

Project Details

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|------------|
| Title | Utilizing assessment data to evaluate learning outcomes beyond general education | Status | COMPLETED |
| Category | 1-Helping Students Learn | Updated | 08-31-2009 |
| Timeline | | Reviewed | 09-08-2009 |
| Planned Project Kickoff | 08-21-2006 | Created | 11-24-2009 |
| Actual Completion | 06-04-0010 | Last Modified | 06-21-2010 |

- **1: Project Accomplishments and Status**

- A: During the fall of 2008, the chair of the social science department and two professors from the nursing department continued working on their departmental assessment plans. The social science department and nursing departments had finalized their plans; they began to analyze data collected from their student attitude surveys and the core competencies for each course. Both departments continue to utilize the findings of their plans to improve the teaching and learning cycle in their courses.
- R: The Action Project has produced tangible results through the development and measurement of learning outcomes beyond general education. The overall project was originally designed to address AQIP Category One: Helping Students Learn, and it has accomplished its intent. The current project also addresses AQIP Category Seven: Measuring Effectiveness through its application of both direct and indirect measures of student learning. Mineral Area College has taken several important steps to address identified areas for improvement, including expanding the membership of assessment teams and planning for more than one individual to lead assessment projects in line with AQIP Category Nine: Building Collaborative Relationships. The implementation of these processes demonstrates the institution's commitment to closing the loop in assessment, and the value of the assessment planning process to the institution's stakeholders. The Action Project Team reports that the Action Project is complete.

- **2: Institution Involvement**

- A: The departments continued working on their own, assessing students, collecting and analyzing data, and making accommodations in course content based upon the feedback they acquired. They sought occasional feedback from the committee and their individual department members. Members of the committee included broad membership, including the Student Services Dean, the Director of Assessment, the Department Chair of the Social Science Department, the Department Chair of the Teacher Education Program, two nursing faculty, the Department Chair of Business Education, one business instructor, and an adjunct social science instructor.
- R: The departments continued to implement the assessment plans that were developed previously in line with AQIP Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement. The department teams adapted the process to their needs and in response to feedback they received. The department teams worked with the broad-based assessment committee in line with AQIP Category Nine: Building Collaborative Relationships. Assessment

Committee membership included the Student Services Dean, the department chairs in Social Sciences, Teacher Education, and Business Education, two nursing faculty, the Director of Assessment, and an adjunct social science instructor. The structure of the committee demonstrates the institution's commitment to involvement and shared governance with representation from multiple administrative levels and faculty and staff.

- **3: Next Steps**

- A: The initial action project is complete with plans to expand the project to additional departments in the future. The Social Science department chair has data from the year's worth of research and is establishing baseline material for future comparison. Since the Business department chair passed away in April of 2008, his portion of the project remains incomplete. The nursing department began collection and analysis of data and has initiated curriculum reform based upon early data analysis.
- R: The institution reports that the initial Action Project is complete, and the institution plans to expand the project to additional areas in the future. The departments are in the process of integrating the results of the project into their work in line with AQIP Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement. The passing of the Chair of Business has had an impact on the project. The institution has made plans to deal with such a contingency in the future. The nursing program has also begun to use data to reform the curriculum, in line with Category Eight. The approaches to assessment developed as part of the Action Project will benefit the institution in its future assessment efforts.

- **4: Resulting Effective Practices**

- A: Each department and discipline is unique; therefore, the committee recommends that departments that will be undertaking assessment projects in the future should be allowed to have the latitude to develop assessment procedures that work for them. Each department faces unique challenges with the course content often dictating the approach to core competencies and assessment. Faculty most closely involved in teaching the courses must be heavily involved in establishing the core competencies and developing assessment measures. The team approach adopted by the nursing department is working well and may be a model for future departments developing assessment plans. As recommended by the AQIP reviewers, MAC will refrain from having one person solely responsible for a section of an action project in the event that one member ceases to be available for the project's continuation. The committee has developed this set of general guidelines for future assessment committees. General Guidelines for Departmental & Course-Level Assessment Plans 1. Describe the procedure and philosophy used to develop the plans. Some departments have started the process at the course level and then developed departmental plans. Other departments started at the departmental level, and developed individual course plans from the departmental plan. 2. Assessment plans should contain the following information: (a) A list of competencies or skills that should be developed for the department and for each course offered by the department. The list should probably contain from 5 to 10 competencies or skills for each course. The types of competencies may include critical thinking skills, social skills, career application skills, communication skills etc. (b) A list of methods, performance indicators, or learner objectives that will be used to develop the competencies or skills. This list should contain specific activities that will be used to develop each course competency. (c) A list of

methods that will be used to assess the level of attained competencies. The list could include test questions, oral and written reports, group projects, simulations, lab assignments, classroom discussion, concept maps, journals etc. (d) Classification of each competency or skill into one of MAC's general education skills and/or as a career competency. (e) A description of procedures that will be used to provide feedback on the accomplishment of assessment goals, methods used to disseminate assessment information, and corrective actions that may be taken. (f) Procedures for feedback on course-level assessment could include pre-tests and post tests on comparable material, scores on projects linked to a specific competency, scores on test questions linked to a specific competency, instructor's notes in relation to the qualitative evaluation of a project linked to a specific competency, and student attitudinal surveys in relation to the attainment of specific competencies. (g) Procedures for feedback on for departmental assessment could include student surveys, grade distributions, syllabi audits, and standardized test scores. (h) Each instructor in the department should provide criteria used to judge a measurement of the level of mastery or performance such as grading scales, minimum scores or grades for continuation in or passage of a course, prerequisite grades for a sequence course etc..

- R: The Action Project has done much to address AQIP Category One: Helping Students Learn through the development of assessment programs, rubrics, and future plans. It has accomplished its intent. The current project has also led to an increased focus on AQIP Category Seven: Measuring Effectiveness through its application of both direct and indirect measures of student learning. Through the Action Project, the committee has developed a set of "General Guidelines for Departmental & Course-Level Assessment Plans" that provides clear guidelines and advice to departments engaged in assessment activities. The focus of the assessment plan is clearly on student learning and applying the result of the assessment efforts to improving learning. The guidelines provide clear guidance to all levels from the department to the individual in developing assessment plans.

- **5: Project Challenges**

- A: As the two departments are completing their project, the college is looking for other departments to undertake the task of developing their own assessment plans. One of the challenges MAC faces as a small college is having the human resources to kickoff two more departmental task forces to complete this project.
- R: Mineral Area College has completed the Action Project. The steering committee has developed a clear set of guidelines for future assessment planning. As the two departments involved in the Action Project complete their projects, the College is identifying other departments to undertake the development of assessment plans. As a small college, MAC struggles with the human resources impact of the assessment planning process they have developed. MAC is acutely aware of the challenges inherent in relying upon a single individual to complete an assessment plan and subsequent process due to the loss of their Business Department Chair. The College might consider an interdisciplinary approach among departments or programs in a college with similar students and interests in order to promote collaboration and ameliorate the human resource concerns.

