

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Gogebic Community College

Project Details			
<b>Title</b>	Measuring Nursing Student Success	<b>Status</b>	COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	7-Measuring Effectiveness	<b>Updated</b>	10-22-2013
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>	04-22-2014
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 11-01-2010	<b>Created</b>	11-16-2010
	<b>Actual Completion</b> 08-15-2014	<b>Version</b>	3

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The goal of this Action Project is to track student progress from admission to the nursing program through completion. GCC utilizes course and comprehensive examinations from an outside source to assist the students in understanding their strengths and weaknesses so they can review any missed content. It is essential to track and analyze the data to measure student success and the effectiveness of the examinations on student learning and NLCEX success. This will assist instructors in identifying areas that need more attention.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** The Action Project is timely in that the nursing programs at GCC are in candidacy status for National League for Nursing Accreditation. In addition, the college is currently reviewing its processes for measuring student learning and teaching effectiveness. This information will help us evaluate program effectiveness and help to identify nursing student needs as well as the needs of area health care facilities. Our faculty members would benefit from information on student learning in specific content areas.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The Allied Health Department will be involved in this Action Project.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** **Program Review Process/Curriculum Process.** The project also will assist the faculty with identifying areas where the students are struggling. It is important to measure the effectiveness of course, examinations and the nursing program.  
**Assessment of Student Learning Process.** We anticipate the Action Project will provide a way to measure student learning and assist the student to remediate in order to be successful on NCLEX. It is important to validate the outside source examinations and identify how best to monitor student success.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** This Action Project was originally scheduled to last for two years. However, we believe the continuation of this project for an additional year would prove beneficial. By keeping this an "Action Project" we will have greater participation and as well as individual ownership and accountability for the project outcomes.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** The Director of Allied Health Programs and the Allied Health Division Chair, will develop a timetable of milestones. Progress will be monitored by the nursing program instructors and will be reported to the AQIP Coordinator and Dean of Instruction.

### 7: Project Outcome Measures

**A:** The Action Project will be considered a success if:

- Measurable data is obtained and utilized for program and course improvement.
- Data is used to improve instructor effectiveness.
- Data is used to compare GCC nursing students with students nationally.
- Data is used to increase student remediation and success.

## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

**A:** The Allied Health Department at Gogebic Community College (GCC) continues to make substantial improvement during the past year in the area of using data to systematically evaluate and improve student learning. This has been accomplished by embedding specific learning and skills assessments at several levels within the nursing program.

- The nursing faculty require that in addition to taking regularly scheduled instructor generated exams, nursing students take concept specific Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) practice tests in order to evaluate student understanding of difficult concepts and to help the students develop a study plan focusing on their individual deficiencies.
- The nursing faculty require that students take a comprehensive course specific examination towards the end of each program. This is done in order to identify individual areas of strengths and weaknesses in course with content areas. This information is also used by the faculty to evaluate where curriculum adjustments are needed.
- Students take a comprehensive examination towards the end of their program (PN and ADN) which covers comprehensive material from the entire program. This information helps the students prepare a study plan for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) practical nurse (PN) and NCLEX registered nurse (RN) exams. These comprehensive exams are externally generated and show the nursing faculty how the students are doing relative to national averages in each content area.
- NCLEX PN and NCLEX RN summary results of student tests are reviewed annually at minimum to help assess where curriculum adjustments are needed.

The instructors use the results of the ATI course specific examinations to identify areas to strengthen in their respective courses. The instructors also use the results to tailor the NCLEX PN and RN review courses in order to make sure students learn the concepts that the students had difficulty understanding which was identified during the course specific tests. From the ATI results and NCLEX results, the faculty has implemented changes in the PN and ADN courses.

In January of 2013 additional testing in ATI of the TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills) which measures entry level skills and abilities for nursing student candidates further supplemented pre-entrance preparation. Students who do well on the TEAS assessment have a better chance of success in their first fundamentals nursing course. Faculty designated that TEAS testing would be investigated for one year, at minimum, before a decision will be made on whether or not TEAS should guide student's entrance requirements. In the meantime Gogebic Community College has evidenced based practice guidelines to identify at risk students. Results are shared with the students at the time of the test.

In the summer of 2013 Gogebic Community College added the LPN Step Assessment for all first time associate degree nursing students. This assessment determines the needs of the students based on items that are tied to the NCLEX-PN test plan. The LPN Step determines needs for each student considering pursuing an RN license. The areas tested are adult medical surgical, fundamentals, management, maternal-new born, mental health, nursing care of children, nutrition, and pharmacology. Results are shared with the students at the time of the test.

Instructors identified the students needed additional emphasis on several areas. Instructors recognized the need to add teaching cultural competencies into nursing courses as cultural competency was one area on the examinations that the instructors found the students could show improvement. The instructors also identified the need to incorporate evidenced based practice and have implemented an evidenced based curriculum that begins in the practical nursing orientation with learning how to access literature and utilize health literature and continues through the ADN program. This will require students to read current research and discuss how evidence based practice improves quality of patient care and safety.

We also identified students did not understand the relationship of their role as a nurse and the available community resources. The nursing faculty worked with community agencies and has developed community resources days. These community resource days are course specific for basic care, geriatric patients, mental health, and maternal/new born. All students are required to attend community resource days to learn about the different services and how to refer patients.

The instructors found that students had difficulty with the area of basic care and comfort so they incorporated non-pharmacological comfort interventions into the classroom discussions. The Allied Health Department decided to add the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) as a pre-requisite to be completed prior to entry into the nursing program. The students must complete a state mandated curriculum and pass a skills and knowledge test to gain certification. The nursing instructors have seen a tremendous difference in the

student's ability to understand and complete basic care and comfort concepts. Students have commented on post-graduation surveys completed that the CNA program was a great addition to the nursing program.

The nursing instructors decided that since the NCLEX has from 15-20% pharmacology to add more medication to the course discussions and course test in order to incorporate more medications in the curriculum. The students are assigned "drug of the week" and "intravenous drug of the week" to increase their knowledge of pharmacology. Additionally, the maternal/new born instructor is adding specific obstetric medications to the clinical course to increase knowledge of pharmacology specifically pertaining to obstetric patients.

Other areas the students required more emphasis on were prioritizing and advanced directives. The classroom discussions and tests also incorporate more prioritizing of patient care. This is a subject that has been seen with more frequency on the ATI testing and NCLEX. Additionally the daily clinical assignments require students to answer questions related to individual patient priorities. The instructors noticed that students had difficulty understanding advanced directives and now they are incorporated into clinical assignments. Each day the student is at clinical rotation they must know the advanced directives status of their patients.

Additional curriculum changes were made to strengthen our program. Microbiology was added to the Associate Degree Program. The RN physiology sub-score was low which provided the evidence needed to add this science course to our curriculum. Nutrition was added to the Practical Nursing Program. Nutrition was added to the PN program because students were having difficulty understanding how nutrition plays a role in disease processes. Finally, we deleted our two credit computer literacy prerequisite course requirements and added Medical Terminology. In 2013 the college mandated that all Associate Degrees of Applied Science would be required to have a second communication course. The Allied Health Department opted to all the students a choice of Speech, Interpersonal Communications, English Composition II or Technical English. The journey of national accreditation requires that the program load be at 72 credits or less. With the additional communication, the curriculum needed to be adjusted lower. Nutrition and medical terminology were taken out of the nursing program. These courses could be integrated into other subjects before or during the nursing programs.

## 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** The Instructors and the Director of the Allied Health Programs at GCC are primarily responsible for this Action Project. People from outside other areas both inside and outside of the College are consulted periodically. It is the focus of our department to improve student learning and retention and subsequently the scores on NCLEX PN and RN exams.

Based on information obtained by a comparison of ATI assessment group scores for our students with that of the national averages, our instructors meet regularly to discuss areas needing improvement or how best to improve the foundational knowledge. Instructors also meet with clinical faculty, the advisory committee, and math and science faculty in order to discuss how to incorporate the knowledge learned in the classroom into the nursing classes, lab, and the clinical setting.

## 3: Next Steps

**A:** The Allied Health Department will continue to monitor the results of the assessments in order to make sure the changes that have taken place continue to improve the students understanding of the concepts. The results of the NCLEX PN and RN will continue to be evaluated to identify if there is an area that the students require additional focus so the instructors can emphasize on that content during the courses and the NCLEX review. The NCLEX results for the practical nursing program have been consistently above the national mean with the results at 2010-100%, 2011-92%, 2012-93% and 2013-100%. There are four practical nursing students who have not tested to this date in 2013. The national mean for practical nursing NCLEX results ranged from 84-87 during those four years. For the associate degree program at Gogebic Community College the results for the last four years are 2010-69%, 2011-84%, 2012-75% and 2013-88%. There are four associate degree nursing students who have not tested to this date in 2013. In 2013, the increase to 88% has occurred in a year where the national logit was elevated and the nation decreased from 89% to 85% overall for associate degree graduates. With the increase in the NCLEX associate degree results and consistently high practical nursing results our plan is to close this action project.

## 4: Resulting Effective Practices

**A:** Instructors now use course specific and program-level comprehensive examinations to identify areas that they teach well and areas to focus on in the classroom. The instructors are incorporating evidenced-based nursing practice, culture, and specific lab and diagnostic tests during lecture, lab and clinical setting. The instructors and students are using informatics such as handheld technologies in lecture, lab and clinical settings. This improves efficiency for students who need to look up medications in a timely manner or look up diagnostic tests or lab results. Students who obtain less than a level 2 (proficiency) on any course specific

examination are required to remediate in the areas of weakness which is provided from ATI and the students have immediate access to the material they missed online. This is a focused review that allows the students to target their weak areas and build a stronger foundation. The instructors use the results of the class to identify the group scores compared to national mean and work toward meeting and exceeding the national mean scores on the tests.

## 5: Project Challenges

**A:** Continuous curriculum development and change has been challenging. Communicating the need for change to the faculty, staff, community, current and future students continues to require constant focus. Students were already in progression through the program and new students have additional requirements for completion. Requirements of additional courses for degree completion as well as pre-requisites for the additional courses require constant attentiveness and guidance. Some courses have been eliminated based on journey toward national accreditation and requirements set forth by the college.

In conclusion, the Allied Health Department is going to close Measuring Nursing Student Success. The Allied Health Department remains committed to assure students complete what is vital to prepare for a career in a changing health care environment. This Action Project has facilitated us to continue to improve on a rigorous, high quality program. Results for the NCLEX have remained consistently high in the practical nursing program. Results in the associated degree program have improved significantly in 2011 and 2013. The mission of the Allied Health Department will continue to strive for educational excellence in the education plan for all of our students.

## Update Review

### 1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

**A:** The institution is to be commended for its work in addressing various aspects of Criterion 4 Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. Clearly, for this program, a cycle of quality improvement that uses multiple forms of feedback and data to inform those improvements is in place.

### 2: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

**A:** It would appear that appropriate constituent groups within and related to the institution are involved in the action project. It may be useful for the program to explore what other information may be available from peer-institutions (at a national level) or the specialized accrediting agency for nursing programs.

### 3: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

**A:** Given the results reported, the improvements made, and the implementation of a sustainable quality improvement process, it seems reasonable to close the action project as the program proposes.

### 4: BEST PRACTICES

**A:** Clearly, the institution has developed some best practices that would be transferable to other programs both at the institution as well as more broadly. The institution is encouraged to share these practices and their implementation strategies broadly within the college as well as other venues.

### 5: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

**A:** Given the results reported, the improvements made, and the implementation of a sustainable quality improvement process, it certainly would appear that the project has been a success. Congratulations!

### 6: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

**A:** .

**7: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR**

A: .

**8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS**

A: .

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**Project Outcome**

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**1: REASON FOR COMPLETION**

A: This project has lasted for more than it's intended time frame. We have a New Director of Allied Health Programs. With this change has come an opportunity to realign the priorities within the program. An updated version of this project is planned for the future.

**2: SUCCESS FACTORS**

A: We have achieved all of the stated objectives of this project. We have incorporated what we have learned as a result of this project into our courses and the faculty have received feedback as to which aspects of their instruction were most successful. Our faculty have also been provided with feedback regarding topics our students require additional assistance with.

**3: UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS**

A: We have found that Students do not always take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided as a result of the additional testing and feedback. In some cases the questions provided by the outside testing services are not well aligned with the NCLEX test plan. We are attempting to address this internally.