

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Ohio University

Project Details	
Title	Expanding Capacity for an Institution-Wide Culture of Assessment
Category	1 - Helping Students Learn
Timeline	
Planned Project Kickoff	06-30-2015
Target Completion	06-30-2016
Status	ACTIVE
Updated	
Reviewed	
Created	12-20-2013
Version	2

1: PROJECT SUMMARY

A: This Action Project revises our previous Action Project on Academic Assessment. During our Strategy Forum in April 2015, we were encouraged to focus our Action Project to include activities that could be completed within nine months. Ohio University has a long history with academic assessment, beginning in the 1980's. With encouragement from the most recent Systems Appraisal, the University recognizes the need to revitalize its academic assessment efforts. The overall vision of the project is to recognize, develop, support, and share existing, proven practices among Ohio University faculty for improving student learning and expanding opportunities for student success.

2: PROJECT RATIONALE

A: The most recent Systems Appraisal identified a significant opportunity for improving assessment practices. In the work prior to the April 2015 Strategy Forum, we identified academic assessment as an area in which Ohio University needs to provide University-wide support for its decentralized and diverse academic colleges, schools/departments, and campuses. Ohio University desires to use AQIP and the newly-revised HLC Criteria for Accreditation to help it achieve its mission, which is the intellectual and personal development of its students, and its vision, to become the nation's best transformative learning community. The University is planning for a Comprehensive Quality Review and reaffirmation of accreditation in 2015-16, and is using the newly-revised Criteria for Accreditation, particularly Criteria Three and Four, to bring new energy and attention to its teaching, learning, and assessment efforts. The University desires to ensure that faculty have a systematic, faculty-centered approach to continuous improvement through a focus on learning objectives.

At the April 2015 Strategy Forum, we were encouraged to move all our Action Projects to the new staggered cycle (winter, spring, summer). This Action Project is being moved to the Spring cycle. Activities will begin in fall semester and will extend throughout the 2015-16 academic year. This Action Project is the first phase of what is expected to be a multiphase set of projects related to assessment.

3: PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: Ohio University desires to recognize, develop, support, and share proven practices for improving student learning and expanding opportunities for student success. There are two overarching goals of this Action Project. The first is to identify and profile existing work that faculty are doing related to SOTL, academic assessment, and student success. The second is to provide incentives and encouragement for new and innovative efforts to improve teaching and learning. Following is the Action Planning Template that was developed at the April 2015 Strategy Forum:

Action/Milestone/Deliverable	Lead	Due Date	Measure/Target
Profile design	UCM	8/15/2015	Ready to populate
Faculty information	EVPP	10/1/2015	30% returned by 10/1/2015
New Faculty Profile			
Profiles up	UCM	AY 2015-16	75% Group I by 5/1/2016 50% Group II by 5/1/2016
Revise call for 1804 proposals to encourage SOTL-oriented projects	VPUE	8/15/2015	Posted
1804 Grants for			Increase the percentage of

SOTL	Publicize 1804 revision	VPUE SVPII	3/1/2016	increase the percentage of applications and awards with SOTL components
	Inventory assessment and SOTL activities	SVPII	10/15/2015	Create spreadsheet
Inventory/Showcase	Communicate range of assessment and SOTL activities	SVPII VPUE UCM OIT	11/15/2015	Website updated

4: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: All academic departments/schools, colleges, and regional campuses are expected to be involved in academic assessment activities. Key stakeholders are faculty; students; academic leadership; staff; Board of Trustees; and external stakeholders.

The Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee will coordinate the goals and objectives of this Action Project. Specific individuals and offices have been tasked with actions identified at the Strategy Forum. Referring to the Action Planning Template in #3 above, the Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP) bears ultimate responsibility for delegating these activities to the most appropriate personnel. University Communication and Marketing (UCM) and the EVPP office will develop a way to gather information from incoming faculty on activities related to SOTL and profile these through UCM outlets throughout fall semester. The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation will work to set aside part of an existing internal grant (1804 Grants) to encourage SOTL-oriented projects, publicize the revisions, and solicit grant applications from faculty across the University. These vice provosts will also work with UCM and the Office of Information Technology to inventory existing, exemplary assessment and SOTL activities from current faculty, and show case them throughout the University.

5: PROJECT CONTROL

A: Referring to the Action Planning Template in #3 above, specific measures, targets, and dates have been identified. Some of the targets are determined simply by the completion of the actual activity. These activities include completion of the new faculty profile, the 1804 Grant RFPs being posted, the inventory spreadsheet of assessment/SOTL activities, and University Web sites being updated. Other activities will be measured by percentage of faculty involvement/response to requests for profile information and percent increase in 1804 Grant applications related to assessment/SOTL.

6: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: We assume sufficient faculty interest and participation for success of the Action Project, particularly from new faculty. Current policies and incentives (e.g. existing promotion and tenure guidelines) may constrain the Action Project's degree of success. Resources (time and financial) are constrained. Effective communication across a large, diverse, and decentralized research university is challenging. Faculty already have many competing interests and duties. Sustained support and attention from the project's sponsor (EVPP) and collaborators is crucial. Financial stability, currently a major challenge for public universities, is crucial.

7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A: We anticipate that this Action Project will take up to three years for all components to mature. The first phase, described above, is expected to occur during the 2015-16 academic year. As this project matures and evolves, additional activities will be carried out to expand Ohio University's capacity for an institution-wide culture of assessment (e.g., redesigning the new faculty orientation, creating an awards program to recognize specific faculty achievements in this area).