The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Kaskaskia College

1: PROJECT SUMMARY

A: Integrate planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting into a single continuous process. Make the use of meaningful data a regular part of planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting. Improve staff satisfaction with planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting processes. Improve efficiency of planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting processes.

2: PROJECT RATIONALE

A: Two recent events make this project appropriate for the College at this time. First, the College’s recently completed “Enhancing the Quality Culture at KC” action project helped facilitate important improvements to the current planning and assessment processes at Kaskaskia College. At the same time, the College came to see that major improvements in the planning and assessment process were best completed by aligning and integrating those processes with AQIP and budgeting at the College. Thus, the lessons learned from this previous action project make the present and ideal time to further improve the accreditation, assessment, budgeting and planning processes at Kaskaskia College. Second, the personnel in charge of coordinating the assessment and planning processes at the College changed just over a year ago. The new perspective brought by this change in personnel and the new relationships being built with existing personnel make it an ideal time to build on this momentum. For these reasons, this project and its goals are high among our institution’s current priorities.

3: PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: Accreditation/AQIP, Assessment, Budgeting, Planning

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: Accreditation/AQIP, Assessment, Budgeting, Planning

5: PROJECT CONTROL

A: Kaskaskia College operates on a fiscal year that begins July 1. Since this project is aimed at improving the ways that Kaskaskia College evaluates its performance, plans for the future and allocates resources to fulfill those plans, the project must span two budgeting cycles: one to fully implement the improvements and one to measure the effectiveness of the fully implemented improvements. Thus by July 1, 2013 the redesigned processes will be fully in place. The fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2014 will be carried out with the improved process in place from beginning to end. The target end date of August 31, 2014 thus allows for a month for final data collection and evaluation of the effectiveness of the project.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: The publication of this project will take place via the approval of the revised process by the Board of Trustees and the associated press releases and internal memos associated with that approval. Also, oral and written updates on the project will be provided to the
College’s central communication hub, College Council, on a quarterly basis. In addition, the College’s recently formed AQIP Action Project Quality Council will provide continuous monitoring and support throughout the project.

7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A: The outcome measures for this project by the purpose they are associated with are as follows.
2. 90% of quarterly divisional updates to College Council include benchmarked performance data.
3. Pre- and post-integration surveys of staff indicate a 25% reduction in those who report dissatisfaction with assessment, AQIP, planning or budgeting processes.
4. Pre- and post-integration surveys of staff indicate a 15% reduction on the average monthly amount of time spent on assessment, planning, AQIP and budgeting processes.

Project Update

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

A: General Project Status: X Completed In-progress Suspended Reopened
Original Project Start Date: 09/25/2012
Originally Projected End Date: 08/31/2014

This action project is complete. As described below, the project has been successful at meeting most of its goals. The next steps for the project are to more fully integrated data in the budgeting process. Steps will be taken to achieve this in the coming year.

The latest Systems Appraisal identified the systematic use of data in decision making as a strategic challenge for the College. This project was designed to help address this issue in the area of strategic planning. Data analyzed as part of the strategic planning process was largely qualitative prior to the initiation of this action project. This action project included the goal of making meaningful use of quantitative data an essential part of the planning process.

2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: The project’s goals are listed below with the measurement listed below its respective goal.
1. Integrate planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting into a single continuous process.
2. Make the use of meaningful data a regular part of planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting.
   1. 90% of quarterly divisional updates to College Council include benchmarked performance data.
3. Improve staff satisfaction with planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting processes.
   1. Pre- and post-integration surveys of staff indicate a 25% reduction in those who report dissatisfaction with assessment, AQIP, planning or budgeting processes.
4. Improve efficiency of planning, AQIP, assessment and budgeting processes.
   1. Pre- and post-integration surveys of staff indicate a 15% reduction on the average monthly amount of time spent on assessment, planning, AQIP and budgeting processes.

3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

A: The project has succeeded in fully integrating the planning, AQIP and assessment processes and made progress toward better integrating the budgeting process as well. As a result, the College has created a more effective and efficient planning process that produces more focused, impactful plans while creating less of a burden on faculty and staff as the participate in the planning process.

The following are some of the concrete achievements that have contributed to the achievement of the goals listed above. First, the College eliminated 10 planning teams and 5 AQIP teams that had been standing committees in the past. These were then replaced with 4 Quality Teams. As part of this reduction in committees, we also reduced the total number of major planning sessions from 3 to 1 by completing more prep work before the meeting and doing more follow up afterward. This work was largely completed by the Director
of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives as part of his regular work load. Thus, the net elimination of 11 teams has increased the efficiency of the process and reduced the burden, both in terms of organization and time commitment, of those faculty, staff and community members involved.

Progress on these activities was reviewed twice by the AQIP Action Project Quality Council. Thus, the target of measurement 1 was met. All updates to College Council included reports on benchmarked performance data. Thus, the target of measurement 2 was exceeded with a value of 100%. Dissatisfaction with the process decreased from 8% of participants in the previous process to 3% in the current process. This 63% reduction of those dissatisfied with the process exceeds the target specified in 3. An objective quantitative measurement in the reduction of staff time spent on the new process was not possible. Thus, measurement 4 was not able to be completed directly. However, surveys of participants indicated that more than 80% of participants believed the new process to be more efficient. This is positive indication that goal was met.

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

As with all Action Projects, details about the project were communicated to the standing Action Project Council which monitors progress all Action Projects and approves proposals for new projects. The project maintained a high priority by engaging all of the leaders of the College in the process. Every member of the President's Cabinet served on one of the 4 Quality Teams. Thus, they were kept abreast of the project by attending their team meetings and the annual planning meeting. The fruits of their labor were then shared through the official publication of the Institutional Plan and its distribution to the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. In addition, updates to the College's leadership have been provided twice a year to President's Cabinet. This ensures that the Action Project is supported throughout the College.

A diverse array of people were involved by deliberately seeking out diverse representation on each of the four Quality Teams. Each quality team included key leaders from the division represented by the Quality Team as well as representatives from each of the College's three other divisions. These internal participants were augmented by community members and students at the annual planning meeting. In total, over 40 people participated in the planning process. This amounts to approximately 20% of the College's full-time faculty and staff who were engaged in the process.

5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The key effective practices realized by this Action Project are:

1. The elimination of committees with duplicate, or significantly overlapping, memberships.
2. The integration of diverse processes with overlapping goals into a single process.

These effective practices are applicable to more than just AQIP; assessment and planning processes but they are certainly at home here. Other institutions can benefit by carefully reviewing their standing committees and combining committees in which a majority of the members serve on both committees. Kaskaskia College plans to take this lesson and apply it in other areas of the College as well.

The same is true for the integration of diverse processes with overlapping goals into a single process. Kaskaskia College, and we suspect many other Colleges, have many other opportunities to apply this lesson. Rather than allowing processes to emerge out of historical necessity and then to persist in a relatively autonomous fashion, clear goals need to be articulated for each process so that those with overlapping goals can be streamlined.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

The primary challenges facing the full institutionalization of this project are an upcoming change in the executive leadership of the College and more comprehensive utilization of data in the budgeting process.

The President of Kaskaskia College has announced his retirement effective July 1, 2015. With a change in executive leadership comes the likely modification of the strategic planning and budgeting processes to better fit with the objectives of the new executive. In addition, this change will likely occasion a period of reflection on the mission and vision of the College which may have ramifications for the planning process. The challenge posed by these changes is that of continuing the positive developments of this Action Project in a way that complements and enhances these changes.

The second major challenge is the more effective integration of quantitative performance data into the budgeting process. The
budgeting process occurs at many levels within the organization. Utilization of data is more systematic at the higher levels with lower level budget decisions largely at the discretion of individual budget officers. To meet this challenge, the College must work to assist those budget officers in understanding how to use data to influence these micro-level decisions about the budget.

### 7: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

#### A:
Step 1 – August 2015: Review planning, AQIP, and budgeting processes with new executive leadership.

Step 2 – October 2015: Develop revised process that is continuous with past process and that promotes the objectives of new executive leadership.

Step 3 – January 2016: Provide professional development to faculty and staff, especially budget officers, about revised processes and the effective use of data within these processes.

Step 4 – March 2016: Hold revised planning events consistent with the new process.

Step 5 – May 2016: Conduct budgeting process with more effective use of data as a result of revised process and professional development.

### 8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

#### A:
There is no additional information to be shared at this time.

### Update Review

#### 1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

#### A:
This project was completed in the originally planned period of time. Kaskaskia indicates that the project was successful in meeting most of its goals. Using quantitative data in decision making was a good choice as a project. With this no longer being an Action Project, Kaskaskia will need to keep the momentum going until this is part of the culture.

#### 2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

#### A:
The original goals for this project were very specific with quantifiable goals. This allows Kaskaskia to determine if these goals were reached or not.

#### 3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

#### A:
Kaskaskia made great progress over the last year by eliminating 10 planning teams and 5 AQIP teams, and replacing them with 4 Quality Teams. Kaskaskia also reduced the total number of major planning sessions from 3 to 1. This led to the institution reaching all of its original goals that could be tracked. One question to consider is if Kaskaskia knows that the current number of committees and meetings is correct? There may be fewer, and participants may be more satisfied, but is this the most efficient structure possible? The only way to determine this is to remain flexible and willing to change.

#### 4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

#### A:
Kaskasia involved a diverse group of people in this Action Project. Each quality team included broad representation and leadership. Kaskaskia also involved community members and students in its annual planning meeting. Over 40 people participated in the planning process, which accounted for approximately 20% of the College’s full-time faculty and staff who were engaged in the process. It would be good to know how individuals were selected and if everyone who wanted to participate was able to.

#### 5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
A possible third effective practice could be to determine how the institution can ensure that new, unneeded committees or processes are not created in the future. Kaskaskia should consider putting a vetting process in place that allows duplication and overlapping memberships to be identified before new committees are formed.

6: **ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS**

A: “The challenge posed by these changes is that of continuing the positive developments of this Action Project in a way that complements and enhances these changes.” To overcome this challenge Kaskaskia must remain flexible and focus on quality improvement principles. Good changes have been made, but too often institutionalization can be confused with stagnation. A change in leadership may lead to modification, but will also bring new ideas to the institution. Change itself is not bad, unless it doesn't lead to improvement. This is how the feedback to section six could benefit the institution. Creating processes that vet changes for quality improvement can allow change to occur without negating the progress that has been made.

7: **PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIME LINE**

A: These steps are clear, but they indicate no action for a year. Kaskaskia cannot afford to remain stagnant until next August. In the next 11 months the institution has the opportunity to make the current system even more effective. This includes the opportunity to more fully integrate the budgeting process, before the change in leadership.

8: **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS**

A: N/A

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**Project Outcome**

1: **REASON FOR COMPLETION**

A: This project was closed, primarily, because the majority of its objectives have been met. The College believes that continued Action Project status is not necessary to succeed in accomplishing the remaining objectives and achieving full institutionalization of the project. Thus, the project is being closed.

2: **SUCCESS FACTORS**

A: This project was successful in improving efficiencies in the areas of strategic planning and continuous quality improvement at Kaskaskia College. It reduced work time of staff dedicated to these functions while achieving better connectedness between these processes. These are significant successes that were realized by this project.

3: **UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS**

A: This project was less than successful at achieving the full integration of the budgeting process into the strategic planning and continuous quality improvement processes. Some improvement was made here but there is still room for improvement. Thus, the next step to achieve full institutionalization of the project is to expand the integration of planning, AQIP, and budgeting.