

---

## Action Project

---

<b>Institution:</b>	Baker College	<b>Contact:</b>	Chris Davis
<b>Submitted:</b>	2007-02-28	<b>Telephone:</b>	810-766-4183
<b>Email:</b>	chris.davis@baker.edu		

---

### 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:


Improve Collaboration with Faculty

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


Baker College employs approximately 2,000 part-time faculty, the majority in general education and developmental education. Most (75%) of our faculty have been with the college five years or less. To support collaboration with our faculty, this project will utilize a combination of communication strategies, mentoring programs, and professional development to engage faculty. A particular goal is to promote the Baker College mission and culture and increase awareness of our right to try philosophy as well as dispel myths about Baker College. Another dimension of this effort will be to assess if we have sufficient full-time faculty in each area and on each campus. We anticipate beginning our efforts with general education and developmental education faculty, as they represent the largest single group of faculty as well as a group that impacts all students.

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


Primary Category: Leading and Communicating

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: 

Baker College has grown rapidly in the last decade in locations, students, and faculty. Our traditional processes for communication can not support the complex organization that we have become. We rely heavily on adjunct faculty, which adds to the challenges of communication. Not surprisingly, communication was a frequently mentioned concern during our self-study and strategic planning process. We see communication has a two-way process where the faculty can not only be more informed about Baker College, but we as a college can learn from our faculty. Without such a process in place, our ability to implement continuous quality improvement in other areas will be severely limited.

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

Faculty and academic administrators primarily in general education and developmental education.

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

This project will address how we create and build relationships within your institution with respect to faculty and How we assure integration and communication across these relationships.

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



We anticipate using the first year to develop an understanding of our current communication and collaboration processes, the second year to develop and pilot improvements with the third year for full-implementation.

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:



One outcome measure will be faculty satisfaction and engagement. A second set of measures will be the development and results from measures of student learning related to institutional student learning outcomes.

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



An action team led by the System President has been formed to oversee this project.

K. Project Leader and contact person:



Contact Name: James Cummins, President

Email: jim.cummins@baker.edu

Phone: (810) 766-4280 Ext.

---

### Annual Update: 2007-09-13

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

Project Activities 1. Twenty five General Education faculty and the General Education deans from all campus sites received a day of Continuous Quality Improvement training in either January or February of this year. 2. An Action Project Committee consisting of the system president, two campus presidents, a campus chief academic officer, the system director of assessment, and a campus dean of General Education met to plan a group session with the general education faculty who had received the CQI training. An agenda and topics were developed to maximize input from faculty. 3. On May 25, 2007 the AQIP Action Project Committee met with 28 General Education faculty from across the System. The majority of the faculty had attended the CQI training. The purpose of the meeting was to get input from the faculty regarding a wide variety of issues. Administrative support, working conditions, the role of General Education classes at Baker College, the attitude about General Education at Baker College, assessment and professional development were among the key topics discussed. 4. The Action Project Committee met again on June 28th to summarize the findings from the May 25th faculty session. The findings were put into a document and circulated to all campus presidents, chief academic officers and all the attendees at the May 25th faculty session. A decision was made, based upon a recommendation from the general education faculty to rename "general education" to spearhead an effort to: 1) Clearly define the role of general education in conjunction with the mission of the College. 2) To promote the value and necessity of general education courses in preparing students for careers. 3) To develop and enhance processes and resources that support and empower faculty who deliver the general education courses. 5. The Action Project Committee met on August 16th. The committee designed a process to adopt a new title for general education. The process of renaming general education will be undertaken by the campus general education deans and general education faculty. Also, at the meeting, data was presented in the volume of general education courses delivered at Baker College both by section and department. 6. Subsequent to the August 17th meeting, the system president and

system chief academic officer decided to create a new system academic administrative position. Currently, there is a system employee who serves as both director of general education and developmental education. Beginning with the 07-08 year, this position will be split into two. 7. The system president met with the General Education deans from all the campuses at a system wide academic retreat on September 7th to discuss the project in more detail. Measured Results There are no measured results to date. We are approximately four months into the process. At this juncture, a project timeline of 24 months seems feasible. Measured results will be both qualitative and quantitative. Project Movement Although no concrete results have been achieved, the College has laid the ground work for an exciting and meaningful AQIP project.

**Review (10-02-07):**

The progress to date is impressive in a number of ways. It has involved and is visibly led by the college's leadership at all levels (Leading and Communicating - Processes). This same category is supported through the communication processes established and followed in this project. The training provided and the involvement of all levels of the organization reinforce Category IV - Valuing People, particularly the initial provision of continuous improvement training to front line faculty (4P5). There has clearly been a continuing commitment to this project as illustrated in the timeline of events that occurred on a recurring basis from May through August and that have led from initial training and discussions to initial decisions for change (hiring a new position and engaging in renaming general education) as short term "wins." These should be clearly described as clear "outcomes" of the process that then reinforce the engagement of faculty and line administration. One caution in involving faculty in the "rebranding" effort is to be sure to keep the deans and campus presidents involved, informed and engaged as co-owners of the process and its outcomes.

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

The institution involved people in the project as follows: 1) Administered Continuous Quality Improvement training to approximately 200 faculty and staff. The AQIP projects were discussed during the training. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the CQI training to properly address AQIP projects. General Education faculty from each campus was selected to participate in the training. 2) Followed up CQI training with General Education faculty session in May 25, 2007 expressed appreciation of the faculty during the session and the goal of giving them a stronger voice. 3) Communicated the results of the session to all attendees and sent them minutes from all follow up meetings of the Action Project Committee. 4) Action Project Committee has met at frequent intervals to keep the project on course. 5) Campus presidents and chief academic officers have been informed of the results of all discussions that have taken place regarding the Action Project. 6) General Education deans will discuss the project at the Campus Fall Kickoff. 7) The system president is leading the project in an effort to both emphasize the importance of AQIP and the project.

**Review (10-02-07):**

This is a practical and manageable process that appears to have clearly delineated parameters as well as a finite and well-defined set of participants. It will be a challenge to maintain a level of involvement among predominantly part-time faculty, even if sincere steps are taken to value their participation and input. If successful, this may well lay the groundwork for a different relationship between faculty and administration that will carry over into other activities.

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

The College has asked the general education deans on each campus to meet with general education faculty to discuss renaming or "rebranding" General Education. The purpose of renaming General

Educations as follows: 1) Communicate to all constituencies the desire of the College to reinvigorate and support the efforts of the individuals responsible for core curriculum. A process has been established to determine a new name for General Education courses which will take effect for the 08-09 academic year. 2) The Baker College System administration will staff a new position dedicated to the effective delivery of General Education throughout the Baker College System. Currently, one individual has system responsibility for both Developmental Education and General Education. The systems focus and approaches that have been utilized in the Developmental Education project will be employed in this action project.

**Review (10-02-07):**

There has been good progress in communication, involvement of faculty and decisions to change position structures and the naming of general education. It will be important in the long run to make sure that the restructuring and renaming of general education actually accomplish measurable instructional and learning goals or the ownership by faculty may decrease over time. There appears to be some ambiguity of desired outcomes in this project. If the outcomes are to be measured in improved communication and collaboration with the faculty, the process is most significant and should be ultimately incorporated as a common way of interacting with faculty across a broad range of issues facing the college and its constituencies. If the project is to generate a new role and appreciation for general education courses in the curriculum, then the college will need to link these changes to measured learning outcomes in the curriculum. (Category VII - Measuring Effectiveness - Results 7R1 and 7R2). In either case, the initial steps taken appear to be working to engage faculty and to build trust in collaborative and open decision-making.

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

This action project is in a very nascent stage. The Action Team reviewed the volume of classes delivered and huge number of adjunct faculty involved, (i.e. in 06-07 the College delivered English 101 to nearly 10,000 students and English 102 to nearly 8,000 students). The complexity of effectively and consistently communicating to students and faculty purposes and goals became much clearer as a result of the review. The development of practices and results that could be shared with others could take eighteen to twenty four months from this point. In the long term, this project will have value to other institutions. The project should be of particular value to institutions serving students who enter college unprepared to address the soft skills needed for long term success in the world of work.

**Review (10-02-07):**

Although "nascent," this project has already made significant process by establishing a way of working that will undoubtedly carry over into other faculty involvement throughout the college. Perhaps the most impressive subtext of this project is that it is, in essence focused on the core mission of Category 1 - Helping Students Learn. There has already been an outcome in the new position that reaffirms a commitment to review and enhance the core role of general education in the college's curriculum. In addition, there has been new data collected and disseminated for decision making regarding general education courses (Category 7 Managing Effectiveness - Context and Processes) thus modeling a decision-making process that is being transmitted throughout the college culture.

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

Baker College is a large, complex educational institution that delivers post secondary education to approximately 33,500 associate and bachelor degree students at nine campus locations and through online delivery. The College employs nearly 2,000 adjunct faculty in the course of an academic year. The College utilizes standardized curriculum and course outcomes. The College has

traditionally downplayed the importance of general education and emphasized the greater value of skill based classes in a student's field of study. Many of the College's entering students are under prepared and socially ill equipped to deal with the rigors of College. Additionally, effective quality controls are not in place to insure the effectiveness of the delivery of general education classes. While these obstacles may seem immense in nature, the administration of the College is completely optimistic that this action project will be successful and lead directly to better educational services, enhanced morale and stakeholder satisfaction.

***Review (10-02-07):***

This project appears well constructed to not only accomplish the goals of Category V, Leading and Communicating but also to begin to lay the ground for longer term involvement of various levels of the organization in Continuous Improvement (Category 8 P 4) by engaging faculty, deans, campus and system leadership in a common dialogue and by honoring that dialogue through open communication throughout the process. It appears that there is already an empowering of general education faculty underway as they have taken the initiative to rename general education and are receiving support in doing so. This process is making very reasonable progress.

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?

Not at this time.

***Review (10-02-07):***

9814