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## Action Project

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**Institution:** Ohio University  
**Submitted:** 2006-12-08      **Contact:** Martin "Marty" Tuck  
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### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 01-01-2007

Target completion date: 01-01-2009

Actual completion date: --

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

Develop Common Learning Outcomes Expected of Ohio University Undergraduate Students

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

The first goal of this project will be to create a campus-wide committee responsible for identifying a set of common learning outcomes expected of all Ohio University undergraduate students. The second goal will be for the committee to assess the ability of the current Ohio University General Education Program to achieve these outcomes and make suggestions as to how General Education at the institution should be altered to achieve the desired outcomes. Finally, the committee will develop a plan to assess achievement of the identified learning outcomes.

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:

During the recent development of the university's strategic plan, several campus groups worked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate educational experience at the university. While several strong academic programs and initiatives exist at the university, it was discovered that there was not a common educational thread which identified what it meant to be an Ohio University graduate. Identifying common learning outcomes will provide an identity for all Ohio University undergraduate students that is currently lacking at the institution. Developing and communicating these outcomes will provide Ohio University students a common purpose and expectation of what it means to be a graduate of the institution. First year Ohio University students will have a clear expectation of their common academic goals which should provide a common connection to the institution, faculty and their fellow classmates, thus increasing student engagement, a goal in the first AQIP action project. Finally, the development of common learning outcomes will provide the needed "roadmap" for updating and improving the current general education program at the institution.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Academic Units- The individual colleges and academic departments will be most affected by this action project due to changes in curriculum and pedagogy in order to achieve the learning outcomes. Faculty - Faculty will take the lead in the organization to discuss, develop and approve the common learning outcomes. University Curriculum Council (UCC)- The council will be charged with monitoring the curriculum and approving courses and activities that support the outcomes. Academic Support Units- will provide the out of classroom support needed for students to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

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

General Education Program- Developing common learning outcomes for Ohio University students will provide

needed direction for reforms in the current general education program. UCC- The council will be responsible for monitoring the general education curriculum through the course approval process and academic program review to insure desired common learning outcomes are achieved. This monitoring will require minor changes in UCC operations. Institutional Research- This office will be charged with gathering data which will enable academic programs and the UCC to assess the desired learning outcomes in Ohio University students.

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

Membership of the Learning Outcomes Committee has been selected by consultation between the Faculty Senate and the Provost. The committee is expected to begin its work during the 2006-07 academic year. The charge of the committee will be to develop the common learning outcomes, complete the assessment of the current general education to achieve the outcomes and suggest changes in the program to achieve the desired outcomes. The committee has been charged with completing these tasks within the 06-07 academic year. It is expected that development of a program to assess the desired learning outcomes and implementation of changes in the current general education program will require an additional year.

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

During the first year, progress on this action project will be monitored by how well the Learning Outcomes Committee has completed its charge. During the second year progress will be assessed by changes made in the current general education program to achieve the common learning outcomes and the progress in the development of the learning outcomes assessment plan.

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:

The Learning Outcomes Committee successfully completes its charge. The selected common learning outcomes receive significant "buy-in" from the faculty as a whole and are effectively communicated across campus. Changes are implemented in the existing general education program designed to achieve the learning outcomes. Successful development of a plan to assess the common learning outcomes. Curriculum and academic review processes are altered to monitor common learning outcomes in the curriculum.

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

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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### **Annual Update: 2008-09-12**

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

The institution accomplished the first goal of this action project during the 2006-07 academic year with the identification of common learning outcomes expected of all Ohio University students. A General Education Learning Outcomes Committee was created and charged with accomplishing this goal. The committee produced a final report in June 2007 in which the learning outcome goals for the current general education program were identified. This report can be found at the web link below:

<http://www.ohiou.edu/instres/assessments/genedlrnobj2007.pdf> The report of the General Education Learning Outcomes Committee also recommended that the institution begin to implement assessment methods to determine if the current general education program was meeting the learning outcome goals. The committee was very specific in their recommendation that the institution use a three-prong approach to common learning outcomes assessment which should include the ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (ACT-CAAP) tests, Alumni Surveys and faculty-conducted structured interviews of Ohio University students. During the 2007-08 academic year, significant progress has been made on the implementation of the assessment plan

recommended by the committee. The university secured funds from the implementation of the strategic plan to administer both the math and writing ACT-CAAP examination to initial cohorts of 200-300 students. Progress was also made on constructing a process for faculty administered interviews and the design of interview questions. The work and progress on this action project represents critical steps by the university to specifically identify outcome goals to be achieved through our general education program and the implementation of an effective assessment program to determine whether these goals are being met. The institutional focus on learning outcomes is also beginning to result in a cultural change in the academic mission of Ohio University. Academic support units are beginning to invest significant time and resources to help faculty address the importance of learning outcomes in their individual classes and to provide them with instruction in the methods to assess these goals. As an example, The Center of Teaching and Learning during the 07-08 academic year sponsored the first annual single-day workshop on student learning outcomes designed to aid faculty in moving their courses towards outcomes-based education. <http://www.ohiou.edu/teacher/index.htm>

**Review (09-26-08):**

Progress on this step from last year is impressive in respect to the degree of accomplishment and the resources used by the committee to achieve its end. Significant and praiseworthy is the very visible manner in which suggestions from last year's review have been incorporated into the practice of the committee. This indicates, among other things, attention to AQIP category nine, Building Collaborative Relationships. Clearly you place no internal or external boundaries on your desire to provide all possible value from this project.

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

The General Education Learning Outcomes Committee was a twenty member broad-based group in which all academic colleges were represented. The majority of the members (13) were faculty, with additional representation from the student body, Institutional Research and the academic deans. The creation of the common learning outcomes and the general education assessment plan has been identified as a first-year goal of the five year academic plan developed from Vision OHIO:

[http://www.ohio.edu/vision/upload/yearone\\_5yearplan.pdf](http://www.ohio.edu/vision/upload/yearone_5yearplan.pdf) (objective 4/strategy 2). This project's prominence in the implementation of the strategic plan, and the fact that university financial and academic support resources are being redirected to realize this goal, is a clear indication of its institutional importance and a motivating factor in the project's success.

**Review (09-26-08):**

Noteworthy here is the involvement of the entire university community in pursuing this very important goal. All of the AQIP categories and all of the principles of high-performance institutions can be seen to play parts in the activities of the GELO committee and members' interactions with colleagues. Since everyone in the institution is so vitally involved in the work of this project, it seems appropriate for the university to celebrate progress in a variety of large and small ways. Celebratory gatherings at regular intervals, distribution of small gifts, posting recognition of individual and group accomplishments in university publications or by means of signage around campus are a few examples of ways to remind stakeholders of the value of their individual and group contributions.

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

During the coming year the institution will continue to develop and refine parts of the general education assessment program as there is a great deal of work yet to be done to completely implement the recommended program. In addition, the Office of Institutional Research will begin the process of data analysis and communicating the results to academic departments and schools. Future goals of this project will include a careful data-driven analysis of the current general education program with an eye on if the program is meeting the desired outcome goals and if not what alterations need to be made to achieve the desired goals. It is likely this action project will be completed in the coming year and the work will evolve into a new action project specifically focusing on the development and implementation of the general education assessment program.

**Review (09-26-08):**

While timely attention to the needs of a project is very important to the its success, equally important is awareness of the time of completion. Your realization that this project will end, with another project building on

its strength demonstrates clear understanding of AQIP category Eight, Planning Continuous Improvement. As this project comes to fruition, it will be a very good idea to promulgate a "Preview of Coming Attractions." Thus, the celebration of this project's success mentioned above can serve as the kickoff event for the future goal.

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

Through the work on this action project, the institution has now identified a set of common learning outcome expectations and has created a blueprint for how these outcome goals will be assessed in the future.

<http://www.ohiou.edu/instres/assessments/genedlrnobj2007.pdf> Work on this project has also identified the institutional units responsible for continuing the development and refinement of the assessment process. The institution is continuing to develop a culture of identifying and assessing learning outcomes as a major part of its academic mission.

**Review (09-26-08):**

Changing the culture of an institution through the accomplishment of any project is perhaps the most important legacy of that project. You articulate appropriately the ongoing nature of cultural change. It is at this point that OU has an opportunity to contribute to change in the larger educational community of which we are all part. No doubt members of the committee will fan out across the land with workshops and conference presentations to help colleagues at other institutions to broaden their own ambitions in the area of general education assessment.

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

The institution will need to continue to make sound decisions in the development and effective implementation of the general education assessment plan in order to obtain accurate and useful data for the analysis of the current general education program. Ohio University will be required to make sound, data-driven judgments regarding the current general education program and be prepared to make the required changes to achieve the common learning objectives/outcomes desired. The ultimate success of this action project will depend upon obtaining broad-based faculty input and convincing the faculty of the importance of identifying and assessing common learning outcomes for general education courses. Success of the project will also require providing educational and professional development opportunities to faculty regarding the use of learning objectives/outcomes in the classroom and the assessment of these goals. Allocating monetary resources for new initiatives, as well as continuing projects, will remain difficult in hard budgetary times.

**Review (09-26-08):**

Challenges presented here are appropriate representations of carrying any program into an uncertain future. Awareness of challenge is fundamental to successful meeting of challenge. you have laid a strong foundation for the future in this year's work. Best wishes.

**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?**

**Review (09-26-08):**

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