

## Action Project

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**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: 2009-09-14**

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

The committee responsible for this project continued its work throughout the year meeting on a bi-monthly basis throughout the academic year. During the past year, this project completed the collection of data for the writing of the portfolio. This project, consisting of 9 committees and involving over 100 employees, generated hundreds of pages of ideas, data points, questions, and opportunities for the institution to address. The data is currently being compiled into the system portfolio for presentation in early 2010. A second accomplishment is the implementation of a research oversight committee intended to facilitate communication about research, program evaluation, pilot projects and related activities occurring across the 11 campuses that comprise the Baker College System. This group has implemented a database system that allows tracking of information across time which will also help to make these processes more transparent and the resulting data more accessible. Finally, the group created the foundation for an AQIP Quality Council that has been implemented. This new council will officially take over the advising and oversight roles that the Quality Infrastructure Team has been carrying since the project's inception. This final step ensures the institutionalization of the underlying principles of AQIP into the fabric of the institution for the foreseeable future. Long term discussions about the role of AQIP at the institution, future conversation days, and the next steps necessary to continue the cultural shift to a data-driven institution also continued. The project reviewed website requirements for communication and considered social networking and other web 2.0 technologies as a way to increase the visibility of AQIP on our campuses. While these have not been implemented yet, work continues with various groups on campus as capacity for web streams and other tools increases. The project began discussions of creating a data catalog designed to help employees understand the datasets available and how to access them through the central student data system (CARINA). This project is currently being conducted through the

information systems department in conjunction with a move to online access to data. A committee was recommended and established that is investigating possible assessment data warehousing tools. A primary concern for such a system is integration with Blackboard that will allow faculty to work in a seamless fashion to submit assessment data. Additionally, the committee wants the system to demonstrate functionality beyond the academic divisions, allowing other units to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their own data collection efforts. Finally, the committee recognized that its primary goals had been substantially met, and plans were developed to close the project. This included the development of a plan for a new AQIP council, for which by-laws were developed, members appointed, and the first meeting held. This new council will replace the Quality Infrastructure Action Project Committee as a permanent committee on campus to oversee and steer AQIP work at all levels of the institution.

***Review (09-26-09):***

Baker College should be commended for the systems approach addressing their desire to create and maintain usable data. The outcomes for this Action Project include a nearly completed Systems Portfolio, reflecting an internal process for an external evaluation; a newly formed research oversight committee that has implemented a database system (on exactly what is unclear); and an AQIP Quality Council group that will advise and oversee the roles previously addressed through this Action Project. There is an institutional move to online access to data, and conversations promoting a data-driven culture are on-going. This three year project has resulted in an infrastructure and process for using data, and for continuous quality improvement. This annual report does not provide specifics regarding data collected and it is assumed that data will support the Systems Portfolio through the Results sections.

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

This action project had been at a high level of activity for a period of 2.5 years. During the last 6 months, activities have been reduced dramatically as the committees completing category worksheets for the portfolio have finished their work. Other activities such as the data catalog and description efforts continue under the auspices of a separate group. These changes represent the natural completion and ending of this project. Concurrently, the number of people and level of involvement has been reduced as well. The committee did consider a variety of tools including social networking tools (MySpace, Face book), video channels, podcasts, twitter, etc. as means to maintain visibility as the project transitions. A decision was made not to invest in these tools at this time because in other areas of the institution where they are used, acceptance is not widespread and the current payoff appears minimal. The AQIP liaison has continued work by visiting every campus, participating in campus operations committees, presenting at campus kick-off and other all staff events. Additional communication opportunities have been utilized, such as using campus visits to review and plan from Noel-Levitz data as an opportunity to focus on continuous improvement and connections to current and future AQIP projects.

***Review (09-26-09):***

Baker College included members from all 11 campuses, and recognized over 100 employees who had contributed to the information collected for the Systems Portfolio. The AQIP Liaison facilitated knowledge and communication about all Action Projects through campus visits, presentations, and participation in campus operations committees. Baker College used existing data-collection activities (i.e. Noel-Levitz data) to continue discussions regarding continuous data collection, data analysis, and data-driven decision-making. The institution reached out for broad representation on this Action Project, and gives every indication that all parts of the

College have moved toward a more data-driven culture.

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

It is likely that this project will be officially brought to a close over the next 90 days. At that time, a draft of the portfolio will be completed and available to all members of the project, as well as other academic leaders and teams including the newly established AQIP council. The remaining work of the project- submission of the portfolio will be directed through the new council. This shift will allow for a realignment of personnel and their involvement with AQIP activities at the system as well as campus level.

***Review (09-26-09):***

This Action Project has run its course, and the institutional systems will be sustained and monitored through two newly established groups, the Research Oversight Committee and the AQIP Quality Council. Again, this reflects a systems approach to continuous quality improvement, and a cultural shift toward valuing and using data. While not all aspects of the original action project were achieved, Baker College has laid the groundwork and created systems that will allow the collection and use of data to continue to progress and improve.

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

A recent discussion among leaders within the Baker College system reinforced the significant cultural changes that have occurred at Baker College over the past 3 years. One example of this comes from a description of another project offered by our Academic V.P. In describing a project about student advising, the V.P. focused on what we have learned about assessment and accountability, how we have learned to use technology to support our work, and how data continues to drive the development of that project. There has been a clear and stunning change in the discussions that occur throughout our institution. This project was intended to help lay the foundations for more effective data-driven decision making. It is clear that we have achieved that goal. The most effective practice may have come inadvertently. A decision was made at the start of the project to involve as many people as possible in the collection of data to drive the portfolio development process. Individuals were drawn from every campus, every level, and almost every job description within the institution to participate in that work. The goal was to ensure that all voices were represented and no stone was left unturned. The result was that every person involved spent many hours collecting, reviewing and discussing data about every aspect of the institution. Individuals not only increased their knowledge about their own domain, but also about the interconnected aspects of the institution they had never considered. And, they were challenged to create an understanding of the institution and its strengths and weaknesses based on data- not just anecdote. This understanding of our approach to planning has permeated the institution. Report cards have become standard tools for tracking data at every level, and key performance indicators are known and referred to by name. This is the shift. How much is traceable to the CQI training, portfolio work, and other activities of this group are unknown. But it is clear that this is one piece of the practice that has moved the institution forward.

***Review (09-26-09):***

Baker College is obviously excited and pleased with their efforts, and report that this Action Project has caused change in their environment. Report cards have become standard tools for tracking data at every level, and key performance indicators are known and referred to by name. They give an example of the new conversations that are occurring, ones that include consideration of available data, trends known through this data, and decisions based on what the

data tells them. The detail of information provided regarding their processes in undertaking this Action Project show that the Action Project was taken seriously, intentionally, and that progress was monitored. Two models of effective practices can be inferred from Baker College's report. First, the model for inclusion. "Individuals were drawn from every campus, every level, and almost every job description within the institution." While the plan for this inclusion is not specified, it is anticipated that to make this statement, the Action Project plan specified a certain number of representatives from various levels and from all campuses. Second, the model for embracing technology as a method for improving access to data. Baker College used technology to communicate changes in how data would be collected and used, and they are working toward having data online, allowing broad access to those who need reports generated in order to make more timely data-driven decisions.

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

The inclusive process used to gather data for the portfolio generated a tremendous amount of information. Most of the category teams generated reports that were between 40 and 60 pages in length. Reducing this in a manner that meets the portfolio requirements while adequately capturing the work of each committee is difficult. Some committee members may respond with disappointment that their work has been so greatly edited. Our challenge will be to help everyone involved see how their work contributed not only to the portfolio, but also to other components of our institutional work including the choice of new AQIP projects, response to quick fixes, and implementation of new policies and procedures specifically brought about by challenges identified through this process.

**Review (09-26-09):**

Baker College undertook an Action Project that promoted their pursuit of AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness, and yet they have also embraced AQIP Category 4: Valuing People. Not only were people involved across the entire College system, but the primary challenge identified is the concern of hurting or disappointing those who spent so many hours collecting and writing for the Systems Portfolio. Once again, Baker College should be commended for inspiring the people to be actively involved, for affecting the culture, and for seeing the value of its employees' contributions. Typically, sustaining the improvements would be an area of concern, but Baker College is confident that there has been a cultural and institutional change in the past 2.5 years.

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?

At this time, the Quality Infrastructure Team is not seeking additional input or consultation.

**Review (09-26-09):**

9834 Baker College presents an example of an organization making exceptional accomplishments in its culture (1) through outstanding practice that ought to be shared.