

AQIP ACTION PROJECT PROCESS

In general the Steering Team will oversee four stages in the Action Project process:

- Stage 1 – Generating Action Projects
- Stage 2 – Choosing and Prioritizing Action Projects
- Stage 3 – Creating Action Project Teams and Implementing Projects
- Stage 4 – Evaluating and Documenting Improvements

Stage 1 – Generating Action Projects

Possible sources of Action Projects will vary widely. Many will originate with current campus Teams in the normal governance process. Others will originate from needs or opportunities by specific areas of college operations. Yet others may be identified by the Systems Portfolio process. A fourth source of Action Projects may be executive/administrative direction. It is assumed this will be infrequent and most usually stem from unique, externally generated challenges or opportunities. Finally, a direct application process from all members of the college community remains a possibility.

A formal application process will be used to select and prioritize Action Projects. The Steering Team will review applications twice a year, once in the Fall Semester and again in the Spring Semester. This schedule will remain sufficiently flexible to address unforeseen contingencies or immediate needs. The Steering Team will maintain a rolling, prioritized shortlist of AQIP Action Projects and, in addition to the three in progress, will always have a minimum of 2 approved projects “on the ramp.” One of these must always be from within the Helping Students Learning category as defined by the HLC. Newly approved projects may “leapfrog” projects which have been approved earlier, if the benefit to the college is deemed by the Steering Team to be more significant.

The completion and submission of an Action Project application form to Steering Team specifying:

1. Problem Identification (specific and clearly defined purpose of the project) - WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?
2. Proposed Solutions and how they address #1 - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?
3. Desired Outcomes (criteria for success) - HOW STUDENTS/COLLEGE WILL BENEFIT?
4. Method of Evaluation of #3 - HOW WILL WE KNOW IT HAS WORKED?
5. Justification of the need for this project now - WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?
6. Timeline for completion of items 1-4 - WHEN WILL THIS BE COMPLETED?
7. Budgetary Implications - HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?
8. AQIP category and how it supports other initiatives at the college - HOW WILL IT HELP AQIP?
9. Areas of the college most directly affected - WHO WILL CARE?
10. Identity cabinet-level Project Sponsor. This individual will provide a senior-level perspective on issues related to the proposed Action Project, serve as the voice of the Action Project at cabinet, provide for allocation of funds during the budgeting process, and assist in implementation of the team’s recommendations.

Other than identifying a cabinet-level Project Sponsor and the primary authors of the application, the form will not address issues of staffing the Action Project. This will be handled in the third stage of the process.

Stage 2 – Choosing and Prioritizing Action Projects

The AQIP Steering Team will review applications. Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria (order of listing DOES NOT imply increased importance):

- Demonstrable benefit to the College's mission
- Breadth of positive impact on the college (numbers of people affected/engaged)
- Direct benefit to students
- Completeness and comprehensiveness of application
- Congruence with the broader AQIP process
- Timeliness

Applications will receive one of the following formal responses from the Steering Team.

- Proposal is entered into AQIP Action Project shortlist (will become an AQIP Project) and moves into stage 3 - Creating Action Project Teams and Implementing Projects.
- Proposal is directed to alternative (non-AQIP) college process for follow up or implementation
 - This is important. Not all good ideas must be AQIP action projects. Some may be more appropriately (and perhaps expeditiously) dealt with via other processes.
- Proposal is returned for revision, combination with other proposals and/or resubmission (for incomplete applications, etc.).
- Proposal is rejected.

Stage 3 - Creating Action Project Teams and Implementing Projects

Once Action Projects have been approved, Action Project Teams will be created by soliciting volunteers from the college community. Team leaders will be selected by the Steering Team. While in most circumstances it is likely that the originators of the proposal will be closely involved in the action project, it is not necessarily the case that they will lead or even be part of the team. Teams will be selected based on the Steering Team's estimation of the ability of the selected group to manage the process through to a successful conclusion.

The following will be considered in assembling teams:

- Stakeholders in the project area
- Expertise
- Experience
- Perspective on issue area

Breadth of campus involvement is a consideration in this respect, as is the avoidance of overloading particular individuals, areas or positions. While every effort to involve all interested parties in the process will be made, Action Project teams are primarily functional groups/ task oriented groups serving the institution as a whole. They are not primarily representative. Representation of campus sub groups' interests is achieved via the normal governance process. Teams will vary in size depending upon the nature of the project but it is expected that 5-7 individuals will be the normal team size.

Stage 4 – Evaluating and Documenting Improvements

Reporting and documenting progress is fundamental to the AQIP process. At all stages in the life of an Action Project, it will be the joint responsibility of the Action Project Team Leader(s) and the Steering Team (especially Chairs) to ensure this documentation process. The Office of Planning and Improvement will be the collection point for this documentation, and this office will ensure that the information is reflected in a timely fashion in the College's Systems Portfolio. The nature, membership and status of action projects will be reported throughout the duration of the process both internally (at LLCC) through the "AQIP at LLCC" web pages, and externally through the HLC AQIP process. Primary responsibility for this rests with the AQIP Liaison position.