**Action Project**

**Title:** Co-curricular Assessment of Student Learning  
**Version:** 1  
**Institution:** Illinois Central College  
**Status:** Completed  
**Submitted:** 2012-06-25  
**Category:** 1-Helping Students Learn

**Timeline**

- Planned project kickoff date: 2012-08-21  
- Target completion date: 2013-07-01  
- Actual completion date: 2013-10-01

**Project Detail**

**Project Goal**  
Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer

The goals of the project are to:

- Assess student learning outside the classroom in co-curricular student activities or events  
- Assess student learning within a college-registered student organization

**Reasons For Project**  
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

During the 2011-12 academic year, the College conducted a pilot study of two college-registered student organizations. To do this, a committee drafted an assessment form and reported on the data collected. The assessment form includes the expected student learning outcomes and the measurement used to assess the outcome. Advisors collect the data from students to complete the form. In addition, the advisor is asked to consider which general education goal(s) will be met as a result of the activity. After the assessment is completed, advisors enter the student data in the form, assess the data, and are asked to consider the successes and revisions of the activity for the next offering/event.

**Organizational Areas Affected**  
List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project
Student Activities, Academic Departments with co-curricular alignments, and the International Office.

Key Organizational Process(es)
Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve

Assessment of student learning within the co-curricular offerings of the college. In other words, are our students able to increase their learning of the college curriculum through engagement in co-curricular activities.

Project Time Frame Rationale
Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion)

The project will take place during an academic year when student activities are scheduled and students are participating in planned co-curricular events.

Project Success Monitoring
Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing

The process will be monitored in the Student Activities office and International Office. Each student activities advisor will be asked to assess one activity in the coming academic year.

Project Outcome Measures
Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals

The success of the project will be monitored by % complete. The goal is 100% of all college-registered student organizations will assess at least one event. International events held on campus and study abroad will also be assessed. Co-curricular engagement and the student learning that occurs within the chosen activity will be the ultimate measure of this action project. Efforts to modify co-curricular activities in order to enhance the stated learning outcomes will be part of the resulting assessment spiral.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status
Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project

During the 2012-13 academic year, 18 of 34, 52%, of registered Student Activities completed co-curricular assessment reports which assessed student learning in a co-curricular activity as these activities linked to the College’s General Education Goals and the College’s Strategic Initiatives. Inertia for the project may have been driven from continued training that was kicked-off during the August Celebration of Learning (2012), which is a week-long event for College faculty and staff. During this week of back-to-school events (morning, afternoon, and evening), multiple information and training sessions concerning how to assess co-curricular learning were held at multiple campus locations. Prior to the training sessions, project leaders involved stakeholders from the Student
Activities office to gain their buy-in for the project. During the training, the project leads presented qualitative and quantitative data as well as analysis and improvements from pilot projects. Student Advisor group stakeholders were able to participate in the process of developing the pilot project and were able to revise the assessment report form and have their voices heard during the pilot project process; hence, involving key stakeholders from the beginning of the process may have assisted in gaining buy-in.

The data from this co-curricular project has been reviewed by the team. The project team presented the project data, analysis, and recommendations for co-curricular learning at the August Celebration of Learning (2013). Student Activities advisors, along with team members, presented the following data:

- 18 of 34 Student Activity groups completed an assessment report
- The gap of 17 activity groups who did not complete reports were Student Activity groups who were not active
- No student athletic reports were completed. These are co-curricular groups who are not included in the whole number of 34
- Frequency of assessment of Co-curricular activity linked to a College General Education Goal:
  - Read and Think Critically 9
  - Communicate Effectively 13
  - Demonstrated Mathematical and Scientific Reasoning 3
  - Demonstrated Awareness of Diversity, Ethics, or Aesthetics 12
  - Demonstrated Ability to be Creative and Innovative in Problem Solving 11
  - Work Independently and Collaboratively 14
  - Demonstrate Computer Literacy and Information Literacy 3
- Frequency of assessment of Co-curricular activity linked to the College Strategic Initiatives:
  - Outreach 3
  - Learning 6
  - Service 12
  - Workforce 1
  - Value 4

After data analysis, the team made the following recommendations:

- Include Student Activities stakeholder (representative) on the College’s General Education Committee and the College’s Assessment Committee
- Formalize a project which assess soon-to-be college graduates (students in final semester) assessing the General Education Goal “Work Independently and Collaboratively” because this goal was completed with the greatest frequency
- Provide continued training on assessing Co-curricular assessment, especially targeting student athletic groups
- Provide information sessions for advisors and students who are interested in offering Service Projects for Co-curricular events (i.e. speakers who can assist in fund raising opportunities for charity events, a “how to” plan a service project guide and
training for students and speakers)

- Provide opportunities to engage the 16 of 34 student activity groups who did not complete an activity for assessment. (Question to consider: why was the group inactive and how can stakeholders increase number of groups involved in student activities)

- The most common recommendation advisors and students made in their completed assessment reports was that continued college support (funds, availability of resources, and engaged advisors) were needed for student activities. (The College has a fully-funded Student Activities staff and office.)

The current state of the project is that it will be completed in the near future, but the project has provided a useful bridge to assess general education goals outside of the classroom. (The College is fully engaged in a project which assesses general education in the academic classrooms and programs.) Co-curricular assessment will continue, as it is becoming part of the assessment of student learning culture at Illinois Central College.

Institution Involvement
Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project

The AQIP Action Project Team involved multiple stakeholders in this process by communicating, listening, and taking action. For example, the team leaders for this project met with multiple stakeholder groups including Student Activities Advisors, Student Activities Managers, Student Activities student workers and administrative assistants, students, faculty, and academic administrators. During these meetings, project goals were developed, revised, and the form was designed. Student Activities advisors were trained and willingly participated in the assessment process of co-curricular activities because they too wanted to assess student learning outside the classroom. Involving students in gathering the assessment data was a fun process because students were willing participants because they wanted their voices to matter and their voices to drive change or sustain necessary activities for the sake of learning and growing.

Student Affairs administration and staff and Academic Affairs administration and faculty were involved in this project. These groups worked together to ensure that all employees are working to assess and move forward on the college's general education goals and strategic priorities.

Next Steps
Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The next steps for this project are:

1) Share results with stakeholders – this started in August and the results will be published on the college web site and sent to faculty and Student Activities Advisors

2) Publish and share recommendations and data publically on the College’s website
3) Recommend to the Academic Administrators, specifically the Provost, that a representative from Student Activities join the General Education Committee and the Assessment Committee as these two committees are joint faculty and administration committees who recommend process changes for assessment and general education.

4) Prepare data report (voicing, qualitative, quantitative) for multiple audiences: students, Student Activities Advisors, Student Activities Managers, Student Affairs Administration, Academic Affairs Administration, Board of Trustees

5) Align the information from the project to the AQIP Systems Portfolio questions (the portfolio questions were reviewed prior to the project being written) and the AQIP Systems Portfolio opportunities statements

6) Report to the executive administration the success of the project and follow-up on the alignment of the project to College Strategic Priorities.

7) Continue to assess Co-curricular assessment of Student Activities, with the Student Activities Staff continuing the lead (This has already happened: the advisors were asked to assess at least one event in an initial e-mail communication sent in mid-August.)

Resulting Effective Practices
Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project

The effective practices were open, honest, and transparent processes from the beginning. Stakeholders from multiple levels had input on the process.

Project Challenges
What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

The challenge is not in the process but in what the data revealed. The challenge is that Student Activities Advisors are primarily assessing the event, which is needed too, but they also need to assess student learning versus the success of the event. We are still working to resolve this. We believe we can make progress because stakeholders are excited about the assessment process.

Annual Update

Reason for completion
What is the primary reason for closing this project?

This project was the kick-off to aligning and assessing general education goals to co-curricular learning. Now that the first cycle is complete, the assessment process of co-curricular learning will continue.

Success Factors
What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

The faculty and student participation in the assessment of co-curricular learning activities was successful because it allowed the college to look at learning outside the boundaries of the classroom and outside the boundaries of an established curriculum.

Unsuccessful Factors

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

The co-curricular project did not include input from student athletics. Engaging the student athletic programs in co-curricular assessment is a focus going forward.