
Action Project

Institution: Baker College
Submitted: 2007-02-27 **Contact:** Mike Tyler
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 03-01-2007

Target completion date: 02-28-2010

Actual completion date: --

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

Development of a Quality Infrastructure to Enable a Quality Culture

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

The goal of this project is to provide the infrastructure to enable the development of a culture of quality and data-driven decision making. Training on quality improvement techniques and the use of data will be provided. Using the data needs of the other action projects and the Systems Portfolio, infrastructure will be developed to include a catalog and documentation of current data resources as well as the creation of data resources to meet gaps between needs and current resources.

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

Primary Category: Measuring Effectiveness

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 is the foundation for the other projects and the development of the Systems Portfolio. The training component will provide staff and faculty with the capacity to implement quality tools and approaches to their work processes and action projects. The data infrastructure is essential for the successful development of our Systems Integration Portfolio.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

This project cuts across the institution impacting Academics, Admissions, Business Office, Information Systems, and Student Services.

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

This project engages our processes related to measuring institutional effectiveness: how we collect, analyze, and use information for decision making and to drive performance improvement.

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

The first year will focus on identifying what human, data, and training resources are required and documenting existing resources. The second year will be used to document gaps in training and data and begin the process of closing those gaps, which will stretch into the third year.

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

The action team will meet monthly to review progress. The leaders of the four action teams will also meet periodically to review progress of the four projects.

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:

The ultimate outcome measure will be the appraisal of the Systems Portfolio, especially around the results questions. Secondary measures will include staff and faculty satisfaction with training and access to necessary data resources.

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

An action team led by the Director of Assessment/AQIP Liaison has been formed to oversee this project.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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Annual Update: 2008-09-11

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

This action project is managed by a team of 8 individuals representing 4 different campuses as well as the Baker College system. The team meets on a monthly basis to review progress toward goals, adjust actions undertaken, and assess results. The primary focus during the previous year has been the coordination of category teams to begin collecting data necessary to write the system portfolio. This first step was undertaken as a way to understand the data needs of the Baker College system as we move forward as an AQIP institution. The portfolio was chosen as the defining structure because this document covers all aspects of our operations and reviews the categories and principles necessary for success. To accomplish our goals, almost 100 employees from all campuses and all functional areas were assigned to category teams representing the 9 AQIP categories. Each team then began responding to the questions that make up the prompts in the system portfolio document, identifying data available as well as gaps. Seven of the 9 categories were completed by the time this update was prepared (September 2008) and the remaining 2 categories will complete their initial work by November 2008. The data collected and documents prepared will be used to create a draft of the system portfolio which will provide an overview of the data needs of the system to be responded to in the coming year. This process has resulted in over 3500 man-hours expended on data collection, review, discussion and documentation. A second area of accomplishment in the past year was the formation of an Academic Leaders Users Group. This group is charged with representing the needs of academic leaders across campuses related to our student information system and other computerized data necessary for decision making. The users group was formed in the Fall of 2007 and has

continued to meet with the information systems (IS) department identifying needs and helping IS personnel develop reporting systems to provide the data needed for operations in the academic arena. A third accomplishment was the start of a research oversight committee whose task will be to provide a clearinghouse for data collection and research efforts across the system. Including information systems, academics and institutional effectiveness representative, this committee is currently developing materials to track research and data collection so that redundancies in the system can be eliminated, and to provide better communication across our geographically dispersed institution. This action project leadership committee has also become a de facto advisory board for our system AQIP liaison and provides feedback on the structuring of the AQIP process across the system.

Review (09-13-08):

The goal of developing a culture of data-driven decision-making to foster continuous quality improvement is fundamental to institutional success and resonates with numerous AQIP categories in addition to the main category identified by the institution, Measuring Effectiveness (category 7). The systematic and broad-based approach that has been implemented promises to yield significant results and demonstrates an understanding of the importance of understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs (category 3) as well as leading and communicating (category) while building collaborative relationships (category 9).

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

The individuals involved as leaders on this project are highly motivated and committed to the AQIP process. Monthly meetings keep everyone informed. These same individuals have provided leadership to the category teams, and have therefore become role models and champions of the AQIP processes occurring on our campuses. Wider participation was gained by requesting volunteers to participate in the 9 category teams that were established. A large number of individuals volunteered showing the widespread commitment to and enthusiasm for AQIP on our campuses. Ultimately, almost 100 employees were invited to participate on 1 or more teams. These teams met initially for a 2-day training/work session. These initial sessions were followed up by up to 3 more 2-day sessions spread across several months. The intense work sessions, held away from the primary work site of most participants allowed a great deal to be accomplished at each meeting. Over the course of the project, enthusiasm was enhanced by the new relationships built and the increased respect for colleagues that invariably occurred as these cross-campus interdisciplinary teams struggled with the complex issues raised in the portfolio questions. An additional method to keep all AQIP projects on the radar and maintain enthusiasm was for the Assoc. V.P. for Institutional Effectiveness to visit every campus to provide updates to campus operations committees. On some campuses, all faculty and staff were invited to attend. This same presentation was made to the Presidents Council/ Executive committee of the Baker College system, as well as to the Chief Academic Officers meeting. Finally, a presentation was delivered to the Baker College System Board of Directors to ensure all levels of the organization were knowledgeable. Smaller presentations have been made to other groups including the Academic Leadership retreat and various campus retreats.

Review (09-13-08):

The leaders of this project have become role models while championing AQIP values and have successfully generated enthusiasm and buy-in to this challenging undertaking (category 5). The broad-based participation is important to the overall goal of cultural change and has had the added benefit of increasing communication and respect for individuals and an increased

understanding of the various needs of different constituencies taking part in the process (category 4 and category 9). Communication among all levels across all members of the Baker system is key to maintaining the enthusiasm and energy to complete this multi-stage process.

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

As we move forward assessing our institutional data needs, we will complete a draft of the system portfolio and use the data to continue our planning as we move forward with AQIP. This will be a major task in the coming year. The college has also begun to look at some new assessment software that will provide easier access for input and retrieval. This software will also continue the development of a warehousing system for our data needs. This project team will work to oversee ongoing continuous quality improvement efforts across campuses. A need has been identified to help units successfully apply CQI models which have been taught and reinforced in training over the past 2 years. The project team will also oversee our next conversation day planned for the Fall of 2009. This will be designed to collect additional data, highlight accomplishments, and prepare for the next step in our CQI journey.

Review (09-13-08):

Building upon their successes and modeling the way in terms of making data-driven decisions, the team has used the data collected to plan for the upcoming year and assess institutional needs (category 8). In the spirit of continuous improvement, the team has recognized the need to continue training and assisting units in applying CQI models, reinforcing training that has taken place over the past two years. (category 8). Another “conversation day” is planned, reinforcing the need for communication (category 5).

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

The most beneficial portion of this project to date has been the cross-campus inter-departmental teams that were formed to respond to each of the 9 AQIP categories. By seeking volunteers, we provided a broad opportunity for involvement from all departments and at all levels. By carefully constructing teams that minimized representation from any single department or campus, individuals had the opportunity to get to learn about other aspects of college operations and to meet individuals they did not previously know. This has had a positive impact on morale, increased respect among departments and improved overall knowledge of college operations. Two key elements leading to success have included support from the highest levels of administration and professional development. The AQIP process has been quite time intensive, and the College administration has made it clear that this is a priority. Letters of welcome were sent from the system President to members of category teams welcoming them, thanking them for their participation and stressing that AQIP meetings were to take priority. Campus Presidents and Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) have reinforced this by making sure AQIP updates are regularly provided, are included in meeting agendas, and that travel costs, housing and food are provided as needed. This has allowed the time, space and freedom to invest in these projects. Well over 100 people meet regularly on various AQIP projects and committees and the total campus investment has been over 4.5 FTE in the past year. The second key element, professional development, has been and continues to be provided. An important focus has been continuous quality improvement. Outside consultant/trainers have been brought in repeatedly and additional training has been provided by in-house experts. As a result, large scale training has been provided not only to system employees, but on at least 4 campuses. These efforts continue. This professional development helps everyone understand the AQIP process and philosophy, supports

the cultural change the institution seeks, and provides the tools necessary for our ongoing success.

Review (09-13-08):

The support of the administration and the element of professional development has fostered a unified focus on achieving the goal of cultural change. The improved morale that has resulted from the increased knowledge and participation on the part of individuals across divisions and campuses is a remarkable accomplishment when considering the tremendous amount of time and work that the project has required. The attention that has been paid to valuing people (category 4), leading and communicating (category 5) building collaborative relationships (category 9) while focusing on the main goal of planning continuous improvement(category 8) appears to have had a positive impact on the culture already and if the momentum that has been achieved can be sustained, the outcome promises to be highly successful.

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

The College still faces the challenge of cataloguing data and providing easier and more efficient methods of input, analysis and retrieval. As users at all levels become increasingly sophisticated about data collection and analysis, and as the culture becomes more focused on data-driven decisions, users will increasingly demand access to reliable and valid data for their decision making.

Review (09-13-08):

The careful planning and implementation as well as the early successes of this project are noteworthy.

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?

The project team is not seeking assistance at this time.

Review (09-13-08):