

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Gogebic Community College

Project Details			
Title	New Program/Course Development	Status	COMPLETED
Category	3-Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	Updated	09-11-2007
Timeline		Reviewed	09-21-2007
	Planned Project Kickoff 03-01-2006	Created	11-24-2009
	Actual Completion	Version	1

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this action project is to improve student learning through the development and implementation of a new instructional program and course development process that is flexible, timely, and consistent with student and stakeholder needs. Program delivery would be considered to recognize learner abilities, learning styles, experiences, and barriers to access.

2: Reasons For Project

A: New instructional program and course development is generally reactive. It is the desire of Gogebic Community College to become more proactive in response to the needs of our stakeholders and as such potentially increase enrollment. Once the needs are identified, the process by which new instructional programs and courses are developed and approved is considered by many to be cumbersome and unknown to others. In order to meet stakeholder needs in a timely, effective fashion the process by which new programs and course are developed and approved must be updated and revised. This proposed action project would improve student learning through the development and implementation of a new instructional program and course development process.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The major impact of this action project will encompass the instructional areas from transfer to occupational. As new programs and courses are developed, the impetus will be on the instructional areas to most effectively incorporate the new offerings into the overall college curriculum. Other areas will be affected as well, including the admissions department who will focus on marketing the new offerings, transfer coordinator who will focus on the transferability of course work to four year institutions, and financial aid who will have to work on obtaining approval for any new programs for federal student aid funding.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The critical processes that are most affected are those involving the development and implementation of new programs and courses. It is vital to the success of the college that stakeholder needs be identified and that those needs be translated in an efficient manner into effective course offerings.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The target for completion is the end of academic year '06/'07. This would allow approximately one year to complete the action project. In reviewing the outcome measures/objectives of the action project, the evaluation of the current process will not take an extensive amount of time, possibly one to two months. The time commitment will come in exploring viable options in new program development and making suggestions for improving the process. Suggestions can be made but the feasibility and validity of the suggestions is the area for careful consideration and testing. It is anticipated that the investigation of other means of program development and evaluation of suggestions will take the most time but achievable in 8 to 10 months.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Timelines have been established for each of the project outcomes. Within the first two months, the current program development process will be flow charted and the opportunities for improvement identified. Also during this period, the team will gather information

on course development in other institutions of higher learning and perform a literature review . At two months, these items will be presented to the entire team for review . By the end of the fall semester 2006, viable suggestions should have been made on how to improve the process. These suggestions will be evaluated with possible new programs of study recommended by the end of the spring 2007 semester.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: 1. Evaluation of current new program/course development process 2. Make suggestions for improving the current process. 3. Test suggestions to assure their feasibility and validity. 4. Suggest new programs/courses for consideration.

8: Other Information

A:

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Since the inception of this action project in 2006, the New Program and Course Development team has been very active in working on this commonly perceived need. In order to establish a baseline for process improvement, the team decided to flow chart the current process for new course or program identification, development and approval by the Curriculum Committee. Microsoft Visio was used as a tool to assist in the flow charting process. In working with this visual tool, the team identified that there were really two different types of approval which necessitated two different types of evaluation. The first is the approval of an entirely new program and the other is for courses that may be offered to enhance a program or to test the waters in encouraging the development of a full program. It was decided that a full program evaluation would take the traditional route requiring a needs assessment and that the acceptance of a course or changes to a program would take a faster route and not require the extent of documentation. Both processes were diagrammed using Visio and the team approved the results. Since that time, a full new program evaluation has been conducted for the ROTC program. The fast track process has been used to offer the first course in a game design program, revisions to the paramedic program and revisions to the criminal justice program. Both processes have used with favorable comments.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The team working on this action project was composed of stakeholders from across the campus including the Dean of Instruction, the Chairperson of the Curriculum Committee, the career counselor, faculty and staff. Along with the team participation, the Curriculum Committee also provided input which is composed of all Division Chairs and representation from Student Services. There is also student participation on the Curriculum Committee. The processes had input from a number of sources including those programs who pilot tested the process in their course revisions.

3: Next Steps

A: The next step is to evaluate the success of the processes, in particular the courses that were fast tracked. Are these courses successful in regard to student interest (enrollment) and student success in meeting the course objectives? Did the courses provide substantive information that will benefit the student as they pursue the next level in reaching their educational goals? In responding to these questions, the team can identify if revisions to the processes are necessary.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: This action project was identified as an area of concern for the entire college community. We needed a way to meet the educational needs of our stakeholders rapidly, yet ensure the validity, sound educational basis and need for the educational offering. The current approval process was very long and as such did not allow the college to be receptive to stakeholder needs. Everyone worked collaboratively to rectify this common area of concern.

5: Project Challenges

A: Currently, we do not foresee any further challenges regarding this Action Project. The results will tell us more conclusively if our perceptions are correct or not. Once the semester is concluded and the results are tabulated, revisions to the processes can be made and the Action Project can be considered closed.

6: AQIP Involvement

A: The team does not feel that assistance is needed at this time, but they will monitor the situation and if necessary request intervention in the future. The team appreciates AQIP's willingness to provide support.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: This action project will clearly impact Category 1 Helping Students Learn and Category 3 Understanding Student and Stakeholder Needs. The institution has made good progress in detailing current processes and has determined that there are 2 separate processes required depending on whether an entirely new program is being considered or just new courses. The project planned for an exploration of alternative processes and a critical review of those alternatives based on examples from other schools and the literature. This portion of the project still needs to be completed. The institution would benefit from reconsidering the original timelines, determining factors that have resulted in the project not being completed as scheduled, and setting new goals based on this review.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The institution has involved a broad base of individuals in this project, through a project specific committee as well as the involvement of another standing committee on their campus. This broad base should be useful in collecting data about current processes, and in identifying points for improvement.

3: Next Steps

A: The distinction between creating effective processes and effective courses has a great deal of overlap. The language used suggests that the distinction is not always maintained in this project. The institution may benefit by focusing in on specific aspects of the development processes and considering course outcome separately. If the project focuses on stakeholder needs, then issues such as access, potential student market, and career opportunities in the community may be the focus and suggest indicators of success for this project. Student success in meeting course objectives may better indicate issues tied to student learning and category 1. Of course, they are intricately tied, but focusing on one or the other may help in evaluation and improvement processes.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The institution indicates that they have been successful in their work. No detail is provided to indicate what practices have been or will be implemented that specifically have led to improvements in operation. Conveyance of such detail would help the institution explain to all its constituents what it has accomplished and better demonstrate its improved performance.

5: Project Challenges

A: The timeline noted in this project shows that progress has not occurred at the speed originally intended. Reasons for this delay are not noted, so it appears that progress is occurring too slowly at this time. This does not diminish the progress that has been made to date, and the institution indicates that it believes the project will be successfully concluded in the near future. Specific timelines as well as brief comments on how the project will be concluded would be beneficial and might help to ensure continued progress. The institution may want to consider what group of individuals will make final determinations concerning the success of the project, any follow up that will be beneficial, and how the success of the project will be communicated to all stakeholders and institutional constituents.

6: AQIP Involvement

A: