Action Project

Title:	Redesigning General Education
Version:	2

Institution:	East Central College	**Status:**	Active
Submitted:	2014-12-17	**Category:**	1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2014-02-01
Target completion date: 2016-01-01
Actual completion date:

Project Detail

PROJECT SUMMARY
Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

Review and redesign general education at ECC to achieve the following:

1. Simplify the program to make it more understandable to stakeholders.

2. Align general education objectives with institutional common learning objectives and make applicable to all degree programs.

3. Align gen ed with the Missouri Dept. of Higher Education 42-hour general education block

4. Reduce redundancy in assessment and reporting

PROJECT RATIONALE
Describe your institution�s reasons for initiating this action project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution�s current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution�s recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio.

General education at ECC is due, if not overdue, for review and revision. Since becoming an AQIP institution, we have worked on developing common learning objectives for all students in all programs, but such progress has been parallel to general education outcomes rather than aligned with them. Given that our gen ed program is due for revision and our CLO's are now well established, it is a good opportunity to align the two systems for maximum simplicity and effectiveness.

PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES
List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed.

This project will affect most areas of the institution, including teaching and learning,

academic divisions and programs, advising, assessment and Academic Council processes.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT
Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project�s duration.

While a project on this scale will affect most of the institution's processes, it will primarily affect advising, transfer and degree audit processes, assessment, curriculum and program design. Clarifying stakeholder expectations and understanding of general education will require improved communication processes as well. Our overall goals of simplicity and alignment will provide an opportunity to improve and simplify many existing processes and create new ones as needed.

PROJECT CONTROL
Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

The rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project is best expressed in the timeline below, which takes into account the upcoming schedule of in-service weeks, summer workshops, Quality Improvement Fridays and the academic calendar. Common Learning Objectives will be referred to below as CLO's. They are Communication, Critical/Creative Thinking, and Ethics/Social Responsibility, or COM, CCT and ESR.

Proposed Timeline:

Spring 2014

Complete the charter and declare the action project

Review the MoDHE 42 hour block requirements, knowledge and skill areas

Spring QI Day: determine the rule set for what coursework lands where (define, how to assess, what constitutes a COM, CCT or ESR course) Align general education courses

 with the CLO's;

Update Academic Council

Summer 2014

Summer workshop on general education and the CLO's / late June

Topics: Draft a form/template to use to organize around the CLO's

Draft a distribution sample/align with the DHE model

Fall 2014

BTSW: Work with faculty to review and modify the draft distribution template

Use a full morning to develop a general education model around the CLO's; have a draft model

Update Learning Objectives

Update Academic Council and other stakeholders

Spring 2015

BTSW: Finalize the new model

Align courses by learning objectives and CLO

Develop CLO Assessments

Update Academic Council and other stakeholders

Summer 2015

Summer workshop onusing the new model of general education to advise students

Test New Model for AA

Seek input from other student services and other stakeholder groups

Fall 2015

BTSW:

Propose AS, AAS, AFA models

Finalize the new gen ed model

Update Academic Council

Spring 2016

Project ends

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS
Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project�s goals.

The Assessment Committee and Action Project group will monitor the progress of the project primarily. Progress updates and results will be shared with all faculty

and student services staff during in-service weeks, summer workshops and Quality Improvement Fridays. Academic Council will monitor and approve changes and disseminate information to relevant parties.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.

An array of measures will be used to determine the effectiveness of the project, including faculty and student surveys, graduation audit assessment, completion/graduation results, common learning objective assessment results and other assessment measures.

Annual Update

CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY
(Please answer the following questions in the text box below)
General Project Status: _____ Completed _____ In-progress _____ Suspended _____ Reopened
Original Project Start Date: ___ / ___ / ___
Originally Projected End Date: ___ /___ / ___
Anticipated Completion Date If Not Completed: ___ / ___ / ___

Briefly describe the current status of the project.

Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution�s most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable

General Project Status: _____ Completed __X___ In-progress _____ Suspended _____ Reopened
Original Project Start Date: __2__ / __1__ / __14__
Originally Projected End Date: __1__ /__1__ / __16__
Anticipated Completion Date If Not Completed: __8__ / __1__ / _16___

Since launching the project at the beginning of 2014, the project team has been focusing on getting buy in from the relevant constituencies, primarily the faculty. We have conducted workshops during spring in-service, spring Quality Improvement Friday, a summer workshop and fall in service, and we have asked the participants to sort, sub categorize and generally rethink our general education model in light of our three common learning objectives—Communication, Critical/Creative Thinking, and Ethics/Social Responsibility. To date we have a roughed out sort of the classes that can fit under particular objectives and more importantly, the faculty have a sense of ownership of the redesign.

General Education touches everything we do here, but the project was not initiated specifically in response to portfolio feedback or strategic concerns.

ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES
List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal

The project states the four goals below in the declaration:

1. Simplify the program to make it more understandable to stakeholders.

2. Align general education objectives with institutional common learning objectives and make applicable to all degree programs.

3. Align gen ed with the Missouri Dept. of Higher Education 42-hour general education block

4. Reduce redundancy in assessment and reporting

As for metrics to assess progress, we will solicit feedback at every stage of the redesign, and we will survey stakeholders regarding "simplicity" and "redundancy" as needed. For example, we surveyed faculty and students to determine their level of understanding of the current general education model. However, we have clear guidelines that will indicate success or failure for some of the goals. For example, did we align our Gen Ed with MDHE requirements? This will be a clear yes or no answer based on the guidelines with which we are complying.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year

The answer to question 1 above addresses this to some degree, given that the project was launched under one year ago. In addition, we have completed the items listed below:

Spring 2014

- Complete the charter and declare the action project
- Review the MoDHE 42 hour block requirements, knowledge and skill areas
- Spring QI Day: determine the rule set for what coursework lands where (define, how to assess, what constitutes a COM, CCT or ESR course) Align general education courses with the CLO's;
- Update Academic Council

Summer 2014

- Summer workshop on general education and the CLO's / late June
- Topics: Draft a form/template to use to organize around the CLO's
- Draft a distribution sample/align with the DHE model

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project�s duration, particularly during the past year

Responsibility for general education falls primarily to the faculty so the last several months have focused on their participation and buy in during the large scale meetings mentioned above. The action project team includes representatives from every academic area or division. Other areas are kept informed through the Academic Council process and in service meetings. Soon it will be useful to bring student services representatives and others to the table as their roles become more clearly engaged and defined. We are still in the early stages but feedback from

students will become important when we have a working draft of the model.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

The project has been a good experience for the institution. The majority of faculty members were hired since the current model was designed nearly 15 years ago, so they appreciate the opportunity to shape the next generation of general education. It has also been a good opportunity to realign our own new initiatives (CLO's and Meta Majors), new state laws, MDHE efforts, and so forth, into a more coherent package. Some of these items have been in conflict and resolution was needed. It is too soon to suggest whether a best practice will emerge, but we have an ambitious plan to make this a much leaner, simpler, more rational system, so we are optimistic that our approach may be worth sharing in the future.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS
Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project�s goals

A fairly obvious challenge will be getting entrenched constituencies to think in a new way and see their programs as part of a new model. But we have been conscious of this from the beginning and worked hard to encourage input and ownership across the spectrum. Other challenges will include recasting and renaming some classes or programs, changing the catalog and our Datatel system to reflect new course prefixes, new courses or arrangements, etc. Communicating all the new changes to advisors and students will be a challenge as well, but we are optimistic that simplicity will be appealing to all stakeholders, and have built in communication strategies to keep everyone informed.

PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE
In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 – 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step

The action project team is meeting every other week to work on the project. We have a Quality Improvement Friday coming up on October 24 so we are planning that event as well as continuing the other efforts. We plan to have a functioning model for the spring 2015 in service sessions. Below is our original timeline for the current academic year:

Fall 2014

- BTSW: Work with faculty to review and modify the draft distribution template
- Use a full morning to develop a general education model around the CLO's; have a draft model
- Create pilot cohort to test model on some AA degrees
- Update Academic Council

Spring 2015

- BTSW: Finalize the new model

- AAS, AS AFA versions
- Assessments
- Update Academic Council

Summer 2015

- Summer workshop on using the new model of general education to advise students

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS
Provide any additional information, inquires, or concerns that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project

Essentially we are still in the early stages of deconstructing the old and re-imagining something new and the emphasis has been on involving the faculty as much as possible. We want them to own this and we want it to be something they (we) can live with for years to come. I should also mention that we have kept assessment in the discussion at every stage, which is by itself a huge change for us. Gen Ed Assessment has never really been a coherent package here, so our goal is to embed it in from the beginning.

The next two semesters will be very important in the development of the project. Any thoughts or suggestions would be very much appreciated from the reviewers, especially if they come from institutions that have undertaken a similar project.