

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Bay de Noc Community College

Project Details			
<b>Title</b>	Clarify the definition of and implement the general education model.	<b>Status</b>	COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	1-Helping Students Learn	<b>Updated</b>	09-11-2008
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>	09-28-2008
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 07-14-2004	<b>Created</b>	11-24-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b>	<b>Version</b>	4

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The goals of this project include 1) the development of a clearly articulated and published philosophy of general education; 2) a consolidation of the current 14 outcomes into a more manageable model; and 3) a revamping of program curriculum to comply with the newly defined model.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** Since the 1999 implementation of our Continuous Improvement (CI) system and the subsequent revamping of the college's general education model, we have realized the need to further refine our general education outcomes into a more manageable model. Prior to 1999, the model consisted of 29 outcomes and, through the CI process, was pared down to the existing 14. We now recognize the need to further modify and reduce the outcomes to a number that is both more manageable and measurable. In the fall of 2003, the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities conducted a focused visit to evaluate progress toward our model, and the resulting report recommended three changes to the current model - the three goals of this project.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The areas most impacted by this project are the academic divisions and the CI General Education Team. Additional areas being impacted are instructional administration, CI Team to Assessment Student Academic Achievement, Student Services, and the Director of Institutional Research.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** Critical processes include: · Reviewing and revising the general education governance procedures; · Defining four to six outcomes; · Identifying courses and activities that meet the outcomes for the general education architecture; · Modifying program curriculum and course content as necessary to comply with the general education model; and · Obtaining approval from curriculum committee and board of trustees for each program that is revised to comply with the new model.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** Focus will be maintained through: · Regular meetings of the CI General Education Team. · Monthly updates from liaisons at CI Steering Committee meetings. · Celebrations upon completion of each goal. · Recognitions of peoples' efforts. · Routine communication and board progress updates.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** Process measures include: · Conducting faculty meetings for discussion and agreement on general education outcomes; · Regularly distributing information and progress reports to faculty for review; · Overseeing proposals through the approval process; · Identifying courses that meet general education outcomes; · Revising program curriculum and course content; · Overseeing approval to changes in curriculum; and · Presenting information to faculty (and staff) at retreats, start-up days, and other meetings.

## 7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Outcome measures include: · Number of faculty discussions; · Amount and frequency of communication; · Length of time it takes for proposals to go through the approval process; · Approved general education governance procedures; · Approved general education outcomes; · List of courses and the general education outcomes that are met; and · Programs that comply with the new general education architecture.

## 8: Other Information

A: In August of 2004, the faculty will decide on a governance model and the general education outcomes. By March of 2005, the courses and program listing will be complete and all will have been routed to the Board of Trustees for approval in time to be submitted for the 2005-2007 college catalog, available in the summer of 2005. Years two and three will be devoted to evaluating the general education model and procedures and modifying as needed. Years two and three will be devoted to evaluating the general education model and procedures and modifying as needed.

## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Even though the goals of this Action Project were completed after the 2006-2007 academic year, the General Education team continues to actively meet due to the importance of general education. During the 2007-2008 academic year, many of the General Education (GE) team's activities involved preparing for the next revision of the GE model's outcomes. The outcomes are scheduled to be reviewed with any potential changes implemented by the fall of 2009. Utilizing the results of a survey conducted in fall 2007, it was determined that research needed to be conducted, outside help solicited, and the team needed to strategize for effective communication and collaboration across the campus in regards to the general education model. Subsequently, the general education models at all of the community colleges in Michigan were reviewed and summarized. An NCA-HLC mentor was invited to speak at the beginning of the fall 2008 semester and a session at the faculty in-service was scheduled for general education discussion at the beginning of the same semester. Other activities included: clarification of general education terminology, regular monthly meetings, and a review of NCA-HLC's position on general education. Also, each academic division specified their ideal GE model. As the team readies for the fall 2009 revision, they want to allow some flexibility for faculty to be creative in the delivery of the outcome's content while ensuring that all programs meet all of the general education outcomes. In addition to preparing for future GE outcomes, the team also serves in collaboration with the Student Assessment Team to assure that each outcome is being met in all Associate degree programs.

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The General Education team is chaired by a full-time faculty member and consists of eight members – a faculty representative from each academic division, the college's transfer advisor, and an instructional dean who is a non-voting member of the committee. One member also serves on the Assessment Team and acts as a liaison between the two teams. Identifying an active student representative was difficult; consequently, each member was asked to obtain student input from within their classes. The academic dean was the liaison with the Instructional Leaders Team, keeping them abreast of progress. All GE meetings are announced and open to entire campus community. This project, along with the other three AQIP Action Projects, was formally identified as an Institutional Initiative in the fall of 2004 and was regularly reviewed by the Continuous Improvement Steering Committee. Although the General Education model is faculty led and driven, the Vice President for Instruction and Student Learning is ultimately responsible for this project. While the instructional dean will keep the instructional vice president informed of team activities, problems, and concerns, the instructional vice president has regularly attended all GE meetings.

### 3: Next Steps

A: The goals of the project were: 1) the development of a clearly articulated and published philosophy of general education; 2) a consolidation of the current 14 outcomes into a more manageable model; and 3) a revamping of program curriculum to comply with the newly defined model. The General Education team feels that they have accomplished the above mentioned goals and the project is being retired this fall. Even though the Action Project is completed the GE team will continue to meet on a regular basis to assure the General Education continues to be a priority at Bay College. The next planned steps include open discussions throughout the fall 2008

semester, a faculty forum at the beginning of the winter 2009 semester. By the end of the 2008-2009 academic year a decision should be made as to any needed revisions to our current GE model. In addition to planning for future changes, the GE team will continue to serve to assure that all programs include all GE outcomes according to the current model.

#### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: As a result of this project, there is now an ongoing process for regularly evaluating both the general education model and outcomes. Using a four-year cycle, the faculty-led process includes a regular examination and potential revision of the outcomes. It integrates with the curriculum-development process to ensure that outcomes are being incorporated into the curriculum through either a distributed or course model. Faculty has assumed responsibility for leading and implementing the process with little direction from administration. All of the progress we have seen, with both general education and assessment, has been directly linked to having these as our two primary AQIP projects.

#### 5: Project Challenges

A: With the upcoming review of the GE outcomes in this academic year the faculty will once again be asked to agree upon a GE model for all students at Bay College. Given the diverse range of programs and faculty at Bay College this often is a challenge. Part of this challenge is obtaining consensus without compromising the integrity of particular programs, such as the occupational programs. The occupational programs frequently have restrictions in terms of the number of available credit hours to use for general education courses. This leads to controversial discussion regarding GE and how it's implemented and measured. With the GE survey and planned faculty forums, the GE team hopes to make this process as smooth as possible. By starting the process last year, the GE team attempted to provide sufficient time for everyone's opinions to be heard and considered. The timeline was adjusted in 2006-2007 so that revision of the outcomes is on a four year cycle rather than a three year cycle. This change in the timeline was to allow more time between revisions so that each model can be thoroughly implemented, assessed, and evaluated before the next cycle of change occurs as well as to obtain some stability in the GE requirements for the students. Even with this extra year between cycles, it still remains a challenge to keep all parties interested and invested in this process. The impact of the new Michigan Merit Curriculum on Bay College's GE model may also be a challenge. The concern is that the new high school requirements, especially in the math area, may exceed the level of math that is currently in Bay's GE model.

#### 6: AQIP Involvement

A:

### Update Review

#### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: After having completed the goals of the Action Project in the 2006-07 academic year, the GE team has continued to actively meet and prepare for the next model revision. Having determined the need for research and outside assistance, the team solicited input from an NCA-HLC mentor in the fall 2008 semester. These activities exemplify the principles of high performance organizations; CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, FORESIGHT and INVOLVEMENT. The inclusion of the Student Assessment Team is lauded as it reflects the AQIP category #3 UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS NEEDS.

#### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The formation of a diverse committee that includes both academic and support service representatives is a way to encourage and support COLLABORATION and across campus commitment to the project. Although the Vice-President for Instruction and Student Learning is ultimately responsible for the project and regularly attends meetings, the GE team is led by the faculty with input from other important stakeholders. The sharing of information through liaison representation and open meetings reflects the AQIP category #5 LEADING and COMMUNICATING.

#### 3: Next Steps

**A:** In keeping with AQIP category #8, PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, a system for soliciting input from faculty was developed in 2006-2007. The regularly scheduled meetings of the GE team provide an avenue for the continuing discussion of these issues. It might also be helpful to compare how the institution's planning process compares to other comparable higher education organizations. The monitoring of all the programs for inclusion of the current GE outcomes is commendable.

#### **4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:** The institution has stated that there is an ongoing process for evaluating the general education model and outcomes. Having completed the four-year cycle, Bay might consider obtaining evidence regarding the effectiveness of the system used for planning continuous improvement (8R5).

#### **5: Project Challenges**

**A:** The GE committee is commended for recognizing the difficulty of achieving faculty consensus on GE outcomes without compromising program integrity. As the institution is planning faculty forums, perhaps some of these could be tailored to address the concerns raised by programs constrained by number of available credit hours available for the inclusion of GE courses. Input from faculty might facilitate the integration of GE objectives into existing program courses or in the development of courses connecting GE objectives with content specific to occupational programs.

#### **6: AQIP Involvement**

**A:** Global Assessment-1. Through this project Bay de Noc Community College has demonstrated exceptional accomplishment. As a result of this project, Bay has developed an ongoing process for the systematic evaluation of its general education model and outcomes. This project exemplifies the principles of INVOLVEMENT, FORESIGHT and COLLABORATION. Well done. Reviewer # 9898