

**Lorain County Community College**  
**AQIP Action Project**  
**Annual Update Feedback**

**Helping Students Learn: Improving General Education, Program Benchmarking,  
Communication, Engagement**

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

The following information reports progress-to-date on cycle two, year one, performance targets identified for this action project. •

Performance target #1: Define the purpose of general education; develop revised general education outcomes, and determine appropriate levels of performance. Faculty subcommittees completed a general education purpose statement and a new set of general education outcomes. Their work was reviewed by the AQIP Assessment Design Team and discussed at the Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC). All faculty members were invited to comment or suggest changes. •

Performance Target 2: Identify and develop processes for the assessment of student learning for the revised general education outcomes. A new General Education Assessment Steering Committee (GEASC) was charged to implement the performance target. The committee is comprised of faculty members from each of the eight academic divisions, the library/learning resources area, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP), a liaison from the action project Design Team, and one student senate member. •

Performance Target 3: Develop a strategy to communicate assessment results and implement continuous improvement changes to meet levels of performance in course outcomes. A subcommittee completed the planning of communication methods and strategies. At the first annual LCCC General Education Conference, 15 faculty participated and submitted communication recommendations to the Design Team. Separate strategies were created targeting students and faculty. In addition: + A web portal containing assessment-related information and key documents was created for access by faculty, administrators, and students. + As required by the Ohio Board of Regents, a web link ([http://www.lorainccc.edu/student success plan](http://www.lorainccc.edu/student%20success%20plan)) describing college-wide activities that support student learning and retention was presented for public access. + A newsletter explaining assessment-related activities was circulated to the campus community. + A document describing assessment practices at the college and encouraging student participation was presented on the college web page ([http://www.lorainccc.edu/Current+Students/student assessment guide](http://www.lorainccc.edu/Current+Students/student%20assessment%20guide)). + A new section on assessment of course outcomes and general education outcomes was included in the Faculty Reference Guide. •

Performance Target 4: Develop LCCC institutional benchmarks that are comparable to

those of cohort institutions with respect to levels of performance and measurability of program outcomes. Phase 1 of this stretch target is in progress. Transfer patterns of LCCC graduates who completed the Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees as a measure of performance are being studied as part of the program review process. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning is collecting data from the National Student Clearinghouse to be used as part of this analysis. Phase 2, establishing and measuring benchmarks of student performance in the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, did not begin as planned, but is now scheduled to begin in fall 2007 and end in spring 2008. •

Performance Target 5: Develop and implement student engagement activities to improve learning and retention The research analyst from Institutional Effectiveness Planning (IEP ) and the chair person of Enrollment Planning Council (EPC) jointly conducted a literature survey to identify best practices/activities associated with student engagement in community colleges. The IEP office analyzed the Community College Survey in Student Engagement (CCSSE) data on LCCC student participation during 2004 and 2006 and reported that current trends and the levels of student engagement are in line with norms Students—of cohort colleges. EPC identified the following at risk populations: students reinstated following— Special needs students —on academic probation Students with less than a 2.5— Diversity Incentive Award students —dismissal Scholarship students who do not meet their required—high school GPA Students who require two or more developmental education—performance criteria courses Personnel changes in student services and EPC have delayed the action plans in this performance target. •

Performance Target 6: Align Curriculum Council guidelines and procedures with AQIP Assessment Action Project. A subcommittee was appointed to (a) align assessment tools and Course Assessment Record (CAR) with the Course Description with Student Outcomes document and Program Assessment Record (PAR) and (b) establish a plan for periodic review of alignment of Curriculum Council procedure and AQIP assessment processes. In revising key forms and documents, the team has completed preliminary work toward replacing the current general education and aligning Curriculum Council guidelines with AQIP procedures.

***Reviewer Comments:***

The college is making strong progress toward completing this action project, which has significant connections with AQIP categories (1) Helping Students Learn, (7) Measuring Effectiveness, and (8) Planning Continuous Improvement. The project's implementation exemplifies core values that contribute to the development of a strong organizational culture of continuous improvement, including broad-based involvement by the college community in collaborative processes that have the support of the institution's leadership that use fact-based information gathering to achieve significant learning-centered educational goals and that demonstrate the institution's commitment and capacity to plan proactively. The project, which ultimately aims to design and implement a sophisticated system of general educational assessment, is structured around six performance targets, each of which has three phases of implementation.

The college has also identified additional interim goals/mileposts, which it uses to assess its own progress completing the action plan. The college's self-assessment in the 8/29/07 annual update documents reasonable progress on all benchmarks; the only significant delay reported is that Phase 2 of Performance Target 4 has been delayed by several months while Phase 1 is being completed. The institution has already achieved several key objectives, including defining the purpose of general education, revising general education outcomes, determining appropriate levels of performance for these outcomes, and identifying processes for the assessment of student learning for the revised general education outcomes. The college has also identified in a clear and realistic manner tasks that remain to be completed. This project originated in institutional stakeholders' reflections on the results of the College's first AQIP cycle. The College's work to date demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of AQIP values and the use of strong planning and implementation processes; the College is on track to secure an outstanding and a significant achievement.

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

See Item A.

***Reviewer Comments:***

The project involves broad-based involvement by faculty, staff, and administration. The college's AQIP assessment design team has established communication and collaboration processes that allow it to understand and respond to the needs of numerous stakeholders, including faculty from each of the eight academic divisions, students, the Ohio Board of Regents, and the public. This degree of planned communication and inclusive collaboration can strengthen individual and group ownership of the college's improved general education program and new general education assessment processes. As a prior action project reviewer noted, the institution's use of personnel on the various performance targets is exemplary.

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

For all six performance targets, tasks and goals were identified as implementation plans in three phases. The next steps for each Performance Target (PT) are as follows: PT 1: Phase II - Present general education purpose statement and outcomes for faculty approval. Phase III - Program faculty and division directors will implement transition plan for assessing General Education. PT2: Phase II - GEASC, with the help of faculty subcommittees, will identify and develop processes for the assessment of student learning for approved General Education outcomes. PT 3: Phase III - The AQIP design team and communication subcommittee will review and improve communication strategies for effectiveness. PT 4: Phase II - Develop benchmarks and performance indicators for AA degree program outcomes. Phase III - Pilot test the procedures in assessing selected AA and AS program outcomes. PT 5: Phase II - Academic division directors and faculty will develop 3-5 strategies to enhance student engagement of at-risk populations. Phase III - Implement pilot testing of identified student engagement strategies in 10 highly enrolled courses. PT 6: Phase I - The subcommittee will revise and complete the alignment of CC and AQIP assessment procedures. Phase II - Implement revised Curriculum Council

procedure in 20% of courses.

***Reviewer Comments:***

As it did last year, this year the college has crafted a sophisticated and realistic plan that builds on past successes, that involves proactive foresight. The anticipated next steps for this progress embody numerous AQIP goals and values and reflect key characteristics of high-performing organizations; they involve collaborative discussion and decision-making (phase II of performance target 1), systematic planning (phase III of performance target 1), the development of new processes for measuring effectiveness (phase II of performance target 2), the refinement of communication strategies (phase III of performance target 3), the use of pilot project to gather and use relevant information (phase III of performance target 4), planning by academic leaders to help at-risk students to learn (phase II of performance target 5), and the refinement of continuous improvement processes (phase I of performance target 6).

As prior reviewers have noted, the college's goals are ambitious; clearly the third year of work on this action project will be a critical one for this project, and college leadership should be encouraged to continue to provide significant institutional support to support these sophisticated plans.

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

1. During 2006-07, 602 CAR forms were submitted, an increase of 28% over the previous year. With 75% of faculty completing a CAR, LCCC has reached an institution-wide commitment to assessment and continuous improvement. 2. The ongoing practice of assessing student learning outcomes in all sections of one course has proven to be achievable through a wide variety of assessment methods. For example, 88% of students (286 out of 342) enrolled in all sections of BIOG 122–Human Anatomy and Physiology–participated in a national examination conducted by the Human Anatomy & Physiology Society. The exam provided relevant program assessment data compared to a national norm. 3. The Course Assessment Record (CAR), Program Assessment Record (PAR) and Course Assessment Record Database (CARD) were revised to include a column reporting results of continuous improvement strategies. 4. The new Assessment Newsletter reports to the College community how the assessment of student learning is used for continuous improvement.

***Reviewer Comments:***

The college reports strong progress improving its assessment processes. First, the increased use of course assessment records constitutes one foundation for measuring effectiveness of the planned new general education curriculum. Second, the expansion and increasingly systematic use of multiple measures of student learning contributes to a robust culture of assessment.

Third, the development of new assessment records and reports, including a database of

course and curricular changes implemented as the result of continuous improvement processes, can contribute to more effective use of assessment data. Finally, the dissemination of an assessment newsletter to the college community can improve understanding and acceptance of the institution's new assessment practices. Continuing strong institutional support will be essential as the college continues to develop and implement these processes.

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

- Performance target #1/Achieving timely consensus on the new set of general education outcomes and moving forward with implementation.
- Performance target #5/Taking what has been learned about student engagement at LCCC and implementing the action plan for improvement.
- Overall/Achieving constant and consistent institutionalization of all aspects of the action project.
- Overall/Responding to Federal and State mandates regarding accountability within the framework of the action project.

***Reviewer Comments:***

Achieving consensus among all a wide variety of stakeholders is a significant challenge for all institutions. The communication strategies and collaborative processes that the college have developed and are continuing to develop should provide it with a strong set of tools for meeting this challenge. The college will also be well-served by continuing to assess in a realistic manner its progress on achieving consensus; realistic self-assessments will allow the institution to make the most effective use of these strategies and processes. Likewise, every institution finds it challenging to engage in sophisticated self-reflection on the "lessons learned" by information gathered from a sophisticated action project like this one. Once again, however, the communication and collaboration processes that the college has developed constitute powerful tools for meeting this challenge, as do the skills and values that college personnel have developed and manifested while working on this action project. Therefore, the institution is well-positioned to make strong progress on this challenge. To achieve constant and consistent institutionalization of the various aspects of this action project, the key personnel implementing this project will need to continue to work hard to understand stakeholder needs and perceptions, to promote broad-based involvement. This work will be made easier to the extent that academic and administrative leaders take specific steps to support a quality-driven culture. With respect to responding to federal and state mandates that relate to this action project, a key value to implement is agility so that the college can make necessary changes to its plans. The college has already shown a high degree of agility and foresight in developing and implementing this project, and its focus on measuring student learning should also help it to respond to any new mandates regarding accountability.

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?

***Review (09-27-07):***