

## Baker College, MI

### Implementing an Institutional Quality Assurance Framework

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**Participation Start:** 09-01-2012

**Participation End:** 09-01-2019

**Date Completed:** 10-01-2018

Team Leader: Denise Bannan

Team Member(s): Lesa Louch  
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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

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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: This project is an extension of the previously closed action project titled “Develop an Institutional Quality Assurance Framework to Measure Institutional Effectiveness and Drive Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts,” Project I. 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:

**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: It is a natural progression of the recently closed project referenced above. The second phase of this project will formalize strategic stewardship, institutional analysis, and institutional improvement with explicit metrics, benchmarks, timeframes, and continuous improvement plans. This project is high priority for the institution as the outcomes will provide data to better capitalize and respond to institutional strengths and challenges. In summary, it will optimize ongoing operations and formalize the continuous improvement process of the functional unit council work and strategic advancements detailed in the College’s Strategic Plan.

The College’s 2014 portfolio submission noted a theme of underutilizing benchmarking and comparative data throughout non-academic departments. This project will continue to formalize processes so that identified functional unit council key performance indicators (KPI) can be benchmarked and utilized to drive decision making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement efforts across the Institution.

The development and implementation of this project will take 9-12 months.

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 primary project goals are to (1) operationalize a KPI reporting process for functional unit councils; (2) develop a gap analysis process between functional unit performance and the established targets; (3) formalize the strategic planning continuous improvement process.

October 9, 2017 - Identify Project Team Leader and team members.

Milestone #1: Team identification

November 9, 2017 - Project team will convene to accomplish the following: (1) KPI reporting process for councils; (2) discuss and develop a draft gap analysis process to be utilized between functional unit council performance and the established targets and external benchmarks; (3) and formalize the strategic planning continuous improvement process.

Deliverable #1: Documented process map for council KPI reporting.

January 9, 2018 - \*Report to President's Cabinet and Strategy Council - Information will be shared with the President's Cabinet and Strategy Council on the status of the project deliverables.

Milestone #2: Formal review

Action Project Team will communicate and deploy the KPI reporting process and instrument for collection of data along with associated reporting dates for each council.

Milestone #3: KPI reporting communication

Deliverable #2: KPI reporting instrument

February 9, 2018 - Action Project Team will convene to finalize the gap analysis process to be utilized between functional unit council performance and the targets established in the Institution's Strategic Plan and finalize the strategic planning continuous improvement process.

Deliverable #3: Documented gap analysis process specific to council KPIs and Institutional targets.

March 9, 2018 - Project team will convene to develop associated communications regarding gap analysis process and to complete revisions and finalization of formal process. Project team to deploy communications to relevant stakeholders.

Milestone #4: Gap Analysis Communication

April 9, 2018 - Project team will convene to evaluate the viability of the existing Strategic Planning continuous improvement process. Project team will identify relevant revisions to the process.

May 9, 2018 - Project team will convene to formalize and publish the Strategic Planning

continuous improvement process. Team will develop and deploy relevant communications regarding process.

Deliverable #4: Documented Strategic Planning continuous improvement process

Milestone #5: Strategic Plan continuous improvement process communication

June 9, 2018 - Report to President's Cabinet and Strategy Council - Information will be shared with the President's Cabinet and Strategy Council on the outcomes of the project and deliverables. Project team will publish all processes associated with the project outcomes.

Milestone #6: Formal Review

Deliverable #5: Processes publication

July 9, 2018 - Project team will review process and outcomes to identify potential lessons learned for future action project.

Milestone #7: Project review

August 9, 2018 - Project Closure Report

Deliverable #6: Submission of final closure report

**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 cross-functional project team will provide leadership and oversight for the project, and call upon relevant stakeholders when appropriate. The additional stakeholders will include Academic Affairs, Campus Safety, Career Services, Deans, Facilities, Finance, Financial Services, Human Resources, Institutional Effectiveness, Marketing, Presidents, Student Affairs, and Strategy Council members as well as related subsidiary work groups. Stakeholders' contributions are dependent on the point of intersection with the project process timeline. Anticipated contribution will vary from process development, process integrity validation, to implementation.

**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:**

The project's progress and ultimate success will be evaluated based on the project team's ability to achieve the identified milestones and deliverables in the timeline previously identified. The specific accomplishments will be appraised using the following criteria:

- Ability of the deliverables to achieve the desired outcomes

- Milestone completions by the determined deadlines
- Ability of constituents to operationalize processes deployed
- KPI collection instrument will be evaluated on ease of use and fidelity to capture identified data

The timeline below reflects the dates of when measures of success, deliverables, will be evaluated in addition to how they will be evaluated.

January 15, 2018 -

Deliverable #1: Process map for council KPI reporting

Evaluation of deliverable #1: accurate and timely reporting of council KPIs will evidence a well communicated and operationally sound process.

Deliverable #2: KPI reporting instrument

Evaluation of deliverable #2: a survey will be administered to end users to determine the tool ease of use and the Strategy Council will provide formal feedback specific to the tool's ability to accurately capture desired data.

March 19, 2018 -

Deliverable #3: Documented gap analysis process specific to council KPIs and Strategic Plan targets.

Evaluation of deliverable #3: At the closure of this project, it is not anticipated that this process will be operationalized but rather available for implementation within the College's strategic planning process therefore, a formal review and debrief will be conducted with the Strategy Council to forecast the capabilities of the process to fulfill its intended purpose.

May 21, 2018 -

Deliverable #4: Documented Strategic Planning continuous improvement process.

Evaluation of deliverable #4: At the closure of this project, it is not anticipated that this process will be operationalized but rather available for implementation within the College's strategic planning process therefore, a formal review and debrief will be conducted with the Strategy Council to forecast the capabilities of the process to fulfill its intended purpose.

June 25, 2018 -

Deliverable #5: Processes publication.

Evaluation of deliverable #5: Evidence rather than evaluation is appropriate here in that the processes will be published to the College's Institutional Effectiveness web page.

August 9, 2018 -

Deliverable #6: Project Closure Report.

Evaluation of deliverable #6: This deliverable has two points of evaluation, first,

comprehensive report is completed and submitted on time, secondly, the report (as a proxy for the project) is reviewed and debriefed by relevant stakeholders within the College.

**Q:**

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

**A:** As with any project, the Institution will need to ensure that this structure and reporting philosophy provides all council leaders with the necessary framework to report measurable outcomes. The primary challenge will be to maintain process fidelity, and thus accountability, through consistent communication and application of the process across all functional council units.

**Q:**

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

**A:** For a historical perspective, please [click here](#), to view the preceding project titled, Develop an Institutional Quality Framework to Measure Institutional Effectiveness and Drive Continuous Improvement Efforts.

## Concluding Report

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**Q:**

**What is the primary reason for closing this project?**

**A:** This project is closing based on the project's predetermined timeline detailed in the Project Charter. To date, the objectives have been completed. The objectives were to: (1) operationalize a Key Performance Indicator (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. The College continues to operationalize these processes into a sustainable framework.

**Q:**

**What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?**

**A:** This project has been successful in several ways: (a) functional units have a clear and direct way to report (Council Metrics Dashboard), (b) a regular schedule for reporting (Reporting Calendar), and (c) a method for ensuring quality improvement (Data Maturity and Gap Analysis process).

1. Council Metrics Dashboard - Functional units regularly share their identified metrics via the Council Metrics Dashboard, which is accessible to all units and serves as a single collection place for data reporting and archival. The dashboard allows the Strategy Council to use reported data to assess and improve strategic goals.
2. Reporting Calendar - The reporting calendar provides a predictable accountability structure for functional units.
3. Data Maturity/Gap Analysis process - The gap analysis process ensures functional units review their metrics and plan for continuous improvement.

Based on the work of this action project, Strategy Council is positioned to manage and lead the processes established through this project although several factors are critical to its continued success: stakeholder buy-in, ownership, accountability, and overall fidelity to the processes.

**Q:**

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

**A:** One aspect of the project that continues to stand out as an opportunity is maintaining the

scope of the project. The first two objectives, operationalizing a KPI reporting process for functional unit councils and developing a gap analysis process between functional unit council performance, are specific to the work mapped to the Institution's Strategic Plan. However, the development of the Council Metrics Dashboard presented potential opportunities for units that pushed beyond the scope of the pre-defined purpose. Identified metrics at the beginning of this process by each functional unit resulted in difficulty in the reporting that could be easily transmitted to an overall dashboard. As such, some of the originally identified metrics needed to be edited or changed to better align with reporting capabilities and still result in actionable initiatives.

Functional units are responsible for multiple unit metrics, some are tied to the Strategic Plan and others are unit-specific. Often, instead of trying to focus on the strategic goals, with which this project is concerned, units attempt to apply this process and its tools to their entire body of work. The units' desire to use these tools for all of their metrics reflects the value of the dashboard developed, but expands the scope and complicates the work of the project. The College still needs to identify how institutional metrics and unit-specific metrics can be accessible in a holistic approach for accountability in reporting and align with continuous quality improvement metrics.

## Concluding Review

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**Q:**

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

**A:** The College met its project goals and the quality framework is now integrated and on-schedule.

## Project: Implementing an Institutional Quality Assurance Framework

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### 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:** Original project start date: October 9, 2017

Original project end date: August 9, 2018

Anticipated completion date: August 9, 2018

**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:** The institution's most recent portfolio feedback outlined an opportunity to identify external benchmarks and comparisons. This project intends to provide the data collection and reporting process foundation required to address this opportunity.

To date, the following goals/objectives are complete:

Deliverable #1: Process map for council KPI reporting

Deliverable #2: KPI reporting instrument

Deliverable #3: Documented gap analysis process specific to council KPIs and Strategic Plan targets

Deliverable #4: Documented Strategic Planning continuous improvement process.

To date, the following goals/objectives are incomplete:

Deliverable #5: Processes publication

Deliverable #6: Project Closure Report

As noted in the project's declaration form, the College's 2014 portfolio submission outlined a theme of underutilizing benchmarking and comparative data throughout non-academic departments. This project formalized processes so that identified functional unit council key performance indicators (KPI) could be benchmarked and utilized to drive decision making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement efforts across the Institution.

**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 primary project goals were to (1) operationalize a KPI reporting process for functional unit councils; (2) develop a gap analysis process between functional unit performance and the established targets; (3) formalize the strategic planning continuous improvement process.

January 15, 2018 -

Deliverable #1: Process map for council KPI reporting

Evaluation of deliverable #1: accurate and timely reporting of council KPIs will evidence a well communicated and operationally sound process.

Deliverable #2: KPI reporting instrument

Evaluation of deliverable #2: a survey will be administered to end users to determine the tool ease of use and the Strategy Council will provide formal feedback specific to the tool's ability to accurately capture desired data.

March 19, 2018 -

Deliverable #3: Documented gap analysis process specific to council KPIs and Strategic Plan targets.

Evaluation of deliverable #3: At the closure of this project, it is not anticipated that this process will be operationalized but rather available for implementation within the College's strategic planning process, therefore, a formal review and debrief will be conducted with the Strategy Council to forecast the capabilities of the process to fulfill its intended purpose.

May 21, 2018 -

Deliverable #4: Documented Strategic Planning continuous improvement process.

Evaluation of deliverable #4: At the closure of this project, it is not anticipated that this process will be operationalized but rather available for implementation within the College's strategic planning process, therefore, a formal review and debriefing will be conducted with the Strategy Council to forecast the capabilities of the process to fulfill its intended purpose.

June 25, 2018 -

Deliverable #5: Processes publication.

Evaluation of deliverable #5: Evidence rather than evaluation is appropriate here in that the processes will be published to the College's Institutional Effectiveness Web page.

August 9, 2018 -

Deliverable #6: Project Closure Report

Evaluation of deliverable #6: This deliverable has two points of evaluation, first, a comprehensive report is completed and submitted on time. Secondly, the report (as a proxy for the project) is reviewed and debriefed by relevant stakeholders within the College.

**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 stated in the above section, the project goals/objectives included: (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. The following details the accomplishments for each objective:

Objective 1: a master reporting [Council Metric Reporting Calendar](#) was developed, establishing a clear structure for Council unit reporting. Data is in the process of being submitted using established forms and all data is recorded on the [Council Metrics dashboard](#).

Objective 2: a [gap analysis process](#) has been developed and communicated with all stakeholders. Data Maturity stages have also been developed to allow councils to first identify the maturity of the data they are collecting, as well as understand the next steps to advance and monitor Council KPIs.

Each Council will begin the gap analysis process by confirming KPIs and strategic plan alignment. Next, Councils will work through identification and/or verification of relevant metrics and identify [data maturity stage](#) of each of their KPIs. The final step is for Council's to monitor performance levels and compare against the established targets to highlight gaps.

The original project goals and outcomes have not shifted as work has progress

**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:** Prior to this action project, the Institution sought and reported data from various user groups through varied processes without centralization. This project purports to bring centralization, transparency and continuity across all institutional units relative to KPI reporting. The KPI reporting process aims to position the institution to systematically address potential performance gaps in addition to ensuring efforts and processes are strategically aligned.

The institution’s user groups, were formalized as “Councils” as a result of a previous action project, these Councils been active in the development and implementation of this project. Councils represent all functional units of the Institution including: Academic Affairs, Deans, Career Services, Campus Safety, Diversity & Inclusion, Enrollment Management, Facilities, Finance, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing, Running Start (high school partnerships), and Student Affairs. Council members have worked to identify relevant council metrics, as well as to reaffirm the council metrics alignment with the institutional strategic KPIs. Councils have reviewed the data collection tool for clarity and ease of use and for accurate reflection of their metrics. Most recently, the Councils identified data maturity stages of their council metrics, which serves as the foundation for the gap analysis process. The Council’s participation evidences the broad participation of groups across the College.

**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:** To date, this project is in its final stages of development and implementation. To that end, the effect of the project is yet to be realized. The anticipated effect on the larger learning community is intended to foster a stronger commitment to accountability; transparency of strategic goals and continuous efforts made to reach said goals; strategic alignment in process; and continuous improvement efforts.

As stated, the project is still in progress; however, at this point, several key learnings have been identified as useful in future projects and or for other institutions: transparency in process, communication, and a formalized accountability structure.

**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:** There are no anticipated challenges in completing the above stated project goals; however, the following are identified as potential obstacles to institutionalizing the learning from the project goals:

- Engaging in shared ownership and accountability relative to reporting council key performance indicators
- Maintaining a continuous improvement cycle to ensure the relevancy of council key performance indicators
- Supporting the continued council data maturation in order to engage the gap analysis process

**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:** In order to complete and institutionalize the objectives of this project, the following actions will take place over the next 12-24 months:

August 2018

- Project completion and Concluding Report
- Strategy Council facilitates the Strategic Planning Continuous Improvement Process
- Strategy Council to maintain accountability for [council reporting](#)
- Data integrity reliability team to continue to support councils' [data maturation](#)

September 2018 - July 2019

- Strategy Council to maintain accountability for [council reporting](#)
- Data integrity reliability team to continue to support council [data maturation](#)

August 2019

- Project completion and concluding report
- Strategy Council facilitate the Strategic Planning Continuous Improvement Process
- Strategy Council to maintain accountability for [council reporting](#)
- Data integrity reliability team to continue to support councils' [data maturation](#)

Cycle continues August - July

**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

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## Version 1.0 - Update

**Q:**

**I certify that this project is ready for review.**

**A:** I agree.

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## 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:** This action project to “implement” an institutional quality assurance framework was a follow-up to Baker College’s action project to “develop” an institutional quality assurance framework, a natural progression for continuous improvement. Throughout the project, Baker College appears to have kept the focus specifically on its implementation and has established metrics and deliverables that have helped guide the College and assure it stays on target.

**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:** While Baker College still has some final stages to complete for this action project, the College has made excellent progress and is commended for doing so. Already the College appears to be finding the implementation meaningful. Specific planning, including both action steps and deliverables, can help keep a project on target, which is something Baker College has been able to achieve.

**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:** Baker College has involved all of its various “Councils” during the development and implementation process of this action project. Such a cross-section appears to be very appropriate and helps to gain the necessary buy-in from the various groups in order to inform meaningful change. By assuring each Council had involvement in the development of their own metrics as well as the maturity stages of their own data, the College has had the opportunity to develop a stronger learning community.

**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:** While the full impact of the new framework will not be known until sometime in the future, the College has already learned the importance of transparency in process, communication, and the strength of a formalized accountability structure. These lessons can now be applied as the College seeks to improve in other areas across campus.

**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 has already developed its next steps, outlining the cycle over the coming year. This will help guide the College and assure project completion. Since this is a process that should be continual, the College is encouraged to assure that the process becomes a regular expectation of the College. Adding a “reflective” stage to the process, so that the College can review the process itself for improvement, will help assure that the process does not become dated in the future.

**Q:**

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

**A:** Baker College appears to have a full understanding of this project and where it needs to go next to assure its success.

**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:** This action project is a clear indicator that Baker College is actively pursuing continuous quality improvement and is dedicated to CQI processes.