Action Project

Institution: Kaskaskia College
Submitted: 2006-05-11
Email: nkinsey@kaskaskia.edu

Timeline:
Planned project kickoff date: 08-31-2006
Target completion date: 03-01-2008

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:
Core Values on Campus

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:
This AQIP project will examine how the College’s code of ethics is used and may be better used within the organization of the College. An ethics matrix will be developed and implemented to examine all aspects of the organization-Faculty, Staff, and Board of Trustees. Each organizational group will then utilize the matrix to help them examine how decisions are made and how ideas are communicated throughout the College. A dashboard and appropriate benchmarking will be created and utilized by this project.

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

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:
Kaskaskia College has a well established set of core values and a recognized core values program. Results from conversations during the College's Conversation Day indicate that the College Community has a desire to establish a deeper core values program. Employees want to examine how the College's core values are used in making decisions and where in the decision-making process strengths and weaknesses, external and internal exist. Because of the College's fast growth, it seems particularly necessary at this time.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:
This project should affect all employees and the Board of Trustees at Kaskaskia College

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:
This project should enhance all decision-making processes at the College. Recognition of ethical decision-making components and the College's core values will become a component campus-wide.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):
An eighteen month timeline has been established for this project. Employees and Trustees have a working understanding of the College's Core Values Code and there is a foundational basis for the project in place. Eighteen months will provide the time for creating the ethics matrix, staff development in training on matrix use and time for SWOT analysis with the matrix to be used within all departments of the College.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:
1. The creation of the ethics matrix. 2. Documentation of matrix use in decision-making. 3. Documentation from SWOT analysis from identified processes. 4. Incorporation of focus statements relating to core values into all councils and committees. 5. Qualitative study of results for one selected committee and process.

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:

At the end of this project, all operations of the College should understand how core values are represented in its decision-making and have conducted a SWOT analysis for core values. A plan of action should be in place within each process for sustaining and improving ethical decision-making.

Annual Update: 2007-09-13

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

The Core Values Action Team was formed in August 2006. We first researched other colleges’ completed projects with documented successful outcomes including Richland Community College. We then examined the Kaskaskia “conversation day” contributions and mapped a sample of several teams’ contributions from conversation day to a matrix of AQIP categories and KC core values. From this activity, we identified a need for a matrix which mapped values, as they were understood at the work unit level, to discover any processes that impeded consistently practicing core values across the campus. The Action Team developed and submitted a sample matrix to the President’s Cabinet. The Cabinet reviewed the matrix and felt that a re-examination and renewal or re-selection of KC’s core values should first take place, before employing our matrix. They suggested that the team create a survey of values, where input for defining our core values could be provided. The following week, the College Council members reviewed and further refined our survey with excellent suggestions. The survey was initially administered campus wide at the Professional Faculty/Staff Development Day on August 15, 2007. The same exercise was conducted with the adjunct faculty and Education Center Coordinators at their training that evening. It was discussed with the Board at the next Board meeting. Further surveying will be done with students as well as community leaders in the near future. At this time, the data collected to date, is being captured electronically for data analysis in the Office of Planning, Grants and Institutional Research at Kaskaskia College. From this instrument we anticipate the data will aid us in identifying the values that are timeless for Kaskaskia College, the values that may need to be better defined and values that may be suggested for addition. Further work by the committee will include testing the values as defined at the work unit level and identifying and improving any internal processes that might have a negative impact on exclusively practicing the core values.

Review:
This is an interesting and unusual project that is clearly tied to the mission of the institution and to what is unique about the institution. The project actually has linkages with several AQIP categories, and Category 4 (Valuing People) is a central focus. They are moving forward in the right direction and have the potential to reform or even transform institutional decision making. The immediate goal of developing a matrix has not yet been achieved because they decided to focus on the more foundational question of what values should be in place. While some on campus may see this as a delay or even a detour, in the long run it will help the institution to develop a richer understanding of values and decision-making processes.

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

The Action Project Team represented faculty, administration and student support services. We also involved the President’s Cabinet of administrative leaders and the College Council which represents all aspects of the campus. The Office of Planning, Grants and Institutional Research helped us to maintain
objectivity and to keep our data quantifiable to ensure valid results for effective planning and decision making. Input was encouraged from all College employees – full and part-time, on and off-campus, and participation in the core values survey activity was strong.

**Review:**
The very nature of the project suggests campus wide involvement, and the institution appears to be doing a fine job of getting everyone involved initially through the survey and later through the use of the matrix to evaluate decisions in a wide range of campus departments. The project update recognizes both the importance of administrative leadership and of faculty-staff engagement. This all-encompassing level of participation should serve as a good example for other decision-making processes on campus.

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

• To review the reports prepared by the Office of Planning, Grants and Institutional Research to thoroughly analyze the data collected from the faculty and staff. • To involve student and community representatives in further research and data collection. • To assist the College in selecting a process for adoption or revision of the core values using a matrix that will examine College processes at a work unit level. • To recommend to the Process Mapping Core Values Action Team those processes that are determined to impede the ethical practice of core values as identified by the work units. • To encourage examination and improvement of processes identified as problematic.

**Review:**
The next steps are fully appropriate and in sync with the project goals and with the larger mission of the institution. It appears likely that the project will take more time than the 18 months initially assigned, but it is important work that needs to be done well. When the matrix is finally developed, it might be helpful for the institution to consider a pilot project of applying the matrix to decision making in a single area before employing it campus wide. The Action Team may learn lessons from such a pilot project that will be helpful in a broader application of the matrix.

D. **Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.**

Values are meant to serve as directional guideposts in meeting KC’s mission and vision. As our campus has expanded its mission and services, we are excited to pioneer a “renewal” of the core value process and to test the models for this renewal and re-focus that will fully engage the campus. Many KC processes have been mapped as they are now by another AQIP Action Team. By detecting ethical conflicts that result from identified processes, these processes can be addressed with priority for revising as a component of KC’s institutional planning process.

**Review:**
Their work on how values guide decision making (or don't guide decision making) can be a valuable case study for other institutions, particularly as they develop a matrix and apply it to decision making processes. The institution is clearly linking decision-making to larger institutional planning and improvement.

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

The assumption was that KC’s core values were the working values of Kaskaskia College as it exists today. However, since the initial core values were identified, the College has experienced unprecedented growth over the past six years, expanded course offerings both on and off-campus and added new facilities. Upon close examination of the AQIP “conversation day” data, the Team felt that KC’s core values needed to be re-visited for renewal or adaptation. Kaskaskia leadership is also in the process of reviewing different core value models to select one that is the best “fit” for KC to use in “student core values at work” courses and in future new employee and student orientations. Therefore, the timing was perfect for the re-examination of our institutional core values.

**Review:**
It is a challenge for a rapidly-growing institution to take time to review and refine its foundations, but
the College appears to be moving methodically through a useful process. The project became larger than initially designed but in the end will benefit the institution in important ways. As projects like these become larger and longer than initially designed, it is important to celebrate the progress along the way and to keep the focus on the ultimate goal of improving decision making.

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 who to contact and when?

This Action Project Team does not request assistance from AQIP at this time as this project is moving forward and making progress toward our goals.

*Review:*
N/A