

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Colorado Mountain College

Project Details

Title	Embedding the Strategic Plan in the Operations and Culture	Status	COMPLETED
Category	4 - Planning and Leading	Updated	08-31-2015
Timeline		Reviewed	10-01-2015
	Planned Project Kickoff 08-26-2014	Created	08-26-2014
	Actual Completion 10-09-2015	Version	1

1: PROJECT SUMMARY

- A:** The goal of this project is to create a process by which the new 2014-2018 Strategic Plan; Reaching New Heights, will be embedded into the activities of the college. The team working on this project will build the foundation and framework to assist the college in its successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- Tools necessary for the success of the project include: 1. clearly define in measurable terms each of the 15 sub-goals of the strategic plan, 2. communicate the clearly defined strategic plan college wide, 3. Develop the tools (report forms, mechanism to report progress, system on evaluating the progress on the plan and tools to evaluate the strategic plan, and 4. Create a strategic plan guideline.

2: PROJECT RATIONALE

- A:** The college has an opportunity to fully embrace the new strategic plan. Without a framework from which to work, the plan will not flourish. The Strategic Plan impacts all areas of the college and therefore warrants becoming an AQIP Action Project. The college needs a cohesive process to implement the plan. The President developed four priorities that are linked to various goals and sub-goals of the Strategic Plan. Teams have been created to develop processes to accomplish the Presidents Priorities. This Action Project will work parallel to the President's Priorities team to build the framework for continuous improvement for all goals and sub goals of the strategic plan, incorporating the principles of *High Performance Organizations*. All employees will be involved in the strategic plan at some level.

3: PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

- A:** The Action Project team will set a series of milestones that reflect progress toward the goal. Milestones will include:

Project Goals	Milestone	Metric	Projected completion
Define sub-goals	An approved list of standing committees and their charters	100% of sub-goals defined and measurable	October 1, 2014
Communicate Plan College wide	Approval from College Council and Q Team on sub-goal definitions	Approved	November 2014
	Completed communication plan that disseminate the strategic plan	Plan fully active – 100% execution of plan	January 31, 2015
Develop tools to implement plan	Create proposal form, progress report form, completion form, rubric to score proposals, form to track the progress on the plan	Forms approved by Q Team	December 1, 2014
	The development of a handbook as a single source of information for the strategic plan.	Handbook completed	December 15, 2014
	The development of a document that identifies who is responsible for the plans implementation and how they will be held accountable	Completed	December 15, 2014
Full implementation of the	By May, 2015 50% of committees and	75% of committees and	July 1, 2015

strategic plan	projects will be reporting their contribution to the strategic plan. By July, 2015 75% of committees and projects are reporting their contribution to the strategic plan	projects across the college are reporting their successful progress on the strategic plan	
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4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: All employees may be affected by this Action Project. Students will be positively impacted through improvements in operations. Specific functional areas that will be affected and held accountable for process include:

- Academic Affairs
- Campuses
- Student Affairs
- All college wide standing committees
- Quality Team (Q-Team)

Improvements are expected in standard operating procedures for committees and task forces conduct business, how department and campuses set priorities and action, how decisions are made and how the college conducts business.

Key Processes:

- Organizational reporting structure for all standing committees, strategic plan task forces, and Action Projects
- Accountability for follow-up on progress and measurement of benchmarks initially reviewed by the Q-Team

The action project team members will have the greatest involvement in the project. They will meet monthly during the duration of the project to create and implement the strategies. Other stakeholders' involvement will take more of a use of the strategic plan embedded documents or as standing committee and president's priorities team members.

5: PROJECT CONTROL

A: Success will be determined by the completion of the milestones outlined above. It is difficult to measure enculturation. Qualitative data will be gathered to support improvements in the project. The college should see movement on the plan on a regular basis which will be determined by semi-annual reports from the committees and strategic plan project teams. A balanced scorecard will be used to track specific metrics.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: Embedding a plan as inclusive as a college strategic plan has many challenges. The biggest obstacle is ensuring that the processes and documents created by the action project team will be accepted and used by the various stakeholder groups. It will be imperative that the college leadership agree with and support the work of the action project team.

7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A: We fully recognize that embedding a strategic plan into the college takes longer than a year. We selected the shorter time span so that the supporting materials and processes are in place at the launch of the new strategic plan. These items are important to the success of the plan. It is our hope that over time the college will embrace the plan and that it become a part of the college culture.

Project Update

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

A: The project has been completed and will be retired shortly. The original launch date was 8/26/2014 with an expected completion of 9/1/2015.

The project originated from the advent of a new strategic plan implementation. The project grew from the last strategy forum. The new President had not joined the college at that time and the current leadership created this project based on a need to help ingrain the

new plan into the culture of the college.

2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

- A: The goal of this project was to create a process by which the new 2014-2018 Strategic Plan; Reaching New Heights, would be embedded into the activities of the college. The team working on this project was to build the foundation and framework to assist the college in its successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- Tools necessary for the success of the project included: 1. clearly define in measurable terms each of the 15 sub-goals of the strategic plan, 2. communicate the clearly defined strategic plan college wide, 3. Develop the tools (report forms, mechanism to report progress, system on evaluating the progress on the plan and tools to evaluate the strategic plan, and 4. Create a strategic plan guideline.

3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

- A: A team was convened representing the various campuses and functional areas. Ideas for embedding the plan by the team were gathered as well as collecting ideas from other college groups. The President's Priorities team were created in addition to the Action Project team and worked throughout the past year to develop strategies in the following four areas: Diversity & Inclusivity, Strategic Enrollment Plan, Organizational Effectiveness and Communications. These teams consisted of representatives from across the college and sub teams that were created further expanded the participation. After 8 months of work, the teams presented a list of recommendations to the President. The President in turn appointed Team Leaders to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.
- In addition, the standing committee structure was evaluated. A new system to qualify for standing committee status was developed and approved by College Council. This entails a reporting structure that mandates agendas, minutes and charters be made available to all employees. All standing committees submit an annual report detailing how their work furthers the strategic plan.

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- A: As mentioned in answer #3, teams that worked on the President's Priorities were spread across college. In all, more than 100 employees participated as either a team lead, team member or subcommittee member. The four priority teams enlisted an analyst from the Institutional Research department to support their data needs.

5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- A: The overall project goals were not fully achieved. The definition of the sub-goals were not completed due to the President's Priorities team that took over that work. The progress reports and other meeting templates were created and approved for distribution. The college has been functioning under those documents for a full year. It was decided that a handbook for the strategic plan was unnecessary due to President's Priorities work. The strategic plan was fully implemented by July 1 of this year.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

- A: We will be retiring this plan shortly. The goals that were still active have been met.

7: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

- A: The biggest challenge for this project was the disconnect and overlap between its work and the work of the President's Priorities teams. In some cases the two groups worked at odds with each other. At other times the two groups were working toward similar purposes. At one point it was decided that the Action Project team would pause in their work to wait for the President's Priorities teams to make their recommendation to the President. When that occurred, there was nothing for the Action Project team to work on since the President reassigned leaders to oversee the recommendations. The Action Project team considered their work completed.

8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

- A: None

Update Review

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

- A: Project is appropriately marked as completed and should be retired soon. Project supports the following quality concepts: AQIP Categories—Category 4 Planning and Leading; HLC Criterion 5—Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness; and Principles of High Performing Institutions—Broad-based Involvement, Promoting Collaboration; Agility and Responsiveness to Change.

2: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

- A: Based on the administrative change in leadership, this action project experienced a change in scope as directed by the College President. The four (4) original project goals and deliverables transitioned to the President's Priorities to include: Diversity and Inclusivity, Strategic Enrollment Plan, Organizational Effectiveness and Communications. Consistent with continuous quality improvement, an additional goal may include the development of a comprehensive communication plan to solidify those processes that ensure successful implementation of strategic plans and initiatives.

3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

- A: Good progress was made in this action project despite a change in administration and direction. Rather than derail the project, assigned teams collectively presented their findings and recommendations to the President. Additionally, a reporting structure specifically for standing committees was developed and approved to demonstrate transparency, improve effectiveness, and maintain accountability during strategic plan implementation. It may prove beneficial to celebrate the Institution's collaborative efforts and accomplishments for the year to rebuild cohesiveness among colleagues and further embed the concept of continuous quality improvement.

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- A: The original structure of the Action Project Team posed for campus involvement was further enhanced by the team assigned for the President's Priorities. A good cross-representation of campus constituents included the efforts of over 100 team members.

5: EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- A: Changes in progress reports and other meeting templates ensured continuous quality improvement which in turn support institutional effectiveness. Continued review of other educational processes within the College could serve as an institution wide effective practice.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

- A: While some of the action project's original goals were cut short due to the new President's change of scope and direction, those goals that remained active were met; therefore, the project will, as indicated, soon be retired.

7: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIME LINE

- A: Change is inevitable and sometimes affects institutional morale and synergy. It may be beneficial to conduct a comprehensive evaluation (formative/summative) of those action project components that were successfully completed for further discussion and future reference.

8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

- A: No comment.

Project Outcome

1: REASON FOR COMPLETION

A: The team completed the work. Other processes took over the activities originally delegated to this action project.

2: SUCCESS FACTORS

A: The team worked alongside the President's Priority teams to move the strategic plan forward and out to the various campuses. The standing committee structure was reviewed and revised providing a more organized approach to governance and communication.

3: UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS

A: The team envisioned a more hands on approach. The President's Priority teams were the ones who had the opportunity to embed the strategic plan more so than the action project team.