

Annual Update: 2003-09-18



A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Since the start of 2003, major changes have affected the College and, thereby, AQIP Action Projects. First, Glen Oaks inaugurated a new President in January, and a new Dean of the College began duties in July. The President's first several months were devoted to organizing the institution in response to a reduction of nearly \$800,000 in the state revenue stream—an approximate 10% funding cut from the total budget. In addition to structuring the College's internal budget-reduction plan, the President has led a college/community-wide campaign to increase local support (property taxes) for the College. The outcome of this initiative, supported by faculty and staff's assuming additional work duties and hours, will be determined by a referendum in late September 2003. As a part of the budget reduction process, academic divisions have been restructured from seven to six: (1) Nursing and Allied Health, (2) Vocational/Technical, (3) Business and Computer Technology, (4) Natural Science/Mathematics, (5) Humanities, Social Science, and Art, and (6) Developmental/Communications. Additional restructuring occurred in the area of Distance Learning. Before 2003, Distance Learning was initially subcontracted and later operated in conjunction with other academic units. Now, Distance Learning has changed leadership, is an integral part of all divisions' curricula delivery options, and is represented at regularly scheduled meetings with Faculty Coordinators (Division Chairs) and the Dean of the College. Still, amid significant change in leadership, budget allocations, and organizational structure, the institution remains committed to AQIP philosophy and practice and remains focused on AQIP Action Projects. In fact, the Assessment of Student Learning has gained a greater degree of understanding, acceptance, and participation due to the effort of Faculty Coordinators and faculty across the College. In no small way, this suggests that AQIP philosophy and practice have moved closer to the core of Glen Oaks' primary system—the teaching and learning system. Given this background, one can better view the 2002 – 2003 accomplishments for this Action Project. Specifically, three of six divisions (Business and Computer Technology, Nursing and Allied Health, and Natural Science/Mathematics) have developed or selected assessment tools for measuring student learning, while three divisions (Developmental/Communications, Vocational/Technical, and Humanities, Social Science, and Art) experienced initial difficulties with appropriately matching assessment instruments to student learning outcomes. Those three divisions, however, have selected more appropriate assessment tools and have begun pre- and post-testing to assess student learning. Currently, all divisions continue to collect data, and four of the six divisions (Nursing and Allied Health, Natural Science/Mathematics, Business and Computer Technology, and Developmental/Communications) have significantly expanded the number of courses within the assessment process, analyzed initial data, and implemented specific changes to teaching approaches, coverage of instructional units within courses, and some restructuring of overall curricula.

Review (12-20-03):

AQIP congratulates you on the progress you have made in the assessment of student learning over the last year. Moving forward despite significant organizational changes reflects your commitment to assessment and to AQIP. Your perseverance also reflects one of AQIP's guiding values—Agility. While budget cuts, restructuring, and increased workloads are affecting many institutions today, it is those who can stay focused on the institution's mission and purposes and who can respond to change with agility that will continue to move forward despite obstacles. The leadership and involvement of faculty is both commendable and necessary for the success of the assessment process.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The stewardship of this Action Project largely resides with the six Faculty Coordinators. Associate, adjunct, and full-time faculty are involved in this project through participation in not only assessment procedures but also assessment-related forums, in-service days, and divisions meetings. More importantly, faculty members college-wide and within divisions increasingly share talk and information about student learning and assessment models. This can be attributed to at least three things: a growing understanding that AQIP philosophy supports participatory governance and practice; the willingness of faculty to give of their time and energy; and the continued contribution of a full-time faculty member as editor of and facilitator for the entire AQIP reporting process.

Review (12-20-03):

Your understanding that the assessment program must be owned by the faculty is evidenced by the full involvement of faculty in the assessment of student learning. Be sure to involve the entire college community, including students, in assessment through the sharing of information. Involving a broad range of individuals from around the college in the assessment process will ensure that the process is understood college-wide. In addition, you will receive input not only from those close to the process but also those who are not. Often some of the best insights come from those who bring a fresh perspective to the topic. Celebrate all of your accomplishments, especially those of the individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to this project.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

By the end of the winter term 2004 (late April or early May 2004), all divisions will be positioned to begin, or will already be actively involved in, the improvement implementation phase of the assessment process. In fact, at that time, some divisions will be starting their second pass through the CQI cycle. At a faculty in-service during the fall term of 2004, Faculty Coordinators will present an institutional update of the successes and changes as outcomes of this Action Project. Coordinators will deliver these presentations to the faculty at large, other AQIP Action Project Committees, and, possibly, the Board of Trustees of the College. It is hoped that this sharing of results and improvements will contribute to institutionalizing AQIP philosophy and practice and developing college-wide a stronger connective understanding of quality improvement.

Review (12-20-03):

With these additional steps, you will be well on your way to meeting your quantitative and qualitative targets. Sharing your results and improvements will not only contribute to the institutionalization of the AQIP philosophy but will also enhance continuous quality improvement. In addition, sharing results will provide program faculty with opportunities to learn from the successes of others and to solicit input from colleagues.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Even though it is too early for the College to offer models of effective practices that have resulted from this Action Project, some academic divisions and areas, including Nursing and Allied Health, Developmental Studies, and Distance Learning, are poised to move to the next level of stretch targets as submitted in the "Goals Commitment Declaration, 2001 – 2004" for this Action Project. In addition, the Business and Computer Technology Division and Allied Health areas have advanced in partnership with Distance Learning, and Developmental Studies has begun a potentially innovative and generative relationship with the Center for Testing and Tutoring. Finally, the Natural Science/Mathematics Division has created a number of its own assessment instruments and has included every course offering in its assessment plan.

Review (12-20-03):

It appears that as you continue your work in assessment, you may well have one or more effective practices emerge. When you feel that you have an effective practice that could benefit the broader higher education community, please inform AQIP so that we may recognize your efforts and share your assessment accomplishments with other institutions of higher education.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

Challenges periodically surface within the Humanities, Social Science, and Art Division as faculty work to determine measurable learning outcomes that can be efficiently and effectively assessed. Furthermore, the College may have missed a developmental piece in the AQIP process with respect to properly preparing its faculty with the applied understanding, knowledge, and skills to assess, with confidence and within a common framework, student learning. This possible oversight may be the source of challenges yet to come.

Review (12-20-03):

Faculty in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities often find it quite difficult to determine measurable learning outcomes and the assessment activities to measure those outcomes. You are on the right track to helping your faculty by recognizing the need for training for faculty. Undoubtedly, you can find numerous assessment workshops/conferences offered in your state or nationally. Consider bringing a faculty member from another institution that has been successful in the implementation of assessment in the disciplines to your campus. Reviewing other Action Projects on the AQIP website may provide you with strategies for dealing with this challenge.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

AQIP could help stimulate greater focus and progress on the Assessment of Student Learning in two ways: (1) by presenting information on student learning and models and examples of assessment cycles (from learning outcomes through assessment and improvement practices); and (2) by conducting assessment workshops designed for specific academic divisions. For example, at colleges nationwide, faculty in the disciplines represented by Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Science face difficult challenges in determining learning outcomes and assessing student learning. Thus, an AQIP workshop that focused on assessment within those disciplines might stimulate progress on the Action Project. Please contact Dr. Ron Pribble, Dean of the College, prior to December 2003 to discuss possible assistance.

Review (12-20-03):

Thank you for your suggestions. Someone from AQIP will contact Dr. Pribble. Best wishes as you continue your work on this very important Action Project.



Action Project: Design and implement systems to measure student learning

Institution: Glen Oaks Community College

Contact: Lucy Zimmerman – lzimmerman@glenoaks.cc.mi.us – 269-467-9945

Annual Update: 09-18-03

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Description ↑

Glen Oaks Community College will use the principles of continuous quality improvement both to determine academic assessment goals and methods and to create division assessment plans. When components of d plans have been implemented, 1. Students will increase their achievement levels. 2. Curriculum changes improve student learning. 3. Faculty will use assessment results to improve learning. 4. Students will have accurate understanding of the standards of college-level courses and programs.

Related AQIP Criteria ↑

Primary	1-Helping Students Learn
Related	3-Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
Related	7-Measuring Effectiveness
Related	8-Planning Continuous Improvement
Related	None

Related AQIP Principles ↑

Principle
Principle
Principle
Principle

Rationale for Action ↑

Glen Oaks Community College is a teaching/learning institution. An emphasis on student learning flows from its Vision, its Mission Statement, and the institutional self-assessment that was completed as part of AQIP participation requirement. Furthermore, students and stakeholders value achievement. Improving student learning is one measure of achievement, one that is the very core of what is done at the institution. Therefore, it is most appropriate that the goal of designing and implementing systems to measure student learning address

essential criterion—Helping Students Learn.

Areas Affected ↑

Student Service Instruction Institutional Research

Processes Affected ↑

Teaching Assessment and Placement Curriculum Development Recruiting

Process Measures ↑

By surveying Area Chairs, Dean of the College will monitor the divisions' development and implementation assessment plans. Area Chairs will submit a copy of the plan to the Dean of the College and will survey regarding implementation. Student Services will count the number of students assessed and accurately plan based on that assessment.

Outcome Measures ↑

Number of faculty who attend professional development activities related to measuring learning Distributed students in courses that correspond appropriately to students' abilities Course completion rates Graduation Success rate in developmental writing exit exam Success rate in certification tests

Performance Targets ↑

Year	Quantitative and Qualitative Stretch Targets
One	5 of 7 divisions will determine what learning/skills to assess . 5 of 7 divisions will explore measurement instruments; Implement and begin tracking the occupational programs admissions process
Two	Remaining 2 divisions will do the work of year 1; Above 5 will select measurement instrument(s). Business Div. will pilot their assessment plan; Continue tracking occupational programs admissions process.
Three	5 of 7 divisions will fully implement assessment and provide feedback; 2 of 7 will select instruments and begin assessment. Business Div. will evaluate their assessment and start curriculum review and development; Business Div. will mentor other divisions as they begin the assessment process; Continue tracking the occupational programs admissions process

Keeping Focus ↑

The College President and the Dean of the College will maintain attention to this goal through monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and to Team GO, the institutional organization responsible for not only completion

also personnel involvement in and support of AQIP activities. The Chair of Team Go will electronically information on to all college personnel. Furthermore, the Dean of the College will devote a portion of all Forums to assessment of learning and to keeping faculty energy focused on this goal. Likewise, Area Ch devote a portion of division meetings to those activities. Once assessment is actually underway and resul documented, the College President will publicize information via Town Hall Meetings (institution-wide, informational meetings called approximately monthly by the President), and Area Chairs will publicize information via "What's Happening," (in-house electronic weekly publication). At every opportunity, all personnel, but especially faculty, will celebrate achievement of goals and improvement in student learnir

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