better understanding of the potential of this initiative and seeks ways to "close the loop" on the assessments.

Q:

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

A: Now that faculty have entered outcomes for a majority of classes taught at GCC and planned their assessment projects for the current academic year, the college plans to assist the faculty as they collect and use data. At the start of the Spring 2017 semester, the college will have a faculty assessment period in which faculty will have the opportunity to discuss their assessment projects. During that session, faculty will have time to discuss and plan ways in which they will use the information from the assessment. Thus, they will work with the idea of "closing the loop" in mind. Much of this information will be added to the outcomes database. Additionally, faculty will consider additional projects for the upcoming year.

During the Fall of 2017, a faculty session before the start of the academic year will focus on faculty developing two assessment projects--one of their choosing and one that aligns the ILO of "global awareness," as GCC attempts to gain a better understanding of that issue in the classroom. The session will be spent collaborating, on, and developing assessment projects with several key faculty facilitating the session. That academic year as well, GCC will look at formalizing assessment measures in other departments on campus and conducting assessments for various programs on campus.

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: As mentioned earlier, GCC hopes to continue this Action Project for several years as it continues its assessment initiative. The planning of the project and the feedback from the HLC has been valuable as the college moves forward with this process.

Version 1.0- Update

Q: I certify that this project is ready for review.

A: I agree.

Version 1.0- Review

Please comment on anything that is omitted or incomplete in the project status, dates and summary Q: field. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N/A

Q:

Check for accuracy and completeness against the original Project Declaration. Are the right metrics or measures included for each goal? If not, what revisions to the metrics/measures would you suggest that the institution consider?

A: The Project goals, metrics and measures stated in the declaration are a combination of outcomes, targets, milestones and/or action steps. To clarify, the term “goals” refers to a future condition or performance level that you intend or desire to obtain. Goals should be **specific** - a specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal, **measurable** - concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set, **attainable** - you identify goals that are most important to you, **realistic** - to be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work, and **timely** - a goal should be grounded within a time frame.

The Project goal should have a measurable outcomes, the outcomes should have measures, the measures should have targets, the targets will have results, and the results will direct an action plan(s).

Most of the items you list as Project goals are action steps, e.g. identify potential ILOs, present proposed ILOs to faculty and staff, provide training etc. A faculty session is not a measure. The term “measures and indicators” refers to numerical information that quantifies input, output, and performance dimensions of processes, programs, services, and the overall organization (outcomes).

This is not quibbling over semantics. As an AQIP institution the expectation is that you have, or will be developing, a working understanding of the basic quality principles, terminology and tools. You have all of the right components in place they just need to be reported differently.

Has the institution acted in meaningful ways to pursue project success, making progress as anticipated in the original project declaration? If meaningful progress or project success has not been achieved, has the institution made appropriate revisions to the goals or anticipated outcomes for this project? • Are descriptions of resources, organization, concrete results, and reaching milestones included? • Make a statement of global judgment. (i.e. “The institution is making [excellent/good/satisfactory/ acceptable/slow/ casual/no] progress in this action project.”).

A: As noted in the Action Project Guide, an Action Project should last as long as it takes — six weeks, three months, one year — to achieve its goals, and no longer. Four years is half of your AQIP accreditation cycle; it is too long for a single Action Project. Much of the value derived from an Action Project is learning how to identify and solve a problem quickly. If you put together a team and give them years to solve a problem that ought to take weeks or months, you may teach and reward procrastination, delay, and unnecessary deliberation rather than inventiveness, focus, and teamwork. Moreover, if each of your Action Projects takes a year or more, the number of projects you can accomplish in a given period (and the number of people you can get involved in “action learning”) will be severely limited.

Based on the timetable provided, the institution is making slow progress in the Project. I recommend closing this Project and the team narrowing its focus for a new Project. The newly formed Assessment Committee may want to investigate participation in the Commission’s Assessment Academy.

Link : [HLC Action Project Guide](https://downloadna11.springcm.com/content/DownloadDocuments.ashx?aid=5968&Selection=Document%2C8f06a3b3-4e91-df11-9372-001cc448da6a%3B)

<https://downloadna11.springcm.com/content/DownloadDocuments.ashx?aid=5968&Selection=Document%2C8f06a3b3-4e91-df11-9372-001cc448da6a%3B>

Link : [HLC Academies](https://hlcommission.org/About-the-Commission/academy-applications.html?highlight=WyJhc3Nlc3NtZW50IiwYWNhZGVteSIsImFjYWRIbXkncyIsImFzc2Vzc211bnQgYWNhZGVteSId)

[https://hlcommission.org/About-the-Commission/academy-applications.html?](https://hlcommission.org/About-the-Commission/academy-applications.html?highlight=WyJhc3Nlc3NtZW50IiwYWNhZGVteSIsImFjYWRIbXkncyIsImFzc2Vzc211bnQgYWNhZGVteSId)

[highlight=WyJhc3Nlc3NtZW50IiwYWNhZGVteSIsImFjYWRIbXkncyIsImFzc2Vzc211bnQgYWNhZGVteSId](https://hlcommission.org/About-the-Commission/academy-applications.html?highlight=WyJhc3Nlc3NtZW50IiwYWNhZGVteSIsImFjYWRIbXkncyIsImFzc2Vzc211bnQgYWNhZGVteSId)

Q: Are the appropriate people involved sufficiently for the nature and scope of the project?

• Is there sufficient breadth of involvement?

• Are the right people involved? • Emphasize the roles of those who can enhance the impact, success, or effectiveness of the project.

• Tactfully call attention to any people that appear to have been omitted or bypassed.

A: In addition to the initial committee members, there have been a number of faculty and staff involved in the Project and opportunities for all GCC administration, faculty and staff to participate. Broad-based faculty, staff and administrative involvement encourages better decisions and strengthen individual and group ownership of systems and initiatives. A culture of involvement draws on the expertise and practical experience of those people closest to a situation. You got the right people involved, in the right way, at the right time, on the right project(s). Well done.

As you move forward with the assessment initiative, you will want to include students and other stakeholders. Voice-of-the-customer data is a key component of organizational performance measurement.

Does the institution show evidence of learning from what it did well?

Q: • Acknowledge any practice that could be replicated internally in future projects.

• Encourage the sharing of best practices with other institutions.

A: While many of the processes have yet to be fully evaluated, refined, and implemented there is sufficient evidence that the institution is learning and adapting as it goes. Be sure to document everything. Plans are in place to garner greater buy-in from the full-time faculty and to involve adjuncts in the assessment initiative. Opportunities exist for faculty to assess their projects and discuss their findings. I encourage you to continue this process and focus on gaps as well as opportunities to leverage successful projects across disciplines.

Does the institution have a realistic understanding of what it needs to address in order to achieve progress and, ultimately, project success? Does it assess its internal and external environments, recognizing the potential forces that could hinder success? Is anything overlooked?

A: The institution has a structured timeline with milestones and potentially measurable outcomes. I believe you have a good grasp on where you are at, where you want to go, and how to get there. As I will mention below, however, I feel your Project has crept. As you report on this and other Action Projects in your Portfolio and Comprehensive Quality Review, you will need to provide physical evidence of your processes and how you arrived at them.

Does the institution understand the current status of its project and know how it intends to pursue project success?

A: What you appear to have suffered from is scope creep. The Project started with the creation of new ILOs and evolved into an instructional-wide assessment initiative. Most megaprojects like yours fall victim to scope creep. Scope creep can occur when the parameters of a project are not properly defined, documented, or controlled. If budget, resources, and schedule are increased along with the scope, the change is usually considered an acceptable addition to the project. However, creep often results in cost

overrun. Scope creep generally takes the form of new requirements or ideas being added once the project has started.

There are five basic ways to avoid scope creep: 1) Document the Requirements - talk to all the project stakeholders and work out exactly what it is that they want the project to achieve. Write their requirements down and get them to sign off on them. 2) Set up Change Control Processes - setting up the process for your project really means thinking about who is going to review and approve changes. 3) Create a Clear Project Schedule - use your requirements to create a detailed task list. 4) Verify the Scope with the Stakeholders - use these discussions to talk to your sponsor and stakeholders about the change control process, and 5) Talk to the Project Team - they need to know about the change control process and how it will affect them.

Q: Overall, does the institution demonstrate a good faith effort in its pursuit of continuous quality improvement through this action project? Is there anything of concern that should be brought to the attention of AQIP via your mentor?

A: This was a good Project that has grown and will continue to creep without controls. There are a number of Projects within this initiative that could have stood on their own. Future AQIP Action Projects can be enhanced by clearly defining the scope of the Project and following the AQIP Action Project Guide. Focus on opportunities where results will make a serious and visible difference in institutional performance, are challenging but attainable in a short time frame, are a stretch, and give faculty and staff a sense of doing worthwhile work. Consider chartering your Project teams and holding to the scope of the charter.

Declaration

Q: Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

A: This action project focuses on revising GCC's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO). GCC plans to refocus the ILOs, updating the outcomes to fit today's changing educational environment and linking the outcomes with across-campus assessment measures at GCC. Drawing upon their areas of expertise, members have worked closely to revise the outcomes. This project will act as the foundation for members of various divisions and programs to revise their outcomes to align with the ILOs. Additionally, now that the ILOs have been revised, faculty have been working toward aligning student-learning outcomes with the ILOs, as well as developing assessment projects based upon the revised student-learning outcomes.

Q: Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this action project now and how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution's current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted Systems Portfolio.

A: To keep current, GCC reviews its ILOs every few years. This year, GCC initiated the revision to keep up to date with current pedagogy across campus. The project represents GCC's increased efforts to assess general education learning, particularly general education outcomes in both the instructional and student

services divisions. Beginning with a revision of the ILOs allows departments to align their own division, program, and course outcomes with those of the institution. We hope faculty and staff will examine their departments' student-learning outcomes, making sure those are measurable and can bring about meaningful assessment. Overall, this revision also allows GCC to engage all departments in the student-learning process.

Q: List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress toward each goal. Be sure to include when you anticipate submitting the project for formal reviews.

A: GCC revised its ILOs before the summer of 2015. The ILO draft was then sent for review by all trustees, administrators, faculty and staff at GCC. After the review, the ILOs were adopted by the Board of Trustees before the start of the Fall 2015 semester. All faculty and staff were sent the approved ILOs and were given time during the start of the Fall 2015 semester to examine and align their own division, program, and course outcomes with the new ILOs. During the course of the 2015-2016 academic year, faculty worked to revise and then record all student-learning outcomes into an Access database created by the College. Those outcomes were aligned with the ILOs. At the start of the Fall 2016 semester, faculty will create assessment projects based upon their student-learning outcomes. The results will be added to the Access database. The newly formed Assessment Committee, which consists of members across campus, will assist with the process, helping in the development of projects, as well as working with faculty on how to use the data/information gathered from the assessments.

Q: Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

A: The initial committee working on this project derives from members of faculty and staff at GCC. In addition to the AQIP coordinator, faculty participation draws from several different disciplines. Additionally, staff members from Student Services, Admissions, and Allied Health are part of the committee working on the revision of the ILOs. Eventually, all employees of GCC will have the opportunity to review and give feedback on the ILOs. Faculty-led assessments will be the focus of this project moving forward. However, an assessment committee, which contains members from across campus and departments, will assist with the development of the project and the use of the information gathered.

Q: Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

A: The Dean of Instruction and the Dean of Student Services are responsible for monitoring the progress of this project. They will meet regularly with the Action Project team to discuss progress regarding implementation and the collection of data. Deadlines and specific milestones agreed upon by the team members in conjunction with the Deans are listed below.

Project milestones:

Development of ILOs: To be completed by May 30, 2015.

ILOs to be presented to the faculty, staff, and BOT for review in July 2015.

Faculty training for implementation of ILO assessment Fall 2015.

Review of initial Project Progress and data collection process. January 2016.

Campus-wide implementation of assessment process. Spring 2016.

All-faculty professional development to help create and implement student-learning assessments. Fall 2016.

Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: The language barrier in terms of assessment practices has been challenging (e.g., using consistent terminology—"outcome" versus "objective"). Additionally, GCC expects to face some resistance from faculty and staff as it asks faculty and staff to align outcomes from the various to departments with the new ILOs. Additionally, creating full buy-in from faculty has proven difficult. While most faculty have revised their student-learning outcomes to align with the ILOs, documenting this information in the outcomes database, a number of faculty have yet to take part in this process. More efforts are needed to demonstrate to faculty the need and the benefits of revising and perhaps rethinking their outcomes in a full-faculty collaborative effort.

Provide any additional information that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project.

A: This project is about more than revising ILOs. It will have a deeper impact at GCC. As mentioned, after revising the ILOs, GCC has been in the process of coordinating the revision of division, program, and course outcomes. Through this process, GCC plans to establish measurable outcomes across campus as the foundation for meaningful assessment. The revised ILOs were merely the beginning of creating a culture of assessment at GCC.

Comments

The project was last modified on 5/31/16 in the former network site. We have had a change in status for the Accreditation/AQIP position at Gogebic Community College. I hoped to update this project on the new site as another phase of the initiative is underway. Thank you for your time.

Ryon List, 2016-09-01

Tags:

- Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs