



Action Project: Design and implement systems to measure student learning
Institution: Glen Oaks Community College
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Annual Update: 2004-07-28

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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 division plans have been implemented, 1. Students will increase their achievement levels. 2. Curriculum changes will improve student learning. 3. Faculty will use assessment results to improve learning. 4. Students will have an 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	
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Principle

Rationale for Action ↑

Glen Oaks Community College is a teaching/learning institution. An emphasis on student learning flows logically from its Vision, its Mission Statement, and the institutional self-assessment that was completed as part of the 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 this 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 of assessment plans. Area Chairs will submit a copy of the plan to the Dean of the College and will survey faculty regarding implementation. Student Services will count the number of students assessed and accurately placed based on that assessment.

Outcome Measures ↑

Number of faculty who attend professional development activities related to measuring learning Distribution of students in courses that correspond appropriately to students' abilities Course completion rates Graduation rates 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 the 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 of but also personnel involvement in and support of AQIP activities. The Chair of Team Go will electronically pass this information on to all college personnel. Furthermore, the Dean of the College will devote a portion of all Faculty Forums to assessment of learning and to keeping faculty energy focused on this goal. Likewise, Area Chairs will devote a portion of division meetings to those activities. Once assessment is actually underway and results are 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 learning

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

Our accomplishments represent substantial progress in some areas and less than significant improvement in others. Overall, project initiatives at least meet a satisfactory level in developing goals, methods, and plans—most with implemented improvements. Within academic areas, featured highlights include improvements and assessment plans/results. First, improvements: (1) Produced highest rate in the state on National Nursing Board Exam (94.4% for RNs and 100% for LPNs). (2) Improved pass rates on MOS Certificate (56% in fall to 60% in winter) by aligning results from new pre-test software to instructional coverage. (3) Hired full-time faculty member in Data Processing/Computer area, affording greater teaching continuity. (4) Revised entry course, BAM 101 Foundations of Business, and boosted retention rate for program from first to second semester to 72% compared to college-wide retention rate of 52%. (5) Employed Nelson Denny test results to correlate reading level with grade level performance and improved reading ability in developmental students by .6 grade level in Academic Foundations (AFD). (6) Documented that 91% of students enrolled in DEV 180 Developmental Writing during Fall 2003 increased skill level and subsequently entered COM 121 English Composition or COM 111 Business/Technical Communications, a 9% increase over Fall 2002. (7) Changed Developmental Studies name to Academic Foundations and changed curriculum to reflect new philosophy in that area. (8) Hired full-time faculty member in science area. (9) Revised on-line course orientation and developed procedures to increase completion rates of Distance Learning students. Second, assessment plans/results: (1) Completed and submitted self-study report on AAMA (Medical Assistant) degree to upgrade program and to initiate national certification process. (2) Instituted in Fall 2003 pre- and post-testing in BAM 103 Business Math and continue refinement. (3) Implemented LASSI survey to assess student attitudes toward education, motivation, and so forth. (4) Refined placement and pre- and post-testing process for AFD courses. (5) Selected courses by area for assessment activity, selected types of assessment tools, and worked in faculty groups to develop assessment methods within Humanities, Social Science and Art. (6) Changed to CAD specific testing for pre- and post-assessment measure, and developed an evaluation tool for CAD courses. (7) Pilot-tested pre- and post-assessment measures in NSH 106 Wellness and Lifestyle for improvements in flexibility, cardio respiratory endurance, and muscular endurance. (8) Pilot-tested ACCUPLACER WritePlacer for assessment in COM 121 English Composition and began conversations with adjunct writing faculty on course goals, learning objectives, and outcomes for writing course sequence. (9) Completed pre- and post-testing of competencies in Humanities, Social Science, Language, Art, and Early Childhood Education.

Review (10-03-04):

The work completed by Glen Oaks during the past year has yielded some very significant results. The improved retention rate in Business, MOS certification exam improvements, and other examples of institutional progress, demonstrate a definite commitment to helping students learn. However, some of the cited actions, such as hiring faculty members or changing the name of the developmental program – while perhaps important actions – do not necessarily illustrate attention to the goal of this action project, which is “designing and implementing systems to measure student learning.” Sometimes, as our action teams bring focus to an area of the institution, such as entry-level assessment or developmental studies, the teams identify needs to be addressed that might be tangential to the goal of the action project itself. To maintain focus, it is important to recognize the distinction between those tangential efforts and the efforts that are directed toward the goal itself. In terms of the assessment plans, significant progress appears to have been made. Pre- and post-testing were instituted for several courses (AFD, CAD, BAM, NSH), and in others learning objectives and methods were developed (Social Sciences, Humanities, Art, etc.).

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

In AQIP’s 12-20-03 review of our “people involvement” section for 2002 – 03, we were encouraged to account for student input in this portion of the process for assessing student learning. In response, we gathered student opinion and continue to conduct analysis of that student input. Across the institution we have deployed three primary methods to engage information from students. These include administering a graduate survey and disseminating a summary, conducting a student opinion survey process using PROE Report, and administering the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which has provided the College with student comments in a number of areas, many of which related directly to student learning and to support for student learning. Our analysis of this information will help spawn new initiatives to address areas identified as opportunities for improvement. Otherwise, our method of involving people has remained the same as in previous years.

Review (10-03-04):

It is encouraging to see the institution reach out to students to engage them in this action project. As you know, “Understanding Student and Other Stakeholder Needs” is one of the AQIP criteria, and these outreach efforts will help your institution in that arena. The methods used (Noel-Levitz, graduate survey, etc.) are appropriate, and the Noel-Levitz also provides cross-institutional comparisons that give another dimension to the analysis of results. For most institutions, involving a broad cross-section of faculty members in assessment is a difficult task. Although your update does not identify the percentage of faculty engaged in assessment initiatives, if that percentage is not reaching your goal, you might want to consider alternative ways to encourage participation. These might include workshops on using Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) for those faculty who would be most interested in activities that are more obviously transferable to the classroom.

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

In 2004 – 05, our fourth year of work on the assessment of student learning, we plan to institutionalize the process within the instructional areas of the college and recommend that Student Services launch an Action Project centered on issues related to student learning. One intent within the next generation of Action Projects will be to align functions across the College to reflect

set up against declining state revenue streams and growing enrollment has magnified the financial pressures the College continues to face. While this comment is not an arrow aimed at any one functional area of the College, nevertheless, it touches the target of future planning and the resources needed to hold it as central to the College Vision. Another area of challenge continues from our response to this item the 2003 Annual Update, namely the difficulties inherent in certain academic areas to determine measurable learning outcomes that can be efficiently and effectively assessed. While some progress has occurred with the academic disciplines of Humanities, Social Science and Art, that progress has been slow and non-systematic. Last year's report attributed this problem to the College's having overlooked in the early stages of the AQIP launch sequence a developmental and training piece for its faculty. Within instruction our plan addresses this oversight as we move toward Fall '04 In-service activities (alluded to in Section C).

Review (10-03-04):

Almost all institutions are faced by the challenges of budget and time constraints, especially in recent years. Streamlining processes and incorporating them into existing processes can sometimes help in meeting these challenges. For example, tying assessment into program entrance and exit processes, incorporating assessment results into program review and budget processes, and providing clerical support or automated processes to take some of the load of data collection should all be considered for possible implementation. The Humanities, Social Sciences, Art and other disciplines are often more challenging for assessment practitioners as you have stated. Some institutions have addressed these challenges by focusing on specific courses, particularly those that are high-enrollment, or that could be considered capstone courses by virtue of their prerequisite pattern. Faculty participation can be encouraged via training and development, and through other methods such as requiring learning outcomes and assessment plans be included in any requests for course and program proposals/revisions. Any suggestions should be considered in light of the institution's culture, of course, and it will take time for shifts in faculty culture to occur.

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?

Our request in last year's Annual Report may have slipped through the cracks. Therefore, it remains as previously submitted: 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, to discuss possible assistance.

Review (10-03-04):

These suggestions will be forwarded to the AQIP leadership.

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