
Action Project

Institution: Colorado Mountain College
Submitted: 2007-03-30 **Contact:** Dr. Meeta Goel
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 01-01-2006

Target completion date: 09-01-2007

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Learning Outcomes Assessment Project

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

-Define course learning outcomes, competencies and skills, and assess whether or not students can demonstrate learning outcomes. Measurable course outcomes will be established for top 60 FTE generating courses by June, 2007. -Evaluate Assessment Data -Develop Learning Strategies Based on Data and alter curriculum and instruction as necessary based on assessment data -Reassess Outcomes, Competencies and Skills

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities: [Help](#)

As a learning centered college, CMC is focused on how we know that student learning has occurred, and how the college can support students becoming more responsible for their own learning; in addition, the focus on student learning and measurable course outcomes helps ensure consistency across the curriculum and instruction regarding what students know and are able to do. Finally, a central college focus on student learning helps ensure the eventual alignment and clarity of the college vision, mission and goals.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project: [Help](#)

Instruction (faculty and staff) Institutional Research Students Discipline Coordinators

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve: [Help](#)

Instructional Processes Course Preparation Curriculum Design Instructional Supervision Processes Involving Assessment Plan and Practices Budget and Planning Processes Related to Faculty and Staff Allocation Budget Processes Related to Time and Materials that Will Support the Implementation of the Action Project

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion): [Help](#)

As the faculty and staff examine the college's internal processes related to the success of the Action Project, the following is noted:  Faculty have planned and facilitated workshops regarding writing measurable course outcomes.  Faculty attended assessment trainings and conferences.  The spring 2005 and fall 2005 faculty in-services had classroom assessment as a central theme.  During the summer of 2006 assessment trainings were conducted to "train the trainer". Ten CMC faculty became Assessment leaders. Their mission is to work with, train and assist other assessment writers to continue the completion of the goal to assess all courses in the college.  The Senior Faculty met in December of 2006 to revisit the General Education Goals. These goals were amended and re-titled as the "Faculty Declaration of Educational Intent". A process for assessing these goals is currently being discussed and planned.  During the summer of 2006 faculty evaluated 44 courses to determine their learning outcomes, competencies, skills and assessment tool. Another thirty courses are being reviewed during the Spring 2007 semester. Plans are underway to complete the assessment process for all courses.  Program mapping is complete for three of the college's Career and Technical Education programs. Plans are underway to complete this process with other Career and Technical Education programs.  Fall and spring deadlines have been met regarding measurable outcomes development, assessing students based on the outcomes, gathering student assessment data, providing faculty with data regarding student success, and supporting and assisting faculty in revising and implementing learning strategies that will improve student learning.  The faculty Discipline Coordinator position continues to be re-evaluated and refocused to provide full-time and adjunct faculty with more support and peer assistance regarding assessment; the number of Discipline Coordinators will increase as needed.  Both full-time and adjunct faculty will receive additional professional development through recently purchased web-based resources (assessment and measurement materials, LENS), and through attendance at selected conferences, including Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis 2005 Assessment Institute, HLC's fall workshop on assessment, and various state workshops focused on assessment.  A three year course review cycle has been developed.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing: [Help](#)

Faculty will define course outcomes. Students will be assessed regarding their achievement of course outcomes. Based on the assessment data, faculty will revise curriculum and instruction as necessary and implement new learning strategies. Student learning will be assessed again to determine "what is working."

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals: [Help](#)

Phase One: August-December 2005---Establish measurable course outcomes in selected courses. --Measurable outcomes were established in the selected courses. Phase Two: January-May 2006---Assess student learning using instruments designed to measure the redefined outcomes; also, select additional courses where measurable course outcomes will be established and begin establishing those outcomes. --Measurement instruments were developed/selected for all courses in Phase One. Additional courses in selected and new prefixes (e.g., HUM, LIT, PSY, AST, BIO, SPA, etc.) were identified for outcomes/measurement instrument development from June to August. Phase Three: May-June 2007---Gather data and have faculty analyze regarding possible changes in curriculum and classroom learning strategies. --Data in selected courses is currently being gathered and analyzed by faculty. Phase Four: May-July 2007---Faculty will analyze data to determine student achievement of selected general education outcomes and plan strategies for expanding and continuing the assessment of general education learning goals. --Faculty will determine student success based upon the analysis of the outcomes data; if necessary, changes in curriculum and classroom learning strategies will follow, as well. Next Steps: During fall 2007 and spring/summer 2008, faculty will train other faculty to develop measurable student outcomes in an every growing number of courses. By summer 2007, the sixty courses that reflect the highest student enrollments should have outcomes completed, measurements selected, and timelines for student measurement/data analysis/curriculum changes established. An implementation plan has been developed to evaluate the remaining courses. Completion of the Assessment for all courses is slated for the summer of 2010.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.): [Help](#)

Because student learning is a central focus at Colorado Mountain College, it will be referred to and emphasized college wide through our strategic planning, goals and processes. In addition, both fiscal and human resources will be dedicated to ensuring continuous assessment of student learning. To further reinforce the importance of student learning at CMC, emphasis on the learning college philosophy, college wide, will continue. The focus of this emphasis will place primary importance on faculty and staff understanding their role in the measurement of student learning and success.

K. Project Leader and contact person: [Help](#)

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Annual Update: 2008-09-14

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

This project has been led by the Vice-President of Academic Affairs' (formerly the Chief Learning Officer) area. This area has been holding joint meetings and collaborating with Student Development Services (now Student Affairs) over the past year in order to more holistically support student success. More specifically, the project lead/contact, the Dean of Arts & Sciences has been working with the Dean of Career & Technical Education and CMC faculty to further the goals of this project, namely the defining of course learning outcomes, competencies and skills for the top 60 FTE generating courses and assessing whether students demonstrate these learning outcomes. This project lead resigned in May 2008 and her replacement was hired a month ago. Thus, although we have some learning outcomes for all our courses, the assessment piece has been less consistently developed and implemented. We less consistently evaluate assessment data, develop learning strategies based on such data, and alter curriculum and instruction as needed based on the assessment. Areas of success have been with our Math & English courses led by experienced faculty in these areas. For example, learning outcomes, competencies and skills were written for College Trigonometry and all instructors of College Trigonometry were given 5 - 7 questions to be included on their Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 final exams with the goal of evaluating four of the competencies. Instructors made copies of the responses, indicated on the responses whether or not the student passed their course with a C- or better and submitted them to an "Assessment Leader". The Assessment Leader then formed a committee of mathematics instructors to evaluate the responses. The Assessment Leader then summarized the results and sent them to all mathematics instructors as well as the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The identities of the student and instructor remained anonymous. Analysis of the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 questions was completed by the end of Summer 2008. The committee then determined whether to re-evaluate the same topics, or to add/delete/change topics in the evaluation process for 2008-09 in an attempt to complete the feedback loop. The English faculty also met to determine learning outcomes, competencies and skills for English Composition I (ENG121) and English Composition II (ENG122). The final essay for English Composition I, which was a standardized assignment, was gathered from faculty and part-time instructors from each of the campuses. The faculty then devised a standard rubric with which to grade the essays. They met in person for a day-long grading session in which they took a random sampling of essays and distributed them, so each paper was graded by at least three faculty members using the standard rubric. They then compared the rubrics, discussed assessment practices and identified where students were meeting, exceeding or failing to meet the learning outcomes. The action plan established was to move forward in classes by retaining strengths while striving to develop curriculum to increase success on outcomes identified as weak. New curriculum and practice developments were shared at ongoing discipline meetings. The same process was followed to assess the final paper in English Composition II with a similar action plan. They felt it was necessary to extend future discussions following assessment sessions because the time together was immensely beneficial. Currently, learning outcomes, skills and competencies have been drafted for Masterpieces of Literature I (LIT 201) and II (LIT202). These will be reviewed and moved towards approval at the next discipline meeting. Career and Technical Education programs reviewed their program level learning outcomes in the fall of 2007. Learning Outcome matrixes have been completed and reviewed for 24 programs. This has been an ongoing effort. A professional development workshop was held in March of 2008 on program mapping aimed primarily at Career and Technical Education programs. The mapping of programs is continuing into fall 2008.

Program maps are available for Ski Area Operations, Forestry Technician, Natural Resource Management, Entrepreneurship, EMS, and Information Technology. The process of mapping has begun for Early Childhood Education, and Fire Science Technology programs, as well as curriculum mapping for Visual Art, Mathematics. Senior faculty met in the spring of 2008 to discuss moving to assessing institutional outcomes within programs and courses. There was support for developing institutional goals (outcomes) that apply to every student at Colorado Mountain College and not simply those students that enroll in general education courses, but Career and Technical Education programs as well. Student Services is in the initial stages of writing learning outcomes for their part of the college's commitment to learning. The program review process was changed and updated. We completed a full review of the Ski and Snowboard Business program during the 07-08 academic year. During spring 2008, we began the process of reviewing the Information Technology program using an outside consultant that conducted an internal and external review of the program, this review will continue with using the findings during the 08-09 academic year. The new Dean of Arts & Sciences has already been working with the Dean of Career & Technical Education not only to provide oversight for this project, but in forming an Assessment Team composed of senior faculty and discipline coordinators.

Review ():

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

A joint retreat with academic and student affairs was held in May 2008 where the two groups focused on how they could holistically support student success. Joint working meetings were held through this past spring/summer and have been scheduled for fall 2008 to continue the momentum. We have been increasing faculty involvement and have had assistance via the Curriculum Advisory Council and the Council for Instruction. The process has been largely faculty driven. Thus, faculty has been heavily involved with accountability to the Curriculum Advisory Committee and Council for Instruction. Our new President has increased the visibility & authority of Academic Affairs and he, the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Campus CEOs are working to strengthen the ties between faculty and Academic Affairs. In addition, efforts have been made to implement continual assessment college wide; although, in practice, this has varied from campus to campus.

Review ():

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

Joint meetings with academic and student affairs have been scheduled for fall 2008 to provide support for this project. The Dean of Arts & Sciences is working with the Dean of Career & Technical Education on forming an Assessment Team composed of senior faculty and discipline coordinators. They will review the assessment plans and programming of other community colleges in Colorado to develop strategy for 08-09 and beyond. Other goals will be to communicate their vision college-wide through more frequent campus visits and electronic means; during campus visitations, continue to communicate to faculty the importance of creating a culture of assessment tied to student learning; garner support from campus CEOs and other leaders; review institutional outcomes and select one for college-wide assessment efforts and develop a new rubric to assess the outcome selected; investigate the "TaskStream" assessment program tool and associated costs; post the assessment plan on the college website for all to access; and develop a new reporting process to generate information for an annual assessment report. Thus, they hope to improve faculty and staff buy-in to a more realistic plan. We have also begun the review of the Ski Area Operations program during 08-09. But further training of faculty in measuring student learning outcomes is needed. Our new President has begun training a continuous improvement team that is targeting how to improve the current faculty & staff professional development process.

Review ():

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

We have learned that not only is a project lead necessary for progress but college wide buy-in, particularly on the part of faculty. Furthermore, faculty then needs the requisite resources e.g. release time/pay, training in assessment or progress is slowed down tremendously.

Review ():

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

Even though we have some sort of learning outcomes for our courses, we are still struggling with the assessment part of this project. Further training of faculty and some staff in measuring student learning outcomes is needed. Giving faculty release time/pay, resources & training to support assessment efforts. We have needed more full-time faculty dedicated to this effort. Systematizing our assessment process and publicly documenting results (i.e. online, etc.) is still needed. Perhaps, an Assessment Director may be needed to really help automate & embed assessment related processes. This position was not funded last year by the leadership and we may have to put in another request for it this year.

Review ():

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?

We could benefit from training in assessment of learning outcomes for our faculty and some staff if AQIP is able to send a team of trainers. It is difficult to take large numbers of faculty to distant training sites. Such on-site training might help us progress more quickly on the assessment piece of this project. The Dean of Arts & Sciences, Deborah Schmitt is the project lead/contact and can be reached at dschmitt@coloradomtn.edu.

Review ():