

Three

A significant percentage of the organizational areas will have improvements on evaluation results. Develop a system of external communication.

Keeping Focus ↑

The College will maintain a standing committee to implement and monitor this goal. Regular meetings will be scheduled. Progress and results will be reported through both internal and external communication.

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Annual Update: 2003-09-17 ↑

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

During the 2002 – 2003 academic year, the Stakeholder Satisfaction Action Project Committee addressed major concerns noted in the 2002 Annual Update and made significant progress as reflected in three major accomplishments: 1. Prioritized stakeholder groups to determine which groups to focus efforts on first and identified six highest priority groups: (a) student satisfaction with a particular course, (b) student satisfaction with educational program/major, (c) student satisfaction with the College in general, (d) employee (faculty and staff) satisfaction, (e) graduate (alumni) satisfaction, and (f) community business (employer) satisfaction with the College in general. 2. Developed methods and tools to assess satisfaction levels of high priority stakeholder groups. For each group, the committee identified the format of the assessment tool to be used and the timeline for implementing the tool; the persons responsible for collection, analysis and reporting of data; the project budget; and the follow up responsibilities involved. 3. Developed implementation schedule for each assessment tool, spanning the next three years. The current status of the Action Project is implementation with the 2003 – 2004 academic year as the initial year of the implementation schedule.

Review (10-19-03):

Evaluating, understanding, and sometimes even identifying stakeholders' satisfaction with a college's quality and services is a difficult task. We often think that we understand how others view our institutions when we really only base our perceptions on limited interactions and little real data. And yet the public's perceptions of our institutional quality are paramount to our success. This is a very important Action Project for your college's future vitality and I applaud your dedication to institutional quality. Your first Project year may have gotten off to a somewhat slow start, but in your second year you regrouped, evaluated that effort, and make improvements. You were able to focus and prioritize your goals. These steps gave you a meaningful organization and valid list of stakeholder groups. Your committee is now more focused and your project tasks are

clear. The next step was the development of methods and tools to assess the satisfaction levels for these identified groups. You included the timeline, persons responsible, budget, and follow up responsibilities. You have created a continuous quality improvement system, including assessment of the process in the follow up responsibilities. Including an implementation schedule for each assessment tool covering the next three years indicates your commitment to the Action Project and understanding stakeholder satisfaction. Your project relates closely with AQIP criteria: Understanding Stakeholders' Needs, Measuring Effectiveness, and Planning Continuous Improvement. It would appear that this academic year has been a successful one for your institution as you have made significant progress with this Action Project. Prioritizing six groups upon which your institution wants to focus and designing appropriate assessment measures are significant steps indeed as it allows you to concentrate your resources in the coming year. Congratulations on what was surely a challenging process! You have planned and anticipated; now you are at the "do, act, check" steps. With this in mind, have you anticipated how you will coordinate the simultaneous assessment of these stakeholder groups? If I understand your report correctly, the college plans to assess the satisfaction of six stakeholder groups over the next academic year. That will be a huge undertaking as sampling will be critical and managing the influx of multiple data. Consequently, I would encourage you to carefully craft an implementation schedule with these things in mind Also, if possible and appropriate, you might consider the possibility of using the same measure for more than one stakeholder group.

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

The Action Project Committee membership continued to include representatives from the following areas of the College: faculty, administration, Board of Trustees, support staff, Center for Business Services, and Continuing Education. In the interest of widening the committee's perspective, the number of faculty members increased from two to six, and a member of the local community joined the committee.

Review (10-19-03):

This Action Project included involvement from many areas of the college including faculty, administration, Board of Trustees, support staff, Center for Business Services, and Continuing Education. To help broaden the committee's perspective you have added more faculty members and a representative from your local community. You have gathered an excellent cross-section of your educational community. Have you considered adding student representatives to further broaden stakeholder involvement? Your committee seems representative, however, based on an observation I made earlier, it is striking that this Action Project Team does not include students. Admirably so, your institution identified three of six priority stakeholder groups as varying student populations; if they are not represented on the committee, how are you communicating with them? Given the nature of commuter institutions, it may be difficult to identify students who will be able to commit to serving on the committee; however, you might explore different options, such as regularly reporting to and soliciting from a student governance group, or holding student focus groups to give them an opportunity to contribute to a process being designed with their needs in mind. This observation may also be extended to alumni of your institution.

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

This Action Project Committee has completed two of the three intended goals presented in the "AQIP Goals Commitment Declaration, 2001 – 2004." The next planned step is to address the final intended goal through two tasks: one, to develop and implement assessment for each group according to the timeline; two, to design a system of internal communications to effectively deliver the data developed by the stakeholder group assessments. (That is, address who needs what information when and how to get that information to those who need it.)

Review (10-19-03):

Congratulations on completing two of the three intended goals for completion of this Action Project. It is obvious that you have planned action steps for year three also. Task one involves the development and implementation of scheduled assessment for each group. Task two is to design a system of internal communication to effectively disseminate data. Both tasks lend themselves to the use of quality tools such as process mapping

to better understand the scope and connections inherent in the systems. Using quality tools and concepts when planning and implementing will help promote understanding of continuous quality improvement. I would also urge you to consider identifying measurable goals for year three of your Action Project. The wording in your stretch target uses the term significant percentage instead of a measurable number. Setting a goal that is reasonable is important as is achieving that stated percentage number. Future goals can also use a measurable percentage after the Project is completed and institutionalized. As is the case with most large projects, the really hard work tends to come at the end, and this would appear to hold true for this action project as well. In essence, you have to develop and implement the assessment for each group then decide how that data will be used. Of the remaining steps, the latter tends to be the most difficult—but the most rewarding if done correctly—part of an assessment cycle. Rather than viewing them as two distinct steps, I would encourage your institution to do the first with the latter in mind. Attempt to design an assessment tool that is clearly linked to institutional processes so what when the data is gathered there is a clear indication of where in your institutional systems that data should be going; don't collect data you won't use or don't know how you will use.

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

Work on this project has not yet resulted in an "effective practice"; however, the implementation of the assessment, spanning the next three years, will likely yield one for the College.

Review (10-19-03):

Your committee has worked hard on this Action Project and I share your expectation that upon completion of the third year you will have effective practices for assessment of stakeholder satisfaction and perhaps internal communication of data results. This should complete your Project unless you decide to broaden your goals and expand your initial intentions. You may focus on other stakeholder groups such as your local schools, four-year colleges and universities, or governmental entities to whom you must report. Internal or external communication systems are other related topics for further expansion. Of course, many other Vital Few Projects may command your attention as you continue self assessment and continuous quality improvement. You should celebrate the fact that you are making progress and are nearing completion of an Action Project that will bring value to your institution and serve as a quality model for future projects.

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

Maintaining statistical reliability when using survey instruments poses some concerns. Also, quantifying the levels of satisfaction of stakeholders has proven challenging.

Review (10-19-03):

You have proven through planning and action that you have the dedication and skills to face the challenges of maintaining statistical reliability and quantifying the levels of satisfaction. Make use of the quality tools to refine and improve your processes and over time these challenges will be less burdensome. You have made real progress in an important and complex strategic area, keep up the good work. Statistics is not one of my areas of expertise. Would your institution benefit from some external consulting on the matter? AQIP would be able to provide you with some contacts if requested.

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?

Review (10-19-03):