The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory
Kaskaskia College

Project Details

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1: Project Goal

A: This project facilitates campus-wide involvement in continuous improvement by strengthening the structure of quality improvement participation throughout the campus, utilizing current Kaskaskia College infrastructure to coordinate quality improvement activities with goals of the institutional planning and budgeting processes. KC will infuse quality improvement processes into existing college decision-making entities with a goal of encouraging and securing more campus-wide involvement, active participation, and ownership of important processes: determining AQIP action projects, updating Systems Portfolio data, reviewing campus-wide assessment data, forming recommendations to Institutional Planning Teams, explaining Systems Appraisal Feedback to those responsible for enacting change, and preparing for the Quality Checkup Visit.

2: Reasons For Project

A: In writing the Systems Portfolio, analyzing the Systems Appraisal Feedback report and discussing these at the Strategy Forum, KC identified an opportunity to educate and motivate larger numbers of KC personnel to become more involved in the quality improvement processes at Kaskaskia College. Additionally, the Strategy Forum team became aware of the lack of clear structure to involve, update, and stimulate campus-wide support for quality improvement activities on campus. In disseminating the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, the AQIP A-Team found that KC lacks a formalized structure to ensure attention is directed to the opportunities and strategic issues outlined in the report. Additionally, the natural link between the quality improvement initiatives on campus and the institutional planning and budget processes should be strengthened. Finally, a systematic review of academic and non-academic program level assessment needs to occur. All these items will ultimately lead to an enhanced quality improvement system that engages more people throughout the College.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: President's Cabinet
   College Council
   Office of Institutional Effectiveness (planning, research, assessment and grants)
   Assessment Coordinator
   Non-academic program directors/managers/supervisors
   Education Center coordinators and Dean of Community Education and Continuing Education
   AQIP A -Team Steering Committee (prepared the Systems Portfolio)
   AQIP Action Project Teams
   Institutional Planning Commitment Teams
   Core Committee – department chairs and program coordinators
   Lead faculty in teaching areas

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: President’s Cabinet Processes: The President’s Cabinet consists of approximately 20 administrators, primarily Vice Presidents, Deans and select Directors. The Cabinet functions not as a decision-making, but a
decision-recommending body to address issues related to operations, planning, budgeting, and student services. This group provides senior leadership and support for achieving the College’s strategic commitments. The Cabinet meets monthly to discuss campus issues, new policies or procedures being developed, and other items of importance to the College.

**College Council Processes:** The College Council is made up of approximately 35 members from various areas of the college. Its function is to prepare recommendations on College planning functions and development of College policies and procedures. Recommendations formulated by committees are brought to the College Council for approval. The College Council formulates recommendations to the President’s Cabinet, and recommendations from the Cabinet are submitted to the Board of Trustees.

**Strategic/Institutional Planning Processes:** Kaskaskia College’s Fifteen-Year Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the "Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities, and Excellence", a document that guides the higher education community in Illinois. Kaskaskia College’s Strategic Plan states the College’s mission, purpose statements and commitment to diversity, core values and ten commitments which provide direction for creating and executing institutional objectives and establishing budget priorities over the next fifteen years. In addition, the ten commitments are the core of the Five-Year Institutional Plan which is updated annually through a planning process that involves approximately 85 faculty, staff, administrators and students.

**Budget Processes:** A system of zero-based budgeting is employed at Kaskaskia College. The process kicks off in the fall each year at the culmination of the final Institutional Planning meeting. The comptroller distributes a budget calendar which begins in January annually; more detailed budget materials and instructions are distributed in February with budget planning sessions held in March and April. Ideally, the Board will review the budget in April or May and College Council will review and approve the budget plans in May or June. The proposed budget then goes to the Board of Trustees in June with tentative approval anticipated in July; a budget hearing is held in August with final budget approval secured at the September Board meeting.

**Program Review Process:** The Illinois Community College Board provides a five-year schedule for programs and departments to be reviewed. They require data submissions from each community college annually to support campus-level planning and decision-making related to:

- Assuring the continuing need and improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of instructional programs;
- Assessing, improving, and updating programs on a regular basis;
- Discontinuing programs when there is no longer sufficient demand, quality cannot be maintained at an acceptable level, or they are no longer cost effective; and
- Identifying best practices, exemplary innovations, and program issues that need to be addressed at the state-level by the ICCB.

### Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** The time planned for this project will allow planning of initial structural changes in the late fall of 2010 and then piloting Phase One changes in spring of 2011. We will assess and refine changes piloted in spring of 2011 during the 2011 summer term for a full implementation in fall of 2011. A similar cycle of piloting Phase Two changes will be conducted in spring of 2012 with assessment and refinement in summer of 2012 and full implementation in fall of 2012. In addition to Phase Two changes being piloted and implemented in the second year of this project, assessment and evaluation of Phase One changes implemented in the first year will continue.

**Phase One: Late Fall 2010 - Spring 2011**

- Dissemination of Systems Appraisal Feedback Report: Opportunities and Outstanding Opportunities to President’s Cabinet – prioritize the Os and OOs for work this next year
- Dissemination of Cabinet’s priorities to Strategic Planning Commitment Teams to ensure inclusion in the institutional plan and the annual budget
- Evaluation of structure of College Council to ensure representation of Institutional Planning Teams and other relevant stakeholders as members on College Council
- Review structure of Administrative, Student Services, and Instructional Services Cabinets to include quality improvement updates
- Updates on actions in institutional plan to College Council through the monthly Institutional Planning Commitment Team updates
- Dissemination of quality improvement action steps to Core Committee especially those that deal with Category One: Helping Students Learn
- Create ongoing process to update Systems Portfolio

- Create process, procedures, responsibilities, and timeline to prepare for Quality Checkup Visit
- Campus-wide training on AQIP Accreditation and the Five HLC Criteria beyond New Employee Orientation 2 hour session
- Creation of iStrategy Implementation timeline which will begin in Fall 2010

Phase Two: Summer 2011- Spring 2012

- Review and revision of ICCB-mandated Program Review process for academic areas
- Review of program review for non-academic programs & departments
- Refine ongoing process to update Systems Portfolio
- Refine process, procedures, responsibilities, and timeline to prepare for Quality Checkup Visit
- Refine campus key performance indicators to serve as the backbone for executive dashboards to be developed and implemented in FY 2012

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: As plans are developed for each change to be piloted and implemented, an assessment/evaluation component will be included with measurable outcomes defined. We will evaluate each change against the predetermined outcomes to monitor the progress being made. We will also evaluate our efforts against those used at other institutions through networking opportunities such as the Illinois AQIP Consortium.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Successful completion of this project will be determined by the infusion of quality improvement processes in Kaskaskia College’s current infrastructure that will result in diverse representation of campus staff, faculty, and administration in quality improvement initiatives and processes on campus, as well as more employees being familiar with the quality improvement initiatives on campus and aware of how they relate to their positions. The creation of action items based on the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and the completion of these action items will also document success in this project. Likewise, the much stronger connection of action items to the institutional planning and budgeting processes will be evidence of an outcome of success. The connection of academic and non-academic quality improvement will also document for KC the success in providing comprehensive assessment and evaluation of all areas of campus. A more comprehensive and meaningful Program Review Process linked to other assessment activities at KC will be a key indicator for success. Finally, the successful creation and use of a process to update the AQIP Systems Portfolio and prepare for the Quality Checkup Visit will be further evidence of project success.