
Action Project

Institution: Ohio University
Submitted: 2008-02-14
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 02-01-2008

Target completion date: 07-01-2009

Actual completion date: --

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

Coordinating Quality Improvement Activities with Strategic Planning at Ohio University

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

The goal of this action project is to create an effective and efficient infrastructure to coordinate and integrate quality improvement activities with the goals of the institutional strategic plan (Vision Ohio). Completion of this action project is expected to result in an institutional structure by which future quality improvement activities will develop into AQIP action projects that are aligned with the goals of Vision Ohio.

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

Primary Category: Planning Continuous Improvement

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:

Beginning with the 2004-05 academic year, Ohio University prepared its very first institutional strategic plan named Vision Ohio. As part of this plan, Ohio University set goals and ambitions in all areas of its academic mission including undergraduate and graduate education, research, faculty/staff/student quality and diversity, infrastructure, environment and national prominence. In 2005-06, the University employed a series of implementation teams to identify and prioritize specific goals and initiatives in each of these areas. As a result, a 15-20 year quality improvement "blueprint" for the institution was created which has, in turn, lead to the drafting of a five-year action implementation plan. What is currently missing from this strategic planning infrastructure is a mechanism to integrate, coordinate and develop quality improvement activities and projects, which are identified as priorities in the strategic plan, into AQIP action projects. The completion of this action project is timely in that it will create a mechanism to allow the institution to effectively and efficiently use its resources for quality improvement projects that strive to achieve the goals of the strategic plan.

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

* The Vision Ohio Executive Steering Committee - This committee is a broad-based group created to set specific priorities in order to achieve the goals of Vision Ohio. A goal of this action project will be to expand this group to include the members of the AQIP Advisory Committee. This expanded advisory group should better identify quality improvement initiatives that can be developed into AQIP action projects and also align with the goals of the strategic plan. * The AQIP Advisory Committee - This committee has been in existence since the institution joined AQIP in 2002 and has acted to steer decisions made by the institution to support quality improvement and the objectives of AQIP. Completion of this action project will result in more efficient integration of the activities of this group with the goals of the strategic plan. * Executive Leadership Team - This team consists of the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice Presidents and Academic Deans. Recommendations for strategic institutional investments are submitted to this group by the Vision Ohio Executive Steering Committee. Completion of this action project should result in elevating quality improvement

projects to top priority recommendations for the team to consider.

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

* Selection of AQIP Action Projects - Completion of this action project will result in a better alignment of future AQIP action project with the goals of the strategic plan. * Integrate Quality Improvement Initiatives with Strategic Planning - Successful completion of this action project will result in more efficient identification and prioritization of quality improvement projects that are aligned with the goals of the institution's strategic plan. * Increase Institutional Commitment Towards Quality Improvement - Achieving the goals of the Vision Ohio strategic plan is a top institutional priority. Integrating AQIP quality improvement goals into the strategic planning process will increase the institutional commitment towards quality improvement.

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

The Executive Vice President and Provost has agreed to and is supportive of the integration of quality improvement activities with the priority-setting process in order to achieve the goals of the strategic plan. The first step in this process will be to expand the Vision Ohio Executive Steering Committee to include members of the AQIP Advisory Committee and expand its charge. The committee's expanded charge will include identifying quality improvement initiatives that both align with the goals of the institutional strategic plan and can be developed into appropriate AQIP action projects. In order for the group to be successful with the expanded charge, the entire committee membership will need to be educated about the AQIP objectives including the advantages of an institutional commitment to quality improvement. It is expected that the integration of the two processes and an effective infrastructure to accomplish the goals of this action project can be completed within a calendar year.

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

The success of this action project will be assessed in two ways. The first metric will be the successful integration of the Vision Ohio Executive Steering Committee with the membership of the AQIP Advisory Committee. The second and most important metric will be monitoring the committee's progress on completing its charge to identify quality improvement initiatives which develop into future AQIP action projects and work towards achieving the goals of the institutional strategic 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:

* Successful integration of the Vision Ohio Executive Steering Committee and the AQIP Advisory Committee.
* Identification of quality improvement initiatives selected as priorities which work at achieving the goals of the strategic plan. * Development of these initiatives into AQIP action projects. * An increased presence and emphasis of quality improvement on campus.

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 main goal of this action project is to develop an infrastructure to coordinate and integrate the University's quality improvement efforts with the implementation of its institutional strategic plan (Vision OHIO). The initial objective of this project was completed at the end of the 2006-07 academic year with the integration of

the AQIP Advisory Committee with the Vision OHIO Steering Committee. The advisory committee was created in 2002 when the institution joined AQIP in order to inform decisions related to the university's participation in the program. The charge of this new and expanded steering committee was rewritten to include not only making and prioritizing specific project recommendations for the strategic plan but also to identify which quality improvement initiatives within the strategic plan can serve as AQIP action projects. The expanded steering committee spent the 2007-08 academic year planning and discussing its new charge, learning about institutional participation in AQIP, and gaining a greater understanding of the AQIP quality improvement philosophy. The steering committee was an active participant in the Quality Checkup Visit in April 2008. During that visit, the committee took part in extensive discussions with the checkup team regarding the group's future involvement in the University's AQIP activities. The steering committee was also instrumental in the development of the Five Year Vision OHIO Academic Plan (<http://www.ohio.edu/vision/fiveyearplan.cfm>). This plan contains specific goals, objectives, strategies and metrics for the implementation of the Vision OHIO strategic plan. It is the committee's responsibility to identify quality improvement (AQIP) action projects contained within or generated by the five year academic plan.

Review (09-17-08):

A. The university's action project strongly advances a necessary early step in the alignment of the institutional strategic planning with their AQIP work to address concerns in Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement. The wider membership in this newly structured committee should promote broader understanding and buy-in of internal stakeholders through learning and participation in the AQIP process while it also promotes stronger collaboration within the institution toward the achievement of strategic goals/action projects. The involvement the modified steering committee had in the 2008 Quality Checkup Visit demonstrates the critical role that the reconfigured body can have in shaping and advancing the college's improvement priorities.

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

The Vision OHIO Steering Committee was obviously very involved in the implementation and success of this action project. The expanded steering committee is a large (22 member) group which represents all campus constituency groups. The new charge of the committee, which includes responsibilities for the institution's participation in AQIP, requires the members to be thoroughly educated about the AQIP philosophy and its' relationship to the accreditation activities of the university. The committee has embraced this new charge with understanding and enthusiasm. It is strongly felt that with the creation and implementation of the strategic plan the university is now in an excellent position to fully benefit from the quality improvement philosophy and participation in AQIP. The alignment of the strategic plan implementation and AQIP is considered a logical and natural strategy and as a result it was not difficult to obtain full campus support for this activity.

Review (09-17-08):

B. It appears that the combining of the AQIP Advisory Committee into the Vision OHIO Steering Committee (working in a consultation relationship with the Executive Leadership Team) establishes a broad base for collaborative participation in the university's planning process. The careful alignment and coordination of AQIP projects with the university's larger planning priorities by this steering committee should promote a more manageable roster of improvement initiatives which the institution's people can pursue alongside their regular workloads with greater understanding of the projects relevance to the university's overall strategic direction. The size of the new committee is quite large which may create some problems in terms of basic group dynamics but the team's leadership will presumably have the foresight to structure the group's work in such a way that these challenges are minimized.

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

With the creation of the Five Year Academic Plan and the prioritization of the plan's first year activities (http://www.ohio.edu/vision/upload/yearone_5yearplan.pdf), the next step in the completion of this action project will be for the steering committee to perform a careful analysis of the academic plan and develop future AQIP action projects that align with the five year plan. The committee understands that not all of the objectives outlined in the academic plan will be suitable for development into action projects, so the committee will

continue to learn about the AQIP philosophy and work to select initiatives from the plan which focus on quality improvement and will help the institution gain the greatest benefit from its participation in AQIP.

Review (09-17-08):

C. As the new steering committee begins to work through an analysis of the academic plan they will learn much about the AQIP Categories and Principles of High Performance Organizations to guide their selection of action projects appropriate to both the university's strategic goals and AQIP improvement expectations. The alignment of these two guiding perspectives should do much to advance the institution in its further achievement of its overall mission and purposes. The committee may discover that challenging but manageable short-term action projects (taking six months to a year to complete) will serve well in the facilitation of pieces of larger strategic goals. Such action projects with more focused scope will allow the university's people to achieve goals with greater agility and then celebrate those valuable smaller successes on their way to deeper more profound improvement.

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

The work on this action project resulted in an infrastructure that aligns the implementation of the university strategic plan with its AQIP quality improvement efforts. This new infrastructure has greatly improved the efficiency of the planning process and has made the institution's AQIP endeavors a more inclusive process. Integration of the strategic plan implementation with AQIP activities has also elevated the exposure and importance of AQIP within the university community. In a large comprehensive academy such as Ohio University, communication and exposure of the campus community to the AQIP process has always been a significant challenge.

Review (09-17-08):

D. This integration of the AQIP leadership into the university's larger planning structure is probably critical for OU's personnel and even its external stakeholders to view the AQIP involvement as more than a bureaucratic add-on. The combined leadership should advance broader learning about AQIP and effective communication within the institution about improvement efforts.

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

Selection of future quality improvement activities which align with the five year academic plan will signal complete integration with the implementation of Vision OHIO. The university faces the challenge of making informed decisions regarding the selection of projects that have a high probability of success and meet both the goals of AQIP and of Vision OHIO. In addition, making the necessary budgetary commitments necessary to move forward on these initiatives will remain a challenge in the difficult financial times that continue to face the institution.

Review (09-17-08):

E. As stated above, smaller short-term projects which advance portions of larger elements of the Vision OHIO priorities will have greater probability of successful achievement. If the Vision OHIO was created as a 15-20 year quality improvement plan only six years ago, the steering committee should be able to analyze where the institution is in the actualizing of that plan and determine next steps in various aspects of the plan that the university has the resources to address in the shorter term. The work of the committee as advocates in the budgeting process should keep the goals of institutional improvement in the mix of demands voiced for what are undoubtedly limited resources.

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 (09-17-08):

N/A