

Colorado Mountain College, CO

Curriculum Resource Library of Exemplar Courses

Participation Start: 09-01-2015

Participation End: 09-01-2022

Date Completed: 06-12-2017

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This Results Report reflects the activity of Colorado Mountain College in the Action Project Collaboration Network. It is not an official document of the Higher Learning Commission.

Declaration

Q:

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.

A:

The goal of this project is to develop a library of well-designed course plans and resources that can be easily accessed by all faculty members from a common area such as Canvas Course Management System. Course plans will be in the form of Canvas sandboxes that faculty could copy to their own Canvas sites and edit as needed. The intention of the library is to serve as a resource (not requirement) for new and existing full-time and part-time faculty.

Q:

Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this action project now and 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.

A: In the past four years the college has moved from having over 60% of courses taught by full –time faculty to over 60% of courses taught by adjunct faculty. As new faculty members join the college community, they must develop their own courses in order to begin teaching. Unless current instructors are willing to share their course plans (as many are), the college does not have standard resources to give new instructors. Currently, a new faculty member receives a set of eight to ten common course objectives, possibly a syllabus, a textbook and an empty Canvas shell. However, these materials do not represent a comprehensive and innovative curriculum package and new faculty members often need extensive course design mentoring and coaching from assistant deans of instruction and existing faculty members.

In addition to inspiring innovative teaching practices, providing examples of well-developed curriculum in all discipline areas will enhance the effectiveness of (a) faculty preparedness, (b) academic quality, (c) faculty onboarding, (d) student learning experience, and (e) common course assessment. By building the common assessments into the exemplar course plans, new faculty members will better understand how the Student Learning Outcomes assessments align with course objectives. Examples of activities that are effective in preparing students for the assessment would be provided in the course library to improve support of student learning.

The college has an opportunity for its talented faculty to impact academic excellence by developing and sharing innovative courses (integrating course objectives, active and reflective learning activities and authentic assessment) with other faculty who want/need this resource. This would in no way limit academic freedom. Instead, it would allow faculty who have excellent course designs to showcase and share their course plans and would give new faculty a strong foundation on which to develop their practice if such support is needed.

Faculty credentialing is based on content expertise and not course design experience. By starting with a well-designed course plan, new adjunct faculty members who are not trained in pedagogy

could focus on their teaching as opposed to designing curriculum from scratch. Frequently, faculty members who are inexperienced in curriculum design rely heavily on lecture-based instruction driven by textbook publisher resources (for example, long PowerPoint presentations and publisher quizzes/tests). Although using the publisher materials may be useful, many of our instructors want to incorporate more active, collaborative and reflective learning experiences paired with authentic assessments. Many new instructors do not know where to start or how to create curriculum that integrates learning objectives, engaging learning activities, and authentic assessment. Having examples of well-designed curriculum will facilitate the success of new instructors and their students and allow assistant deans of instruction and faculty mentors to support new instructors in other ways.

It is expected that many instructors will be willing to develop/share their excellent course plans. Curriculum plans have already been developed, through contracts and release time, but are not yet housed in a common area that can be easily accessed. For example, the Summit Campus has a growing library of comprehensive course plans that are shared with new faculty members. The existing faculty members who develop these course plans receive a set of outcomes to ensure consistency across course plans.

Q:

List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress toward each goal. Be sure to include when you anticipate submitting the project for formal reviews.

A: The expected maximum time for the development of the initial resource library is one year. The compilation of the resource library will continue after the Action Project is retired. The length of the project continuation will be determined by how many disciplines adopt the exemplar course plans and the number of shareable plans that already exist.

Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Success of the project will be monitored by the members of the Action Project Team for the duration of the project. During the first year of the project, the Action Project Team will identify a standing group or permanent position to oversee the Curriculum Resource Library once it is launched.

Milestones include:

- Define the content and criteria for the curriculum library
- Identify the format for the library courses
- Secure funding for possible faculty compensation
- Create a plan to select courses for the library
 - Who will review and approve the plans?
 - Who will be responsible for uploading the courses?
 - Who will maintain the library?
 - Who and how will ask current faculty to submit their courses for consideration?
- Create a communications plan to ensure faculty learn about the course library and receive training.

- Determine who or what department will take over the process.

Q:

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.

A: The Office of Academic Affairs will be most affected by this project. The specific departments include Office of Innovation, Director of Assessment, and faculty groups such as the Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Q:

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.

A: The project will initially be monitored by the Action Project Team. Once the project goals are met, the Academic Affairs Department will take over the monitoring of the repository. The following will be measured to indicate success or failure of the project:

- Number of courses posted: The target is 20 courses by the end of the first year of the project.
- Number of new faculty who access and use the library courses: The Target is ten new faculty members in the first semester of the library opening.

Q:

Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: Challenges include encouraging a sufficient number of faculty to contribute to the repository and getting adjunct faculty to use the repository. The college is spread over seven campuses that cover 12,000 square miles over the Central Rocky Mountains. This presents challenges in communication and discipline meetings.

Q:

Provide any additional information that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project.

A: None

Concluding Report

Q:

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

A: The project was successfully completed.

Q:

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

A: The project provided the college with a repository of course templates. The intent was to make courses available to adjunct instructors as well as new faculty. The participation far exceeded expectations. The initial goal of 20 courses within one year was met after the first month. The library continues to grow. It also brought the Quality Matters structure into the forefront so that other courses can be evaluated based on this criteria.

Q:

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

A: The project team expected to have the library integrated with a position at the college to ensure continuation. The team felt strongly that someone should be designated to be responsible for and to oversee the library. Due to an Academic Affairs restructuring project the decision on where the library will be housed is delayed. A decision will be made by fall 2017.

Concluding Review

Q:

Do you have any final thoughts or feedback for this institution in regards to this project? Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: The College has exceeded its goals and provided a rich resource for all faculty, with an emphasis on adjunct faculty. The outcomes of this project will have an impact on student success given that faculty have such a invaluable resource for courses. Good work.

Project: Curriculum Resource Library of Exemplar Courses

Version 1.0 - Project

Q:

What is the current status of your project?

A: Completed

Q:

Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A: Project start date: 2015-10-13

Target completion date: 2016-12-01

Actual completion date: 2017-3-06

Q:

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.

A: As of March 24, 2017, 110 items have been shared to the Canvas Commons Course Library including 81 courses, 16 modules, 1 assignment, 8 quizzes, 1 discussion, 1 document, and 2 pages.

Through this project, a badging system was created to identify courses in the library that have been reviewed for quality. Courses can be reviewed for quality using three different methods, each identified with a unique image (badge). The three types of quality review that are recognized in the library are Quality Instructional Design, Discipline Review, and Administrative Review. The following are descriptions of each quality review method:

QID-Quality Instructional Design — The course is submitted by the instructor to the Quality Matters Internal Peer Review process. The instructor will first conduct a self-review using

the Quality Matters Rubric and submit that review to his or her supervisor and to the Quality Matters Institutional Representatives to assemble a team of peer reviewers to include at least three (3) QM trained individuals. Using the Quality Matters rubric, this review includes elements of course content alignment, ADA compliance, and Universal Design.

DR-Discipline Review — The course is submitted by an instructor to the discipline coordinator who will review the course content, competencies, and program outcomes to ensure that the course meets the rigor, expectations, and assessments of the discipline. Each discipline may have a different review process which may include but is not limited to a team approach by a discipline group or the discipline coordinator reviewing a course.

AR-Administrative Review — The course is submitted by an instructor to his or her campus supervisor who will review the course for pedagogical practices and college level outcomes.

As of March 24, 2017, 8 courses have been quality reviewed and distinguished with the respective badges. Six courses have been badged for Discipline Review, one course has been badged for Administrative Review, and one course has been badged for Quality Instructional Design.

The course library is helping the college address the following challenge:

In the past five years the college has moved from having over 60% of courses taught by full-time faculty to over 60% of courses taught by adjunct faculty. As new faculty members join the college community, they must develop their own courses in order to begin teaching. Unless current instructors are willing to share their course plans, the college does not have standard resources to give new instructors. New faculty members receive a set of eight to ten common course objectives, possibly a syllabus, a textbook and an empty Canvas shell. However, these materials do not represent a comprehensive and innovative curriculum package and new faculty members often need extensive course design mentoring and coaching from assistant deans of instruction and existing faculty members.

In addition to inspiring innovative teaching practices, providing examples of well-developed curriculum in all discipline areas will enhance the effectiveness of (a) faculty preparedness, (b) academic quality, (c) faculty on-boarding, (d) student learning experience, and (e)

common course assessment.

The college has an opportunity for its talented faculty to impact academic excellence by developing and sharing innovative courses (integrating course objectives, active and reflective learning activities and authentic assessment) with other faculty who want/need this resource. The library allows faculty who have excellent course designs to showcase and share their course plans and gives new faculty a strong foundation on which to develop their teaching practice.

Faculty credentialing is based on content expertise and not course design experience. Many new instructors do not know where to start or how to create curriculum that integrates learning objectives, engaging learning activities, and authentic assessment. Having examples of well-designed curriculum will facilitate the success of new instructors and their students and allow assistant deans of instruction and faculty mentors to support new instructors in other ways. By starting with a well-designed course plan, new adjunct faculty members who are not trained in pedagogy can focus on teaching methods.

This project aligns with adjunct faculty initiatives. A study was conducted in 2015 to determine needs and possible actions to improve the environment for the college's adjunct instructors. The results of this project will be used to inform the writing of the 2018 Systems Portfolio.

Q:

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A: Improved key organizational processes including:

- New faculty training: New faculty members will be better prepared to teach, which allows more time to devote to other aspects of starting a new position with the College.
- Curriculum development: The time new faculty members spend on curriculum

preparation in order to devote more energy to thinking through assignments and other aspects of the classroom environment.

- Common assessment: As noted above, new faculty members are frequently unfamiliar with the academic assessment process. By having assessments as a part of the course plans in the resource library, new faculty members will become more engaged with the assessment process.

Success of the project will be monitored by the members of the Action Project Team for the duration of the project. During the first year of the project, the Action Project Team will identify a standing group or permanent position to oversee the Curriculum Resource Library once it is launched.

Milestones include:

- Define the content and criteria for the curriculum library
- Identify the format for the library courses
- Secure funding for possible faculty compensation
- Create a plan to select courses for the library
 - Who will review and approve the plans?
 - Who will be responsible for uploading the courses?
 - Who will maintain the library?
 - Who will ask current faculty to submit their courses for consideration?
- Create a communications plan to ensure faculty learn about the course library and receive training.
- Determine who or what department will take over the process.

The following will be measured to indicate success or failure of the project:

- Number of courses posted: The target is 20 courses by the end of the first year of the project.
- Number of new faculty who access and use the library courses: The Target is ten new faculty members in the first semester of the library opening.

Q:

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.

A: Project team assembled

Canvas Commons identified as the most ideal repository for the course library. Determined that all faculty can share courses and resources to Canvas Commons.

Name for library identified as Canvas Commons Course Library.

Quality review processes and a badging system developed to highlight high quality courses.

Frequently asked questions document developed to share best practices for using the library and to promote sharing of high quality courses.

Canvas Commons Course Library (CCCL) introduced at the Spring 2016 faculty in-service.

Master Academic Plan includes the following goal in the in the 1-2 year short term plan:
Develop Master Course Library Resource

Met with Arts & Sciences Program Review Team to request that they consider adding CCCL and exemplar courses to A&S program review.

Canvas Commons Course Library training offered in two work sessions at the Fall 2016 faculty in-service.

Canvas Commons Course Library training provided to instructional leadership team and group is encouraged to promote the use of the library with faculty.

Canvas Commons Course Library training offered through the Office of Innovations in Teaching & Learning.

Eight courses reviewed using one of the three quality review methods and assigned respective badges in the CCCL

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Request to add responsibility for the CCCL to the School Dean job description.

Requirement to share courses to CCCL added to new course development contracts.

Courses shared to the CCCL grow from one course to 82 courses.

Q:

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.

A: A wide variety of faculty and staff members participated in this action project over the last year. The six member project team consisted of four full-time faculty members and two administrators from six campuses. Over forty faculty members, both adjunct and full-time, have contributed to the course library by sharing one or more courses. The Office of Innovations in Teaching & Learning and Library Department have also shared content to the library. The course library has been a regular discussion topic with a variety of groups including faculty senate, curriculum advisory committee, instructional leadership team and APRC.

Q:

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?

A: The CCCL offers a new vehicle for easily storing and sharing academic resources. By sharing resources with one another, faculty are promoting a culture of teaching and learning excellence and ensuring that new faculty have a strong foundation on which to build their teaching practice at Colorado Mountain College.

Q:

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: One barrier to using the CCCL is the requirement to import courses from Canvas Commons into a sandbox to fully view the content. Canvas is considering ways to improve the accessibility of resources stored in Canvas Commons.

Uncertainty about a new academic affairs organization structure poses another challenge to the sustainability of the library. Job descriptions for positions in the new model are still being developed and at this time, responsibility for the library has not been assigned to a specific role.

Q:

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.

A: The following four action items will be completed in the next 12-24 months:

1. Request the Curriculum Advisory Committee to add the course library as a standing agenda item.
2. Request a table at the upcoming CMC Days to showcase the course library and quality badging system.
3. Request the Office of Innovations for Teaching & Learning to link the Canvas Commons Course Library FAQs and a digital badge request form to Canvas and Basecamp.
4. The project team will meet in six months to assess the sustainability and growth of the library, how well the course library is integrated into the new academic organizational structure, and to ensure that responsibility for the library is

embedded into one or more of the new academic job descriptions.

Q:

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: None

Version 1.0 - Update

Q:

I certify that this project is ready for review.

A: I agree.

Version 1.0 - Review

Q:

Please comment on anything that is omitted or incomplete in the project status, dates and summary field. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: N/A The Project Declaration and Update are well written and complete.

Q:

Check for accuracy and completeness against the original Project Declaration. Are the right metrics or measures included for each goal? If not, what revisions to the metrics/measures would you suggest that the institution consider?

A: The Institution is using the Quality Matters (QM) process to identify courses in the new curriculum library that have been reviewed for quality. QM is a faculty-centered, peer review process to certify the quality of online courses and online components. QM is emerging as a leader in quality assurance for online education and has received national recognition for its faculty-centered approach to continuous improvement in online education.

Q:

Has the institution acted in meaningful ways to pursue project success, making progress as anticipated in the original project declaration? If meaningful progress or project success has not been achieved, has the institution made appropriate revisions to the goals or anticipated outcomes for this project? • Are descriptions of resources, organization, concrete results, and reaching milestones included? • Make a statement

of global judgment. (i.e. “The institution is making [excellent/good/satisfactory/ acceptable/slow/ casual/no] progress in this action project.”).

- A:** The Institution has made good progress on the Project. The Project Declaration presented clearly defined milestones and targets. The approach was systematic, responsive to the overall Project requirements, and appears to have been well deployed with no significant gaps. The approach for creating the curriculum library is integrated with the institution’s current and future organizational needs identified by a change from a predominately full-time to a predominately adjunct faculty base.

Q:

Are the appropriate people involved sufficiently for the nature and scope of the project?

- Is there sufficient breadth of involvement?**
- Are the right people involved? • Emphasize the roles of those who can enhance the impact, success, or effectiveness of the project.**
- Tactfully call attention to any people that appear to have been omitted or bypassed.**

- A:** The six-member Project Team consisted of four full-time faculty and two administrators. There is no evidence that adjunct faculty participated in the design of the process however, full and adjunct faculty contributed to the course library. The Office of Innovations in Teaching and Learning and the Library Department also contributed to the Project. Broad-based faculty, staff and administrative involvement encourage better decisions and strengthen individual and group ownership of systems, activities, and initiatives. Because of the platform being used, IT should be a key stakeholder in the design and maintenance of the CCCL.

Q:

Does the institution show evidence of learning from what it did well?

- Acknowledge any practice that could be replicated internally in future projects.**
- Encourage the sharing of best practices with other institutions.**

- A:** The accomplishments with the Project over the past year(s) are significant; targets were met or in some cases exceeded. No mention is included in the narrative regarding the cost – direct and indirect – of badging the courses. The QM course review process can be cost-prohibitive for some institutions. The College may want to consider alternatives for sustaining the library.

Q:

Does the institution have a realistic understanding of what it needs to address in order to achieve progress and, ultimately, project success? Does it assess its internal and

external environments, recognizing the potential forces that could hinder success? Is anything overlooked?

- A:** The Project as described in the Declaration and Update has been completed. The institution is working with the vendor to improve access to resources stored in Canvas Commons. Yet to be determined is who will “own” the CCCL process; a job description(s) is being developed for the position(s).

Q:

Does the institution understand the current status of its project and know how it intends to pursue project success?

- A:** The Institution has presented strong grounds for the Project being complete. The next steps presented are logical and achievable. The Project Team is scheduled to reconvene in six months to assess the sustainability of the library. This represents a clear understanding of the continuous improvement process.

Q:

Overall, does the institution demonstrate a good faith effort in its pursuit of continuous quality improvement through this action project? Is there anything of concern that should be brought to the attention of AQIP via your mentor?

- A:** This is a good example of an Action Project and a good example of an institution that clearly understands the AQIP principles. The Team explored root causes, developed a corrective action plan for outcome attainment and future sustainability, outcome measurement, plan execution, and evaluation of the Project success.