Action Project

Title: Revision of General Education Goals
Version: 1

Institution: Illinois Central College
Status: Completed
Submitted: 2010-10-27
Category: 1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline
Planned project kickoff date: 2010-11-01
Target completion date: 2011-10-01
Actual completion date: 2011-10-01

Project Detail

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

The overall goal is to engage faculty in a process which reviews and updates the current ten general education goals at Illinois Central College. This project will allow a faculty-driven process which aligns ICC's general education goals with current faculty expectations for community college degree graduates.

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

This project is being undertakine for the following reasons:

- The ten general education goals have not been reviewed by the faculty as a whole since the mid 1990's.
- Faculty voiced concerns about the current general education goals during a four-year AQIP assessment project.
- The project will assist in laying the foundation for addressing opportunities suggested in our recent systems portfolio feedback.

Organizational Areas Affected
List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project

Organizational areas affected: Eight academic departments (managing assessment of general education outcomes), Curriculum Committee (reviewing updated curriculum), Faculty (revising, implementing, and assessing goals and adjusting curriculum), Marketing (implementing catalog revisions), and General Education Committee (managing the process
of change as the process owners for this review; the general education committee includes a representative sample of faculty from throughout the academic departments along with academic administrators and student services administrators).

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

The key organizational process to be changed/improved is the faculty-driven assessment process at the college. The revised general education goals will help drive assessment throughout the academic units of Illinois Central College.

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

Building community and laying a solid awareness of general education among faculty in a faculty-driven process takes time. Faculty discussions, roundtable discussions, surveys, academic department meetings, and committee and subcommittee meetings, all held in the course of an academic year, are driving the sense of community that is needed for a review and revision of general education goals at the College. In addition, timelines associated with the curriculum updating process and the publication of a catalog will align to the time-frame of this project.

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

The monitoring process will include feedback from academic department meetings and faculty surveys. These monitoring processes keep the voice of the faculty at the forefront of the project. The voice of faculty will be relayed through the general education committee, which is responsible for owning the project, creating the timeline, and making a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) regarding the future general education goals at the College.

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

At the end of the project the faculty will either affirm the current general education goals or revise the current goals to reflect faculty expectations for community college degree graduates. The overall outcome measure/indicator is acceptance of the faculty recommendation for general education goals by the VPAA.

Annual Update

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

The College’s overall project goal was to use a faculty-driven process to review and update the general education goals. The College met its goal, and the faculty completed the work by staying on-task and responding to the calls and leadership of the General Education
Committee. The College now has 7 General Education Goals which were written, discussed, and voted on positively by the faculty. These goals go into effect fall 2012.

The College will be retiring this project and entering Phase II: The development of operational definitions of these goals for a future college-wide assessment project.

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

The primary participants of this Action Project were 10 faculty, 4 administrators, and 1 student services representative who served on the General Education Committee. This committee held active, focused, action-driven meetings during the academic year. After each meeting the Chair of the Committee along with other members would complete an action item. These items included college-wide discussions open to faculty and all staff, academic department-level discussions, college-wide caucuses and feedback sessions on proposed goals. The Chair of the General Education Committee called a vote which included full-time and adjunct faculty as well as representatives from ancillary services to decide if the new goals would be approved. The new goals were overwhelmingly approved. After this vote, the Vice President of Academic Affairs affirmed the goals. This large project was completed in one academic year.

Next Steps
Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The next step is to retire this project, and faculty will begin the development of operational definitions of these goals for a future college-wide assessment project.

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

The work involved many effective practices. To begin, conversations and listening techniques were used. The process was inclusive, and all faculty and staff were invited to participate. In fact, faculty did voice concerns and accolades throughout the project. All voices were heard and considered. The process started in the General Education committee; the committee encouraged discussion, and the committee practiced “inclusion” throughout the year by continually meeting with all faculty, not just the faculty who served on the General Education Committee. In the end, the most effective practice is that the Chair of the Committee, a full-time faculty member, remained a neutral mediator throughout 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 process for revising the goals was quick-paced and full of opportunities. The College did not experience roadblocks along the way. The fear that we could not do this in one year quickly dissipated as we began the revision process of our general education goals. The
College, particularly the faculty, are proud of this outcome because this group of faculty now has ownership of goals they developed.

Annual Update

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

The goal of the project was met: use a faculty-driven process to review and update the college's general education goals. The former ten general education goals were reviewed and updated into seven general education goals that go into effect the fall of 2012.

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

Everything! Conversations within and amongst the faculty; active listening techniques with feedback and reflection; inclusiveness of the process, as all faculty and staff were invited to participate. The General Education Committee started the process, but it quickly rolled out to all of the faculty during the August 2010 Celebration of Learning week. The discussions and feedback sessions continued throughout the 2010/2011 academic year. The Chair of the Committee, a full-time faculty member, maintained neutrality and played the role of mediator throughout the process. That was a huge role for her and she did it very successfully. In addition, the conversations/listening posts techniques will continue to be used with other projects campus-wide.

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

Nothing. There was an initial fear that we could not get our goal completed in one academic year, but because of the continued focus on having new outcomes...outcomes that were faculty-driven...the process moved forward. The entire action project was one filled with successes.