**Action Project**

**Online Learning**

**Institution:** Kaskaskia College  
**Submitted:** 2008-10-31

Timeline:

- Planned project kickoff date: 2008-10-31  
- Target completion date: 2010-08-31  
- Actual completion date:

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Improve and Expand Online Learning

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

Evaluate the current state of online learning at Kaskaskia College to establish benchmarks from which to improve the quality and consistency of the online learning experience for KC students and faculty, identify stakeholders in need of support and/or training which may be hindering their participation, and identify new opportunities to increase online offerings, including online degrees. Improve infrastructure and support for the needs of increased online enrollment. Develop and improve the Web-based student services with an online admissions process, online counseling and advising.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

This project supports the Five-Year Institutional Plan at KC; Objective V-5 states: “Kaskaskia College will implement a plan that will provide a systematic approach for assessing the effectiveness of alternative teaching modes of delivery (online & hybrid courses).” Objective VII-4 states: “The College will continue to develop on-line programs, interactive video offerings, and telecommunications courses to make more programs accessible. This will include using technology for offering Career and Technical programs and programs in the Arts and Sciences.” Actions listed under these objectives include:

- Increase online course offerings and modify courses in an effort to secure accreditation for on-line degree programs
- Improve student learning by migrating from Web-CT 4 to Blackboard 8.0 online course management system
- Conduct assessment needs analysis for online courses and support services

In an effort to complete these actions and fulfill the objective, a new position was created through the annual planning process; a Director of Distance Learning was hired in August 2008. Enrollments are rapidly increasing in online courses; the rapid growth in this sector represents a student demand that must be met. The College has had a 48% increase in courses offered in the last two years (FY 06 - FY 08) and a 64% increase in credit hours generated in that same two-year period.
E. List the organizational areas - institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

KC Departments: Arts and Sciences, Career and Technical Education, Corporate Training and Continuing Education, Student Services, Information Services and Information Technology, Institutional Research, Learning Resource Center, as well as Distance Education and Technology Support.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

Admissions, class scheduling, marketing, course and curriculum development, program review, provision of academic resources, and technical training for faculty and students.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

The scope of the project is within an 18 month timeframe.

2008-2009 Academic Year

Initiate the collection and data analysis on the current state of online learning (numbers of faculty, courses, disciplines, enrollments, successful completion and retention rates, technology usage, and methods of instruction). Analyze the online course faculty approval process. Quantify faculty interest in the immediate future (one year) for curriculum/course development to establish realistic growth. Organize and structure faculty training to aid quality and consistency. Facilitate a process for faculty to identify and discuss other possible program offerings and establish standardized methods to ensure quality. Explore and discuss student authentication procedures and options.

Review budgetary impact of the online program. Conduct faculty training in both technological and pedagogical skills for enhanced online instruction. Curriculum development currently underway will enter the approval process, or if already approved will move to implementation. Complete analysis of data collection from Fall 2008. Pilot a new process for student training and support based upon data collection results. Explore use of Readi<sup>©</sup> distance education preparedness assessment or other similar program. Review the student online orientation. Develop a faculty online orientation. Solicit feedback from students and faculty on the online orientation. Recommend methods to ensure quality. Disseminate information and solicit feedback on the quality of the online program and student satisfaction.

Involve Assessment Coordinator to recommend methods to assess and ensure quality of instruction and student learning. Disseminate information and solicit feedback. Prepare the Request for Change application to accredit online associate degree programs. The following areas will be focused on to enhance support for online students: admissions process, advising, library access, online admissions process, tutoring, placement testing, and authentication process.

Spring 2009

Submit application for first online degree programs.

Summer-Fall 2009

Plan for and document institutionalization of this project.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Measure the project’s success comparing the original benchmark data (training, course offerings, degree...
opportunities, infrastructure, etc…) to that of Spring 2009 and scheduled Fall 2009. Updates on AQIP projects are regularly provided at Faculty/Staff Workshops throughout the year. Progress and successes will be documented in the Systems Portfolio and the departmental annual reports. Presentations will be made periodically to the College Council, President’s Cabinet and the Board of Trustees.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

Using the baseline data collected and analyzed in Fall 2008, as referenced in Section G, objectives stated in Section B will be accomplished and documented through measureable performance indicators. The following specific goals will also be achieved or revised as deemed appropriate by the AQIP Team through regular assessment strategies.

• An AQIP Action Project Team will be created in Fall 2008 which has oversight provided by the AQIP co-chairs.

Training and Support
a. By the end of the Fall 2008 semester, develop an online course specifically designed for faculty using KC’s new course management system where content about online instruction is conveyed in an online environment. Provide at least two opportunities each academic year for faculty to learn about online education. Set a benchmark for faculty participation, and recruit faculty to participate in training.

b. By Spring 2009, help with design and delivery of online courses. Review current staffing assignments and identify cross-training and inter-departmental cooperative efforts when feasible.

c. Enhance online orientation and course management system information available for students and faculty on KC’s web pages.

Curriculum
a. Identify online courses and programs that are aligned with Institutional Plan.
b. Evaluate the number & quality of online course offerings to move toward offering complete online degree programs.

Policies, procedures, and guidelines
a. Establish guidelines with respect to issues regarding the quality of online courses, including but not limited to: types of courses to put online, definition of hybrid and web-enhanced courses, faculty qualifications to teach online, registration restrictions, offerings outside of the traditional academic calendar, types of faculty to student contact (synchronous and asynchronous), testing/assessment, minimum components of an online course, course evaluations, peer evaluations.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

KC has a large, rural area to serve, and economic conditions require that we reach them with needed curriculum and programs in the most cost-effective ways possible. Quality online programs are just one way to provide educational opportunities for these students in a manner that is consistent with Kaskaskia College’s mission and Institutional Plan.

Publicity:
Our AQIP Systems Portfolio, currently under development, provides documentation on all continuous improvement activities & AQIP projects. The AQIP web page is accessible to faculty, staff, administrators, students and other College stakeholders; KC’s Assessment Coordinator works with staff to develop and distribute communications on projects and initiatives.