

Baker College, MI

Develop an institutional quality assurance framework to measure institutional effectiveness and drive continuous quality improvement efforts

Participation Start: 09-01-2012

Participation End: 09-01-2019

Date Completed: 11-16-2017

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This Results Report reflects the activity of Baker College in the Action Project Collaboration Network. It is not an official document of the Higher Learning Commission.

Declaration

Q:

Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

A: A quality assurance framework will provide non-academic departments with the foundation for measuring unit effectiveness and guiding quality improvement efforts. Executive leadership will identify metrics at the department level that support the College's Mission, Guiding Principles, and overall institutional effectiveness for continuous quality improvement. Department leaders will be responsible for implementing measurement tools and assessment processes that align with the quality assurance framework.

Q:

Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this action project now and how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution's current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted Systems Portfolio.

A: The lack of utilizing benchmarking and comparative data in non-academic departments was a common theme identified in the College's most recent systems portfolio appraisal. This feedback strongly aligns with Executive Leadership's desire to strengthen integrative planning, resource alignment, and ensure all unit initiatives align with the institutional strategic plan.

Selecting, monitoring, and benchmarking functional unit measurements is not only critical to identifying improvement opportunities, it will help staff prioritization activities, develop initiatives, and allocate resources. These measurements allow for transparency regarding unit effectiveness and ensure accountability to institutional goals.

The project is anticipated to take 12 months to complete.

Q:

List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress toward each goal. Be sure to include when you anticipate submitting the project for formal reviews.

A: The project goals include: (1) the development of a quality assurance framework, (2) the identification of key personnel in each functional area (3) the identification of metrics in each functional area, and (4) the identification of a strategy for implementation in each functional area.

The formal evaluation progress will be reviewed in the following time table:

June 15, 2015 -- Identify Project Team Leader and Cross-functional Project Team Members

July 1, 2015 -- Project Team Reviews Action Project Charter and Action Project

Declaration -- Assigns roles and responsibilities for project completion

August 1, 2015 - September 30, 2015 -- Project team maps quality assurance framework and details of implementation strategy for dissemination of project goals and communication plan to all stakeholders

October 1, 2015 -- Quarterly Report to Project Sponsor(s)

October 1, 2015 - January 31, 2016 -- Project team meets with each functional area unit director to outline the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for reporting expanded key performance indicators for each functional area

February 1, 2016 -- Quarterly Report to Project Sponsor(s)

February 1, 2016 - March 31, 2016 -- Project team assists functional area units in providing guidance and oversight for quality assurance framework resulting in each functional area having identified metrics, which align with the institutional metrics provided to each group

April 1, 2016 -- Quarterly Report to Project Sponsor(s)

April 1, 2016 - June 15, 2016 -- Project concludes with summary of the following deliverables: (1) Department/Functional Unit metrics are identified; (2) Department/Functional Unit measurement processes and benchmarks are identified; (3) Quality assurance process is implemented in all organizational departments/functional units; (4) Data collection and analysis is underway; and (5) Transparency framework, reporting processes, and annual assessment dates are identified.

June 15, 2016 -- Final Report Summary to Project Sponsor(s) and Project Closure Report submitted to Higher Learning Commission

Q:

Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

A: The project team for this project will be cross-functional by design. It will include representation from all areas of the institution, including (but not limited to) academics, admissions, business office, career services, financial aid, residence life, campus safety, and human resources. The project team will meet with each functional unit director in order to outline the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for implementation.

This project will impact the entire organization's learning community. All employees will be impacted by the implementation of the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics identified.

Q:

Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

A: Oversight for the strategic plan including all AQIP projects is the responsibility of the

Institutional Strategy Council. Additionally, monthly project updates will be provided to the Presidents' Council and System Executive Committee.

The projects consists of the following goals to be measured at the end of 12 months:

- Department/Functional Unit metrics are identified
- Department/Functional Unit measurement processes and benchmarks are identified
- Quality assurance process is implemented in all organizational departments/functional units
- Data collection and analysis is underway
- Transparency framework, reporting processes, and annual assessment dates are identified

Q:

Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: Historically, the College has taken a fragmented approach to measuring effectiveness across the institution in functional units. A significant challenge may arise in helping to transition the institution from its historic ad-hoc approach to a more strategic and prescriptive approach. This will be a significant cultural change for the institution.

Identifying quantifiable metrics related to quality for each functional unit will be challenging and may be insurmountable for some department directors.

Lastly, there may be some challenge to the assumption that the current culture and KPI's will not enable the College to be successful in the changing higher education landscape and that market conditions may provide significant constraints to the implementation. It should be noted, however, that all Executive Leadership at the College believe that this is an opportunity for the College to implement strong quality assurance processes that will allow for the College to focus on continuous improvement and remain viable.

Q:

Provide any additional information that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project.

A: The project will be successful to the extent that the College has a transparent, consistent communication strategy for all stakeholders to understand the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics in all functional units, which align to the institutional strategic goals. Critical components to the success of this project include: (1) Alignment with the mission, guiding principles, and AQIP process; (2) Strong and transparent process must be consistently communicated to all stakeholders; (3) Accountability for leadership and all identified stakeholders to support the project with reporting protocol established. Risk factors to be considered in the implementation of this project include: (1) The project team may not develop a quality assurance process that is easily utilized and maintained; (2) Leadership might not embrace and drive the cultural change; (3) Leadership may not maintain a commitment and focus to this project; (4) Campus misinterpretation of goals and metrics could result in inconsistent implementation; (5) The cultural shift may be too significant to be successfully implemented.

Concluding Report

Q:

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

A: The primary reason for closing this project is due to the fact that original goals outlined for this project have been completed. The intent of the project was to (1) develop of a quality assurance framework, (2) identify key personnel in each functional area (3) identify metrics in each functional area, and (4) identify a strategy for implementation in each functional area. The College recognized as part of its continuous quality improvement journey, along with feedback received from the College's 2014 portfolio appraisal, that there was a lack of utilizing benchmark and comparative data in non-academic departments. As the Executive Leadership examined the priorities of the institution, this action project aligned with the desire to address this gap and strengthen integrative planning, resource alignment, and ensure all business unit initiatives align with the institutional strategic plan.

A Strategy Council has been formed to create a framework and provide oversight to ensure key performance indicators are selected, monitored, and benchmarked for each functional business unit of the College. These measurements have allowed for transparency regarding unit effectiveness and ensure accountability to institutional goals. Additionally, a newly authored Strategic Plan has been written for the College encompassing strategies and initiatives for the next four years (2017-2021), which also aligns with the strategic initiatives and key performance indicators outlined for each functional unit.

The College has initiated phase two of this action project, which will comprise of a comprehensive assessment process to ensure consistency in measurement of outlined goals and objectives. This project, Project II, "Implementing an Institutional Quality Assurance Framework," intends to further advance Project I through the following objectives: (1) operationalize a KPI reporting process for functional unit councils; (2) develop a gap analysis process between functional unit council performance and the Institution's Strategic Plan; (3) formalize the strategic planning continuous improvement process. This project will impact all functional units within the Institution.

Q:

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

A: The successful aspects of this action project include many positive outcomes. Of note, this action project was far reaching. Many stakeholders were involved in the planning and implementation. Even more individuals were involved in the development of the framework and metrics. The intent was to provide a framework and templates for all functional user groups to work with common, consistent tools. The learning communities consisted of representation from all areas of the institution, including (but not limited to) academics, admissions, marketing, business office, career services, facilities, financial aid, residence life, campus safety, and human resources. The Strategy Council (who also provide

mentorship to each of the user groups) provided oversight and leadership to the functional unit leaders regarding the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for implementation. During the past year, the individuals within each unit of the College created the five templates that delineated the strategies, evidence, and timeline to meet goals and objectives which align with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan for the College. (See attachment). All employees will be impacted by the implementation of the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics identified.

Additionally, because there were so many individuals involved in the creation of the templates, there is a clear understanding of the direction and accountability outlined for each business unit of the College. This allowed for consistent messaging to all employees. Individuals are appreciative of the transparency of the goals and objectives of the College and how their body of work fits into the larger picture of the organization.

Also another successful aspect of this project was the time and planning that went into the communication structure and building of the framework. Upon reflection, the time spent developing a targeted communication strategy to the various stakeholder groups helped promote consistent knowledge and support the implementation of the framework and the template creation. This strategy minimized confusion, questions, and helped make for a smooth implementation of a wide-reaching initiative for the College. Personnel throughout the College needed to understand their role and accountability for key performance indicators and deliverables outlined for each area and position in the framework. This deliberate structural change allowed for a transparent, consistent communication strategy. It allowed all stakeholders to understand the quality assurance framework and the strategically aligned key performance metrics in all functional units. Even though this process took a considerable amount of time to implement and impeded the progress of this action project, the benefits to the institution ensured that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities prior to the implementation of a quality assurance process.

A final successful aspect was the consistency in implementation of a quality metrics driven framework which allowed individuals to not only visualize how their roles fits into the organization, but also how other roles are critical to meeting the overall key performance indicators for the institution. Because all employees will be measured by the outlined metrics for each functional unit, it allowed for ease in implementation and a common understanding the institutional goals and strategies.

Link 1: [Strategy Framework / Templates](#)

<http://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7vinaAf01NrNURIYUNZQzIKaXM>

Q:

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

A: One aspect of this project that was less than successful was an underestimation of the significant challenge of the implementation of this project across the institution for each functional unit. In the past, the College has taken a fragmented approach to measuring effectiveness across the institution in functional units. Even with the outlined communication strategy and time invested in outlining the strategies, metrics, and timeline for each area, a significant challenge may still arise in helping to transition the institution to a more strategic and prescriptive approach. This will be a significant cultural change for the institution. Because of our long history and engrained processes, there continues to be a challenge for some departmental leaders to identify quantifiable metrics related to quality,

along with finding an appropriate external benchmark for the key performance objectives.

Additionally, one final note regarding this project to consider as a 'lesson learned' for future projects, is the timeline, milestones, and deliverables outlined from the onset of this project perhaps were not as realistic as first indicated. Because of competing priorities and grappling with a changing culture, the original timeline was extremely aggressive and spending the time to clearly outline strategies, deliverables, and actionable strategies provided a more comprehensive, transparent outcome for the College.

Concluding Review

Q:

Do you have any final thoughts or feedback for this institution in regards to this project? Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: Great work. This strategic project is complete and a framework that is centered on CQI has been implemented. The College has functionally deployed an approach that moves the institution forward and ensures the institution is focusing on value-added projects that have strategic alignment.

Project: Develop an institutional quality assurance framework to measure institutional effectiveness and drive continuous quality improvement efforts

Version 2.0 - Project

Q:

What is the current status of your project?

A: Completed

Q:

Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A: The original project start date was slated for June 15, 2015, and the original project end date was June 15, 2016. As stated version #1 project update, due to competing priorities the project did not meet the original anticipated end date. However, the original action project submission is now completed.

June 15, 2015 – Original Project Start Date

June 15, 2016 – Original Project End Date

June 29, 2017 – Actual Project End Date

Q:

Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

A: A common theme in the College's 2014 portfolio appraisal is the lack of utilizing benchmarking and comparative data in non-academic departments. This feedback strongly aligns with Executive Leadership's desire to strengthen integrative planning, resource alignment, and ensure all unit initiatives align with the institutional strategic plan. A Strategy Council was formed to provide a framework and oversight to ensure key performance indicators are selected, monitored, and benchmarked for each functional business unit of the College. These measurements will allow for transparency regarding unit effectiveness and ensure accountability to institutional goals. Additionally, a newly authored Strategic Plan has been written for the College encompassing strategies and initiatives for the next four years (2017-2021), which also aligns with the strategic

initiatives and key performance indicators outlined for each functional unit. As part of this document, a comprehensive assessment process has also been outlined for consistency in measurement of outlined goals and objectives.

Q:

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A: Project Goals: (1) development of a quality assurance framework, (2) identification of key personnel in each functional area (3) identification of metrics in each functional area, and (4) identification of a strategy for implementation in each functional area.

As stated previously, there are four primary goals to examine:

(1) Development of a quality assurance framework – evidence: The Strategy Council provided five templates in order to outline the strategic goals, initiatives, and metrics for each of the functional units of the College – Template #1: Council Charter; Template #2: Strategy; Template #3; Current to Future State; Template #4: Council Initiatives; and Template #5: Council Metrics. (See Example of Templates Attachment)

The templates provided a framework for each functional unit to provide their council charter, strategies, current to future state, initiatives, and metrics. The functional units include: Academic Affairs, Campus Safety, Career Services, Deans' Council, Diversity / Inclusion, Enrollment Management, Facilities, Finance, Financial Services, Human Resources, Institutional Effectiveness, Marketing, Student Affairs, and Running Start (High School Initiatives / Partnerships). All of these units have provided the five templates inclusive of their specific outlined strategies and initiatives in order to meet the outlined metrics / key performance indicators for each area.

(2) Identification of key personnel in each functional area – evidence: On the Project Charter Template for each functional area key personnel were identified and created the strategic documents in their area of expertise. (See Template #1 -- Council Charter)

(3) Identification of metrics in each functional area – evidence: On the KPI / Metrics Template for each functional area key performance indicators were identified and outlined for the functional area. (See Template #5 – Metrics)

(4) Identification of a strategy for implementation in each functional area.— evidence: On the Strategy Template – evidence: Strategies, time lines, and evidence have been identified for each functional area of the College. (See Template #2 – Strategy)

Link 1: [Strategy Framework / Templates](#)

<http://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7vinaAf01NrNURIYUNZQzIKaXM>

Q:

Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

A: As explained in earlier responses, the project outlined a framework, along with identified

project team members for each functional area. The formation of a Strategic Council provided the framework and templates to standardize the reporting process for all departments. The leadership of each functional unit worked with employees within their respective departments to prepare the strategies, initiatives, and metrics by which all areas will be measured.

A quarterly reporting period has been identified for each department leader to provide updates to the Strategy Council in order to hold responsible leaders accountable for metrics for the identified key performance indicators for all functional units utilizing a consistent process. This check in period will allow all department heads to identify any gaps and deadlines not met as was set forth in the outlined templates for each functional unit. As the project continues to evolve throughout the next twelve months, the College will have an outlined assessment plan and continue to clarify and update any expectations as to the measurable outcome for each functional unit.

At this time the College is fully operational and in full swing of the implementation of the outlined framework for each functional unit. As data becomes available, the College will collect, analyze, and report this data in its upcoming portfolio.

Q:

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

A: This action project was far reaching. Many stakeholders were involved in the planning and implementation. Even more were involved in the development of the framework and metrics. The intent was to provide a framework and templates for all functional user groups to work with common, consistent tools. The learning communities consisted of representation from all areas of the institution, including (but not limited to) academics, admissions, marketing, business office, career services, facilities, financial aid, residence life, campus safety, and human resources. The Strategy Council (who also provide mentorship to each of the user groups) provided oversight and leadership to the functional unit leaders regarding the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for implementation. During the past year, the individuals within each unit of the College created the five templates (as outlined in the above response) that delineated the strategies, evidence, and timeline to meet goals and objectives which align with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan for the College. All employees will be impacted by the implementation of the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics identified.

Q:

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

A: There are a number of very positive themes that can be extrapolated to other areas and initiatives. The first positive item to note is that from all initial accounts, the framework outlined for all business units of the College in outlining the strategies and deliverables for each group helped promote a consistent message to all employees. Individuals are appreciative of the transparency of the goals and objectives of the College and how their body of work fits into the larger picture of the organization.

Another positive outcome of this project is the time and planning that went into the communications structure and building of the framework. Upon reflection, the time spent developing a targeted communication strategy to the various stakeholder groups helped promote consistent knowledge and support the implementation of the framework and the template creation. This strategy minimized confusion, questions, and helped make for a smooth implementation of a wide-reaching initiative for the College. Personnel throughout the College needed to understand their role and accountability for key performance indicators and deliverables outlined for each area and position in the framework. This deliberate structural change allowed for a transparent, consistent communication strategy. It allowed all stakeholders to understand the quality assurance framework and the strategically aligned key performance metrics in all functional units. Even though these changes impeded the progress of this action project, the benefits to the institution ensured that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities prior to the implementation of a quality assurance process.

The final lesson learned from this project, one that could apply to any complex school or system of schools operating multiple locations and sites, is that consistency in implementation of a quality metrics driven framework allows individuals to not only visualize how their roles fits into the organization, but also how other roles are critical to meeting the overall key performance indicators for the institution. Because all employees will be measured by the outlined metrics for each functional unit, it allowed for ease in implementation and a common understanding the institutional goals and strategies.

Q:

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: As indicated in the original submission of this action project, the College has taken a fragmented approach to measuring effectiveness across the institution in functional units. Even with the outlined communication strategy and time invested in outlining the strategies, metrics, and timeline for each area, a significant challenge may still arise in helping to transition the institution to a more strategic and prescriptive approach. This will be a significant cultural change for the institution. There continues to be a challenge for some departmental leaders to identifying quantifiable metrics related to quality, along with finding an appropriate external benchmark for the key performance objectives.

Because the framework and templates were just finalized and implemented, there may be some challenge to the assumption that the current culture and key performance indicators will not allow the College to be successful in the changing higher education landscape and that market conditions may provide significant constraints to the implementation. It should be noted, however, that all Executive Leadership at the College believe that this is an opportunity to implement strong quality assurance processes that allow the College to focus on continuous improvement and remain viable. A quarterly review of the framework, strategies, deliverables, and outlined milestones for each function unit director is planned and will be assessed as to the sustainability and consistency in implementation.

Q:

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of

this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

A: The next steps are as follows. The Strategic Council will continue to provide mentorship and oversight for the strategies outlined for each functional business unit over the next 12 months. Quarterly meetings will be held with each departmental leader to assess the progress made on the outlined strategies and initiatives. During this review, the Council will provide guidance on the progress in meeting the desired key performance indicators. If there is any indication that milestones are not being met, the Council, along with the departmental leaders, will re-assess the outlined strategies. It will be important for the College to assist with holding all employees accountable to the outlined expectations consistently and fairly. It is expected that some of the lagging indicator data sets will be collected and analyzed for presentation to the College President’s Cabinet in December of 2017.

As part of the ongoing assessment, an annual review of the key performance indicators and metrics will be completed at the end of each academic year – August of 2018. Any edits to the original outlined strategies and metrics will be assessed by the Strategic Council at that time. The goal of this ongoing assessment process will provide feedback, affirm metrics, and continue to align strategies with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. This process will allow for the comprehensive evaluation of the Strategic Plan and outlined initiatives during the five-year cycle of the Strategic Plan.

Finally, ensuring the fidelity of the framework in such a complex organization with multiple campuses has helped bring light to the benefit of a consistent message and outline for all personnel to align their roles with the larger picture of the College. It is thought at this time that the College will continue to utilize a Strategic Council to assist with the implementation of the framework and continued oversight to set targets, benchmarks, and audits for future years.

Q:

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N / A

Version 2.0 - Update

Q:

I certify that this project is ready for review.

A: I agree.

Version 2.0 - Review

Q:

Please comment on anything that is omitted or incomplete in the project status, dates

and summary field. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N/A

Q:

Check for accuracy and completeness against the original Project Declaration. Are the right metrics or measures included for each goal? If not, what revisions to the metrics/measures would you suggest that the institution consider?

A: This Action Project stemmed from a need to enhance unit effectiveness measurement processes as well as a desire to have more structured quality improvement efforts in non-academic departments throughout the campus. The Action Project is now complete.

Goals listed in the Declaration have been addressed. Metrics were defined for each of the four goals and results have been recognized.

Q:

Has the institution acted in meaningful ways to pursue project success, making progress as anticipated in the original project declaration? If meaningful progress or project success has not been achieved, has the institution made appropriate revisions to the goals or anticipated outcomes for this project? • Are descriptions of resources, organization, concrete results, and reaching milestones included? • Make a statement of global judgment. (i.e. “The institution is making [excellent/good/satisfactory/acceptable/slow/ casual/no] progress in this action project.”).

A: Baker College has posted project goals completed during the two-year span of this project. A quality assurance framework has been developed and is supported by five templates covering Council Charter, Strategy, Current to Future, Council Initiatives, and Council Metrics. Each of the templates requires the various units to supply specific outlined strategies and initiatives to meet metrics and key performance indicators for each area.

Key personnel in each area were identified, as were metrics specific to the unit's function. Strategies, time lines, and supporting evidence were identified for each area.

Completion of the Action Project was undergirded by the formation of a Strategic Council which continues to receive quarterly updates from each department leader. Data will be collected, analyzed, and reported in Baker's upcoming Systems Portfolio.

Q:

Are the appropriate people involved sufficiently for the nature and scope of the project?

• Is there sufficient breadth of involvement?

• Are the right people involved? • Emphasize the roles of those who can enhance the impact, success, or effectiveness of the project.

- **Tactfully call attention to any people that appear to have been omitted or bypassed.**

A: Participation in the Action Project was broad-based, including representation from all areas of the institution. The Strategic Council provided oversight and leadership. Its work continues.

There was no mention of student input from areas such as academics or student support services. This may have provided a different perspective and additional ideas for improvement within processes.

Q:

Does the institution show evidence of learning from what it did well?

- **Acknowledge any practice that could be replicated internally in future projects.**
- **Encourage the sharing of best practices with other institutions.**

A: The college indicates that changes of attitude and understanding among employees may be a positive effect of this Action Project. The completion of the framework design has helped to promote a consistent message to all employees by bringing about a transparency of the college's goals and objectives, as well as how each unit's work contributes to the overall effectiveness of the institution. Communication is felt to be stronger and more open on this specific topic, and there is a more congruous implementation of quality metrics.

Q:

Does the institution have a realistic understanding of what it needs to address in order to achieve progress and, ultimately, project success? Does it assess its internal and external environments, recognizing the potential forces that could hinder success? Is anything overlooked?

A: The Action Project is completed but the college intends to continue using the newly developed documents and processes. A potential challenge is seen in the change to a more strategic and prescriptive approach to measuring effectiveness. It is a cultural change. Additionally, some departmental leaders are struggling to identify quantifiable metrics and external benchmarks for the key performance objectives relevant to their departments.

Q:

Does the institution understand the current status of its project and know how it intends to pursue project success?

A: Yes. The Action Project is complete.

Q:

Overall, does the institution demonstrate a good faith effort in its pursuit of continuous quality improvement through this action project? Is there anything of concern that should be brought to the attention of AQIP via your mentor?

A: Baker has done a nice job of designing and deploying this Action Project. The commitment to continuing the work with the oversight of the Strategic Council sends a message of the value Baker leadership puts on quality improvement. Nicely done.

Project: Develop an institutional quality assurance framework to measure institutional effectiveness and drive continuous quality improvement efforts

Version 1.0 - Project

Q:

What is the current status of your project?

A: In-progress

Q:

Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A: Note: Due to competing priorities this project was not officially ‘kicked off’ until September of 2016. The initial project charter was developed and review by various stakeholders from the institution. Due to infrastructure changes, along with ensuring that the appropriate individuals, were selected to be on the Strategy Council for the institution, the nine person team convened its first meeting to review the charter for the Strategy Council and identify next steps for implementation. Therefore, a new project timeline and implementation strategy will be outlined below.

The original project start date was slated for June 15, 2015, and the original project end date was June 15, 2016. The following contains a revised timeline and project goals as originally stated in the project charter – with a targeted completion date of June 23, 2017.

The project goals include: (1) development of a quality assurance framework, (2) identification of key personnel in each functional area (3) identification of metrics in each functional area, and (4) identification of a strategy for implementation in each functional area. The newly commissioned Strategy Council is responsible for leading this project.

June 15, 2016 -- Identify Project Team Leader and Cross-functional Project Team Members

June 24, 2016 – Strategy Council Charter and membership was reviewed and approved by the Presidents’ Cabinet.

September 1, 2016 – The inaugural meeting of the Strategy Council included a review of the Institution’s strategic initiatives, individual campus strategic initiatives, and industry best practices regarding strategic development, stewardship, format, and communication.

September 21 and 22, 2016 – Strategy Council met to review the AQIP Action Project Charter and Action Project Declaration – Strategy Council will assign roles and

responsibilities for project completion, along with affirming time lines to complete this project.

October 3, 2016 -- Strategy Council maps quality assurance framework and details of implementation strategy for dissemination of project goals and communication plan to all stakeholders. Each functional area unit leader will meet with the Strategy Council to outline the quality assurance framework and assignments regarding deliverables and time lines for each area. A mentor from the Strategy Council will be assigned to each functional group.

October 14, 2016 -- Quarterly Report to Presidents' Cabinet – Information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet on the project plan status to date.

October 17 – 21, 2016 – System President / CEO – Information will be shared with the campus Board of Regents' meetings at their quarterly meetings on the status of the plan to date.

November 8, 2016 – Strategy Council monthly meeting will continue to refine the quality assurance framework, schedule meetings with identified key leader in each functional area, identify the metrics (KPIs) associated with each functional area, and identify the 'strategies' for implementation for each functional area.

November – December 2016 – Strategy Council mentors will meet with each functional area unit leader to provide a structure for reporting expanded key performance indicators for each functional area.

December 2, 2016 – Strategy Council monthly meeting will update the status on the roll out of the quality assurance framework, schedule meetings with identified key personnel in each functional area, identify the metrics (KPIs) associated with each functional area, and identify the 'strategies' for implementation for each functional area.

January 10, 2017 – Strategy Council monthly meeting to review status and implementation of strategies to meet KPIs for each functional area.

January 16 – 20, 2017 – System President / CEO – Information will be shared with the campus Board of Regents' meetings at their quarterly meetings on the status of the plan to date.

January 27, 2017 -- Quarterly Report to Presidents' Cabinet – Information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet on the project plan status to date.

Monthly meetings held on the following dates to ensure guidance and oversight for quality assurance framework resulting in each functional area having identified metrics, which align with the institutional metrics provided to each group:

February 6, 2017; March 3, 2017; April 6 2017.

April 17 – 21, 2017 -- System President / CEO – Information will be shared with the campus Board of Regents' meetings at their quarterly meetings on the status of the plan to date.

April 27, 2017 -- Quarterly Report to Presidents' Cabinet – Information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet on the project plan status to date.

May 5, 2017 – Strategy Council monthly meeting will be held to ensure guidance and oversight for quality assurance framework resulting in each functional area having

identified metrics, which align with the institutional metrics provided to each group.

June 5, 2017 – Strategy Council reviews the status and concludes the project with a summary of the following deliverables: (1) Department/Functional Unit metrics are identified; (2) Department/Functional Unit measurement processes and benchmarks are identified; (3) Quality assurance process is implemented in all organizational departments/functional units; (4) Data collection and analysis is underway; and (5) Transparency framework, reporting processes, and annual assessment dates are identified.

June 12 - 16, 2017 -- System President / CEO – Information will be shared with the campus Board of Regents' meetings at their quarterly meetings on the outcome of the project deliverables.

June 23, 2017 -- **Quarterly Report to Presidents' Cabinet** – Information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet on the outcome of the project deliverables.

June 29, 2017 – Update of this project will be submitted to the Action Project website for review.

Q:

Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

A: As explained in the first response, the current status of the project is in its initial phases of implementation. A common theme in the College's 2014 portfolio appraisal is the lack of utilizing benchmarking and comparative data in non-academic departments. This feedback strongly aligns with Executive Leadership's desire to strengthen integrative planning, resource alignment, and ensure all unit initiatives align with the institutional strategic plan. Now that the Strategy Council has been formed, the College's intent is to ensure key performance indicators are selected, monitored, and benchmarked for each functional business unit of the College. These measurements will allow for transparency regarding unit effectiveness and ensure accountability to institutional goals. With the project being 'officially' kicked off, the timeline given above will be followed.

Q:

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A: The project goals include: (1) development of a quality assurance framework, (2) identification of key personnel in each functional area (3) identification of metrics in each functional area, and (4) identification of a strategy for implementation in each functional area.

By the end of the project plan (June 2017), the metrics/measures for assessing the progress of each goal will be evident by: (1) Functional Unit metrics are identified; (2) Functional Unit measurement processes and benchmarks are identified; (3) Quality assurance process is implemented in all organizational functional units; (4) Data collection and analysis is underway; and (5) Transparency framework, reporting processes, and annual assessment dates are identified.

Q:

Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

A: As explained in earlier responses, the project has outlined a Strategy Council Charter, along with identified project team members, who will outline the benchmarks and deliverables for each of the functional business units. The new timeline that has been established and highlighted above will hold the Strategy Council accountable to meeting the deadlines and milestones set forth for the institution. As the project evolves throughout the next nine months, the College will submit another update in the first cycle of the new year (2017) regarding the project and clarifying and delineating any shifts in outcomes.

Q:

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

A: The intent is to have cross-functional project teams. The learning communities will include representation from all areas of the institution, including (but not limited to) academics, admissions, marketing, business office, career services, facilities, financial aid, residence life, campus safety, and human resources. The Strategy Council provides oversight and leadership to the functional unit leaders regarding the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for implementation. As indicated in the original action project description, this project will impact the entire organization's learning community. All employees will be impacted by the implementation of the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics identified.

Q:

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

A: As the project is in early stages of implementation, the results thus far are limited. However, the College's executive leadership continues to be committed to the project and goals outlined. The leadership felt it was important for discussion to take place over the past few months to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding the new infrastructure changes. Personnel throughout the College needed to understand their role and expectations to be accountable for the KPIs and deliverables that will be outlined for each area and position in the framework. This deliberate structural change will allow for a transparent, consistent communication strategy for all stakeholders to understand the quality assurance framework and the key performance metrics in all functional units, which align to the institutional strategic goals. Even though these changes impeded the progress of this action project, the benefits to the institution ensured that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities prior to the implementation of a quality assurance process.

Q:

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

- A:** As indicated in the original submission if this action project, the College has taken a fragmented approach to measuring effectiveness across the institution in functional units. A significant challenge may arise in helping to transition the institution from its historic ad-hoc approach to a more strategic and prescriptive approach. This will be a significant cultural change for the institution. Identifying quantifiable metrics related to quality for each functional unit will be challenging and may be insurmountable for some department directors.

There may be some challenge to the assumption that the current culture and KPI's will not enable the College to be successful in the changing higher education landscape and that market conditions may provide significant constraints to the implementation. It should be noted, however, that all Executive Leadership at the College believe that this is an opportunity for the College to implement strong quality assurance processes that will allow for the College to focus on continuous improvement and remain viable.

Q:

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

- A:** The next steps of this project to meet the identified goals will be as follows:

Step #1 and 2: (Have been completed see timeline above).

Step #3: Strategy Council maps quality assurance framework and details of implementation strategy for dissemination of project goals and communication plan to all stakeholders. Each functional area unit leader will meet with the Strategy Council to outline the quality assurance framework and assignments regarding deliverables and timelines for each area. A mentor from the Strategy Council will be assigned to each functional group. (October 2016)

Step #4: Updates and information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet and campus Board of Regents on the project plan status to date. (October 2016)

Step #5: Strategy Council monthly meeting will continue to refine the quality assurance framework, schedule meetings with identified key personnel in each functional area, identify the metrics (KPIs) associated with each functional area, and identify the 'strategies' for implementation for each functional area. Strategy Council mentor meets with each functional area unit director to outline the quality assurance framework and provide a structure for reporting expanded key performance indicators for each functional area. (November and December 2016)

Step #6: Strategy Council monthly meeting to review status and implementation of strategies to meet KPIs for each functional area. (January 2017)

Step #7: Updates and information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet and campus Board of Regents on the project plan status to date. (January 2017)

Step #8: Monthly meetings held on the following dates to ensure guidance and oversight for quality assurance framework resulting in each functional area having identified metrics, which align with the institutional metrics provided to each group. (February, March, April 2017)

Step #9: Updates and information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet and campus Board of Regents on the project plan status to date. (April 2017)

Step #10: Monthly meeting will be held to ensure guidance and oversight for quality assurance framework resulting in each functional area having identified metrics, which align with the institutional metrics provided to each group. (May 2017)

Step #11: Strategy Council reviews the status and concludes the project with a summary of the following deliverables: (1) Functional Unit metrics are identified; (2) Functional Unit measurement processes and benchmarks are identified; (3) Quality assurance process is implemented in all organizational functional units; (4) Data collection and analysis is underway; and (5) Transparency framework, reporting processes, and annual assessment dates are identified. (June 2017)

Step #12: Updates and information will be shared with the Presidents' Cabinet and campus Board of Regents on the project plan status to date. (June 2017)

Step #13: Update of this project will be submitted to the Action Project website for review. (June 2017)

Q:

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N/A

Version 1.0 - Update

Q:

I certify that this project is ready for review.

A: I agree.

Version 1.0 - Review

Q:

Please comment on anything that is omitted or incomplete in the project status, dates and summary field. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N/A

Q:

Check for accuracy and completeness against the original Project Declaration. Are the right metrics or measures included for each goal? If not, what revisions to the metrics/measures would you suggest that the institution consider?

A: Baker College has experienced a one-year delay in initiating this Action Project. Identified goals in the Declaration correspond to those in the Update with exception of time-lines. While there are listed tasks to be completed, there are no specific metrics defined. Several meetings are alluded to, but limited information provided so determining quality and/or progress of the Action Project is not possible.

In order to evaluate this Action Project, more documentable data must be provided.

Q:

Has the institution acted in meaningful ways to pursue project success, making progress as anticipated in the original project declaration? If meaningful progress or project success has not been achieved, has the institution made appropriate revisions to the goals or anticipated outcomes for this project? • Are descriptions of resources, organization, concrete results, and reaching milestones included? • Make a statement of global judgment. (i.e. “The institution is making [excellent/good/satisfactory/acceptable/slow/ casual/no] progress in this action project.”).

A: A Strategy Council has been formed and is charged with selecting, monitoring and benchmarking key performance indicators for each functional business unit of the college. No information was provided of process, measures, or targets.

A Strategy Council has been formed and is charged with selecting, monitoring and benchmarking key performance indicators for each functional business unit of the college. No information was provided of process, measures, or targets.

Progress on this Action Project is not documentable.

Q:

Are the appropriate people involved sufficiently for the nature and scope of the project?

• Is there sufficient breadth of involvement?

• Are the right people involved? • Emphasize the roles of those who can enhance the impact, success, or effectiveness of the project.

• Tactfully call attention to any people that appear to have been omitted or bypassed.

A: The Strategy Council is described as being cross-functional but no further explanation was provided. "Learning communities" are to include representatives from academics, admissions, marketing, the business office, career services, facilities, financial aid, residence life, campus safety, and human resources.

There was no explanation provided for the rationale for or responsibilities of the "learning communities." This project is unclear.

Q:

Does the institution show evidence of learning from what it did well?

- **Acknowledge any practice that could be replicated internally in future projects.**
- **Encourage the sharing of best practices with other institutions.**

A: Progress on this Action Project has been severely limited due to "competing priorities" but the college executive leadership remains committed to complete the Action Project as designed.

Q:

Does the institution have a realistic understanding of what it needs to address in order to achieve progress and, ultimately, project success? Does it assess its internal and external environments, recognizing the potential forces that could hinder success? Is anything overlooked?

A: Baker College foresees a required culture change from ad-hoc to strategic and prescriptive as being a primary challenge of moving forward. While culture changes are generally awkward and somewhat painful, clear, consistent, and timely communication regarding the rationale for change and the goals for improvement may allow for a smoother transition. In this document, those facets of the project are not clear. It appears that more explanation is needed to fairly evaluate this Action Project by both the college community and the HLC reviewers.

Q:

Does the institution understand the current status of its project and know how it intends to pursue project success?

A: Again, Baker College has 13 steps listed for completing this Action Project. The steps reflect tasks and timelines but are not supported by measures of effectiveness that would support continuous quality improvement and/or justify the resources used to complete the project. More information is needed to fairly evaluate the progress of this Action Project.

Q:

Overall, does the institution demonstrate a good faith effort in its pursuit of continuous quality improvement through this action project? Is there anything of concern that should be brought to the attention of AQIP via your mentor?

A: Baker College has poorly described the processes, metrics, analyses critical to this Action Project. It is unclear how the college will determine if quality improvement actually occurred.