

## Action Project Commitment Declaration – February 23, 2006

### A. Action Project Title:

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

### B. Goals of the Project:

The emphasis on helping students learn involves multiple aspects of the assessment process. General Education at the college will be reviewed and revised, along with development of generalized institutional assessment tools. Communication associated with sharing of assessment methodology and results among faculty will be enhanced, in conjunction with improved coordination of documentation between the AQIP and Curriculum Council processes. Institutional benchmarks will be established to identify performance expectations associated with program outcomes. As the final component of this Action Project, enhancement of student engagement will be explored as a way to improve learning and retention in the classroom.

### C. Identify the single AQIP Category that this Action Project will most affect or impact.

AQIP Criteria	Primary	Related
1 – Helping Students Learn	X	
2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives		
3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs		X
4 – Valuing People		
5 – Leading and Communicating		X
6 – Supporting Institutional Operations		
7 – Measuring Effectiveness		X
8 – Planning Continuous Improvement		X
9 – Building Collaborative Relationships		

### D. Reasons for taking on this Action Project now

The goals of this assessment Action Project all have the primary focus of helping students learn. LCCC's external reviewer, Douglas Easterling (Sinclair Community College), noted that "the project [and the context provided in the AQIP Systems Portfolio] bears evidence of significant institutional experience already with understanding and improving major processes in several major functional areas." As a result, the goals of this project are a natural outgrowth of the work accomplished during LCCC's first AQIP cycle. These Action Project goals are high among the College's current priorities for the following reasons:

- Excellence in Learning and Teaching is a stated value in *Vision 21* and reflects the College's mission and vision.
- Now that the College has a process and tools to systematically use data for measuring and documenting student learning, planning for continuous improvement is essential.

-- At the conclusion of the first AQIP cycle, the faculty realized the College needs to revisit its General Education learning outcomes, and that this can be effectively accomplished through the application of lessons learned over the past three years.

-- The Design Team is committed to improving communication, coordinating effort among various college committees, and engaging students more effectively based upon current research.

E. Organizational areas most affected or involved in the action project:

-- Students

-- All academic division directors and faculty

-- Center for Teaching Excellence

-- Curriculum Council

-- Enrollment Planning Council

-- Enrollment Services

-- Institutional Effectiveness and Planning

-- Joint Center for Policy Research

-- Vice President for Learner Services and Chief Academic Officer (VPLS/CAO)

F. Key Processes most affected:

-- General Education Outcomes associated with degree programs

-- Communication associated with assessment results and best practice

-- Institutional benchmarking for program outcomes

-- Student engagement in the educational process

-- Alignment of curriculum and assessment documentation

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project

As a result of the AQIP Assessment Action Project (2002-2005), assessment tools now exist that enable faculty to measure and document common student learning outcomes and continuously improve these outcomes. At the institutional level, the College now has the means of aggregating progress made on assessing course and program learning outcomes, along with continuous improvements associated with those outcomes, across the curriculum.

The three-year Action Project consists of six Performance Targets that channel the College activities to one over-arching goal—the implementation of a fully operational assessment system by Summer Semester 2008. The system will create a clearly-defined and ongoing process of continuous improvement. The work will require the coordination of many important components of the College, necessitating a full three-year cycle. Four of the six Performance Targets cover two years, but overlap, so that at any time, at least three performance targets are in operation.

Each performance target is divided into three distinct interim phases, most of which culminate in a distinct goal, indicated on the matrix under “Stretch Target Phases” or “Action Plan.” In three of the performance targets, however, the second phase outlines activities directed to the goal of the third phase. Each interim goal/milepost represents an objective measure of progress. LCCC believes that the six performance targets for this AQIP cycle are necessary and interconnected. They will help us accomplish not only assessment, but also a common understanding of what assessment is and why it is important.

**\*\*Performance Target 1:** Define the purpose of general education; develop revised General Education Outcomes; and determine appropriate levels of performance.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - Complete purpose statement - Summer '05 – Aug. '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - Complete revised GE Outcomes - Jan. '06 – Aug. '06 -- Stretch Target Phase III - Implement transition - Fall '06 – Spring '07

**\*\*Performance Target 2:** Identify and develop processes for the assessment of student learning for the revised General Education outcomes.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - Identify standardized tests - Fall '06 – Dec. '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - Complete analysis of pilot rubrics for measuring learning - Spring '07 – Summer '08 -- Stretch Target Phase III - Implementation of GE assessment - Fall '07 – Spring '08 -- The first two performance targets each span two years, but are staggered over the three-year cycle. -- The goals of phases one and two of Performance Target 1 must be in place before Performance Target 2 can begin.

**\*\*Performance Target 3:** Develop a strategy to communicate assessment results and implement continuous improvement changes to meet levels of performance in course outcomes.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - 80% of faculty provide input on communication strategy - Dec. '05 – May '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - Identify and implement communication procedures - Jan. '06 – Aug. '06 -- Stretch Target Phase III - Review/modify procedures - Fall '06 – Spring '07 -- Two years will be required to determine whether or not information being communicated is successfully used in assessment.

**\*\*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.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - AS degree benchmarks developed - Spring '06 – Fall '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - Benchmarks used to assess learning - Dec. '06 – Spring '07 -- Stretch Target Phase III - Benchmarks developed for other degree programs - Fall '07 – Spring '08 -- Three years will be necessary for researching of benchmarks at cohort colleges, completion of the AS Program Review, and full faculty review of student performance benchmarks in other programs.

**\*\*Performance Target 5:** Develop and implement student engagement activities to improve learning and retention.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - LCCC at-risk populations identified - Dec. '05 – May '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - Engagement strategies implemented in 10 pilot courses - Spring '06 – Spring '07 -- Stretch Target Phase III - Improved engagement strategies implemented in additional courses - Fall '07 – Summer '08 -- The three years for Performance Target 5 align with CCSSE survey cycles and reviews.

**\*\*Performance Target 6:** Align Curriculum Council guidelines and procedures with AQIP Assessment Action Project.\*\* -- Stretch Target Phase I - a. Align assessment tools with curriculum and program review documentation b. System plan established for periodic review of alignment of Curriculum Council procedure and AQIP assessment processes - Fall '05 – Spring '06 -- Stretch Target Phase II - a. Implement revised Curriculum Council procedure in 20% of courses b. Implement program review changes in 50% of programs completing program review in 2006/07 - Fall '06 – Spring '07 -- Stretch Target Phase III - a. Implement revised Curriculum Council procedure in

additional 20% of courses b. Implement program review changes in 100% of programs completing program review in 2007/08 - Begin Fall '07 -- This two-year Performance Target challenges the College to address procedural inconsistencies between these two groups.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts are

-- The VPLS/CAO, academic division directors, divisional faculty representatives, Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC) president, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) research staff and a representative from Student Senate will constitute the AQIP Design Team (AQIP-DT). The AQIP Design Team will meet twice monthly to keep the institution focused on the Assessment Action Project.

-- The Action Project Design Team (AQIP-DT) will take the lead in developing the list of assessment activities, implementing the plan, appointing faculty committees, and monitoring the progress made in achieving the target goals.

-- Documentation of course outcomes assessment, using the Course Assessment Record (CAR) developed in the previous AQIP cycle, will be continued by all faculty, including adjuncts, throughout the college and the data will be compiled annually by Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) in the summary Course Assessment Record Database (CARD).

-- The General Education Assessment Steering Committee (GEASC), a subcommittee of the AQIP-DT, will monitor many of the Action Project activities associated with General Education.

-- General Education Assessment Steering Committee (GEASC) and several faculty sub committees will be engaged in developing appropriate rubrics, identifying standardized tests, or writing and validating locally developed tests to assess general education outcomes across all programs offered by the college.

-- A sub committee of Curriculum Council (CC) and the AQIP- DT will be created to review and align CC and AQIP assessment documentation procedures.

-- Input from internal stakeholders (full time faculty and current students) and external stakeholders (advisory committee members and past graduates) will be solicited for developing general education purpose statements and revision of measurable general education outcomes by two, eight member faculty committees.

-- Ohio Board of Regents' (OBOR) criteria and competency requirements for General Education Transfer Module courses will be periodically reviewed by academic division directors and faculty representatives.

-- Faculty focus groups will be consulted to help develop communication strategies on how best to use assessment results to improve achievement of course outcomes, including general education outcomes.

-- Enrollment Services will study transfer patterns of LCCC graduates who complete the AS and AA degrees as a measure of LCCC performance levels.

-- AQIP-DT and IEP will review Associate of Science and Associate of Arts program levels of performance at cohort colleges and develop benchmarks for LCCC program outcomes.

-- AQIP-DT, Enrollment Planning Council (EPC), IEP, and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) will identify and implement 3-5 student engagement activities to improve learning and retention of at risk populations of students.

-- The administration will provide an appropriate budget for implementation of all activities mentioned above and IEP will collect data and analyze results to evaluate the achievement of the goals set out in the Action Project performance targets.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators

- General Education purpose statement and outcomes revised and approved by faculty.
- Transition to new General Education architecture completed.
- General Education assessment methodology and instrumentation developed, pilot tested, and adopted across programs.
- Systematic communication process designed, piloted, and implemented to disseminate assessment information to faculty (full-time and adjunct) and students.
- Assessment information used to implement continuous improvement in student learning.
- Process for developing program benchmarks for student learning outcomes designed, piloted for Associate of Science degree, and used for continuous improvement. Benchmarks for additional degree programs subsequently developed.
- Strategies to improve student learning and retention through enhanced engagement of at-risk students developed and piloted in pre-test/post-test control group study.
- Institutional strategies to improve learning and student retention through enhanced student engagement identified through analysis of results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2004, 2006, and 2008), measures of student academic success, and engagement-related services/strategies at the college.
- Curriculum Council guidelines and procedures aligned with AQIP Assessment Action Project.
- Revised Curriculum Council documentation procedures implemented in 40% of college's courses.
- Revised Program Review documentation implemented in all programs completing program/cluster reviews after 2007/2008.

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

- AQIP-DT Newsletter
- VPLS/CAO
- Cohort Community Colleges
- Program Advisory Committees will provide insight for external stakeholder needs.

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