

Inver Hills Community College
IMPLEMENT PROGRAM REVIEW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
Action Project Update, September 14, 2006

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

Program Review: The first year of this project we quickly realized that we were in no position to design a program review process because our academic data was not sound. The Academic Council (our curriculum committee) decided that we would not move forward until we had accurate documents and data. The third year of the project started with the completion of the data alignment:

- Development of 2-year curriculum maps
- CIP code conversion
- 3 new certificates, several course additions and changes
- Electronic curriculum review, tracking code on course outline

The last Academic Council processes that were identified for revision were reviewed and redesigned:

- New process for catalog development was developed
- A liaison between Academic Council and the Marketing Department was assigned.

The final components of the Program Review process were put in place:

- Questions for next phase of department/program review were determined, encompassing the areas of alignment, curriculum, course outlines, syllabi, articulation and transfer, internal partnerships, enrollment, completers, cost analysis, student learning, student feedback, resources, faculty, and departmental goals.
- The institutional researcher developed an interactive form with links to data and resources to help faculty answer the review questions for department review for fall 2006.
- At the May Professional Days, the institutional researcher and the faculty chair of the Academic Council held meetings with the deans and their departments/programs to explain the process and the forms.
- Planning for the 3-year cycle to begin fall 2006 with one third of departments was completed. Deans selected departments that had not completed the review tasks of the last two years and other departments that indicated a desire for program changes to be in the pilot year of the new review process.

The final result of the Program Review development is that the College is now in compliance with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities policy on Program Review.

Learning Outcomes: The original Action Project linked student learning directly to Program Review, and the process for program review requires departments to address several student success issues (assessment of learning outcomes, retention, graduation rates). From the beginning of the College's Student Academic Achievement Program (SAAP) in 1995, assessment of learning outcomes had focused on the core curriculum and was grounded in the individual classroom and in departments. During the program review design process and the writing of the College's Systems Portfolio, it became clear that the College had never had a conversation about the learning outcomes that it values across all programs and in all disciplines. At this point, we realized that we really had two projects going on simultaneously, but they remained so intertwined that we left them together. This realization drove the activities of the last year:

- The SAAP forms were revised to allow more flexibility in selecting outcomes for review.

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- A history of the outcomes which have been reviewed during SAAP by each department and each faculty member was compiled and shared with the deans, who then shared it with the faculty. This should result in a more complete review of courses and learning outcomes within departments and programs, so that each course and its outcomes are reviewed on a regular cycle.
- Five faculty members, a dean, the provost, and the institutional researcher (the Chicago 8) attended the HLC Assessment Workshop.
- Several meetings with faculty members, staff, and students were held to discuss the college-wide learning outcomes that are valued by the campus community.
- Three key learning outcomes were identified: Communication, Citizenship, and Critical Thinking

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

Program Review: Participation in the project was widespread across the College:

- Deans met with the faculty during department meetings to explain the review process and encourage completion of tasks.
- The college hired an external counselor with experience in curriculum design to work with departments and programs to create 2-year curriculum maps for all programs. These will be given to interested students to help them choose appropriate courses in the correct sequence to graduate in a timely manner.
- The institutional researcher compiled data from internal and external sources to aid the program review process and developed interactive forms for ease of reporting.
- The College is in the process of hiring a new web designer who will focus on creating department and program web sites which will include mission, vision, and goal statements; program review reports, curriculum pathways, career opportunities, etc.

Learning Outcomes: The conversations about the Learning Outcomes was held across College constituencies:

- Time during faculty professional days and staff training days was spent discussing common learning outcomes. Student groups were also asked to give input. A compilation of the results was disseminated via email campus-wide.
- A group of comprised of five faculty members, a dean, the institutional researcher, and the provost met several times during the year and attended the HLC workshop on assessment and the assessment workshop sponsored by from the Collaboration. This group discussed learning outcomes assessment at IHCC at the course level, department level, and college-wide. This group helped facilitate discussions during the faculty professional days. This group re-examined the College SAAP process and revised the forms and is trying to revitalize faculty energy in the program.
- The group also looked for trends within the compiled common learning outcomes and identified the three outcomes that were most often listed: communication, citizenship, and critical thinking. They presented these college-wide outcomes to the faculty and staff in August and outlined the next steps to be taken during this year to prepare the college to measure student results in these outcomes.

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

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Program Review: The following steps will be taken to completely imbed new program review processes into the work of the College:

- The Academic Council, the Deans, and the Institutional Researcher will give support to the departments doing the review process this year.
- The departments in the first round of the review process will report to the Academic Council the major findings of their work in April 2007.
- The review process will continue with new departments in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, so that all departments will be reviewed in the three year period. Each year the effectiveness of the process and the forms will be reviewed. Revisions will be made as necessary to facilitate the effectiveness of the process and ease of reporting.
- During 2006-2007, the College will develop a new catalog, using the new processes put in place last year, and evaluate the effectiveness of the new process.

Campus-wide Learning Outcomes: The following will be done to facilitate the integration of the outcomes into the learning of all students:

- Time will be devoted during all faculty and staff professional days this year to discuss the process for assessing the college-wide learning outcomes
- Discussions and the outcomes themselves will be widely disseminated so that the whole community is familiar with these outcomes
- This assessment process will begin in fall 2007.

This action project will be retired following this review cycle. Its activities will be sustained and new and/or expanded activities will be developed through the continued work of the Chicago 8 and the Academic Council (Curriculum Committee).

D. Describe any “effective practices” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Program Review: Several effective practices flowed out of the development of the new Program Review process:

- Finding and making critical program review data accessible to faculty.
- 2-year curriculum maps and the discussions that took place within departments and with the coordinator of the project.
- Electronic review of course outlines by the Academic Council worked well and hopefully saved several trees.
- Designating one liaison between the Academic Council and the Marketing Department resulted in a more complete and useful addendum this year. This efficiency will hopefully continue this current catalog year.

Learning Outcomes: The campus-wide discussion of the learning outcomes resulted in several effective practices:

- The “Chicago 8” had great discussions throughout the year, and their enthusiasm and diversity has helped create a more willing climate within the faculty concerning assessment of student learning.

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- The chair of the Academic Council sent email reminders to faculty to try to keep a focus on the SAAP plans throughout the year and reminded them of due dates. This resulted in a better response rate than in the past.
- Rich faculty and staff discussions concerning common learning outcomes were held. The shared nature of these outcomes has led to the desire for more interaction between faculty and staff around campus issues and a shared professional day is scheduled for October 2006.

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

- There are still departments and faculty that have not completed the requested program/department review tasks. Hopefully, targeting those departments in the formal review process this year will get results.
- Instilling enthusiasm (beyond compliance) for assessment of student learning at all levels among the faculty, administration and the staff is an ongoing challenge.
- Setting aside time during professional days for discussion of student learning when there are always several other issues that also require our attention is difficult.

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 whom to contact and when?

Not at this time.

G. Who should be able to see this annual update?

Anyone

Only people from other AQIP Institutions

No one