The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Bay de Noc Community College

Project Details

Title	Migration of Student Information System from Jenzabar TE to EX	**Status**	COMPLETED
Category	6-Supporting Institutional Operations	**Updated**	09-14-2010
Timeline		**Reviewed**	10-02-2010
Planned Project Kickoff	06-01-2009	**Created**	03-31-2010
Actual Completion	07-18-2011	**Version**	1

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this project is to upgrade Bay College's administrative software Student Information System (SIS) from Jenzabar TE to Jenzabar EX. This upgrade will greatly increase the capabilities of Bay's information system and, thereby, allow for a wealth of new online enhancements for both students and employees of Bay College. The steps of this action project include working with the vendor to determine appropriate timelines and proper configuration protocols, working with an outside partner to assist in project management, and the eventual installation of the system and the training of all Bay College employees.

2: Reasons For Project

A: The limitations of Bay's current SIS have become a significant barrier to progress. This upgrade represents a critical step for the future of the institution. The efficiencies and new capabilities this system will provide include: students ability to access more information online; instructors ability to store more information about their students' progress; new possibility to adopt the creation of student ID cards with pictures, since the new system will be able to store photos within a student record; creation and efficient use of electronic degree audits.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: All departments of the College, and even stakeholders external to the organization, will be impacted by this upgrade. Internal stakeholders, specifically College employees, will be impacted most, however, due to the training required and the direct contact with the new interface. As would be expected with a project of this nature, Information Technology will be the department most involved in leading the Action Project. However, a team of representatives from across the College has been meeting on a weekly basis for the past several months to discuss and plan for the migration. This group, known as the Module Managers Team, is involved in properly configuring the new system's settings and in preparing for the data conversion.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The completion of is Action Project will improve the processes of literally every department within Bay College. While some initial training will be required, especially early in the system's implementation, the enhanced capabilities will have a very positive impact in College operations. One example of the impact this new system will be within Bay's Institutional Research (IR) department. Currently, all file and field names within the TE database structure are a cryptic series of letters and numbers that make it difficult to determine what type of data a specific file or field may contain. The new system uses English language names, which will make it much easier to identify information sources and write queries. The system upgrade will also allow IR to write the code behind queries and then share that query design with other departments. This seemingly simple process change will allow any department in the College to access real-time data on the measures important to them. IR will write the code; the departments can run it whenever they want. The system even allows for the creation of graphical dashboards, thereby making the use of data an easy task for all College departments. This is just one small example among many of how the new SIS will improve Bay College processes.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The industry standard for an installation of this magnitude is typically 2 – 3 years. Bay College, however, will complete the full installation in 22 months. The initial implementation schedule called for a 17-month installation, but after discussing this schedule with

employees and estimating the time demands of the upgrade, the schedule was extended to 22 months.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Bay College has partnered with an outside vendor, one who has worked with the College extensively in the past, to assist with project management duties related to this conversion. In addition to this project manager, the vendor also employs a project manager who assists with scheduling and task completion. The Module Managers Team also meets on a weekly basis to accomplish tasks and monitor the implementation's progress against the deadlines that have been set forth. At this point, a very detailed schedule has been developed and is being followed closely by all parties.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: A project of this nature does not require as many success indicators as other projects that are more directly related to student success. However, that is not to say that the success of this project won't be closely monitored. Before the new SIS goes live, extensive testing will take place to ensure the new system's operation and compatibility with Bay's other systems and processes. Staff from the vendor will also be on-campus the week the system goes live, providing additional support to make the initial transition as smooth as possible. The ultimate success for this project, however, will be the new capabilities and efficiencies that are realized and utilized after its initial implementation.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: A very detailed training and implementation schedule was developed by the leaders of this initiative in coordination with the vendor. Work on the Project has been progressing over the past months and has been prompted and structured by the scheduled Training Trips, where the vendor's trainers visit campus for several days and work with a focused group of stakeholders to train them on the new system and prepare the data for conversion.

2: Institution Involvement

A: A core team, called the Module Managers Team, has been meeting to work on properly configuring the new system and is preparing for the conversion of data into the new system. The Module Managers group consists of the key front-end users of data, including for example, the registrar, business office personnel, IT staff, financial aid staff, advising and admissions personnel.
In addition to members of the core team, others have been brought into the process on an as needed basis. For example, the new system will permit wider fields to use for course descriptions, i.e. EN 101—Rhetoric & Composition can now be listed as ENGL 101—Rhetoric & Composition. So the registrar has met with the respective deans and faculty leaders to explain the new option and developed guidelines and a timeline for collecting and using the new course descriptors.

3: Next Steps

A: Next steps include the planned continuation of preparation and training for the migration to meet the target date of mid-March, 2011, to move to the new EX system.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: A key element with a Project like this that is broad in scale is the importance of involving key stakeholders in the planning and scheduling of training. The Training Trips require colleagues to be away from their offices for extended periods of time and the conversion work that takes place behind the scenes has to be attended to while fulfilling normal operational duties. Therefore, scheduling has to be managed in a way that enables colleagues time to prepare for the conversion while keeping up with their regular work responsibilities.

5: Project Challenges

A: Engaging in a Project of this magnitude while leading other initiatives is a challenge for the College's IT staff. The strategy developed by the Executive Director of IT to meet this and other challenges has been to carefully map and prioritize all IT projects, so that the team can manage and stay on top of the tasks. Also, hiring additional IT staff and reorganizing responsibilities within the group was necessary to enable the IT team to complete all projects in a timely fashion.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Recognition of the need to have vendor assistance in developing the plan, supporting the implementation, and providing training help secure the success of this project. In addition to supporting institutional operations (AQIP Category 6), the collaboration between the institution and the vendor suggests that AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships is being served. Bay du Noc Community College might want to consider documenting the involvement of the vendor as a successful vendor relationship, since given the number of vendors serving higher education, other institutions might be able to apply it to their relationships with vendors.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The concept of a core team and the involvement of others who the project will impact, such as the registrar, deans, and faculty serves AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating. The inclusion of the people touched most significantly by the change on the Module Manager Team shows a commitment to assuring the project is successful. By providing information before big changes, Bay Du Noc Community College may be circumventing resistance to the change. Developing guidelines and providing a timeline reduces the impact of the change.

3: Next Steps

A: It appears that Bay Du Noc Community College has developed and is proceeding with a plan that will help assure the success of this Action Project. The institution may want to consider providing more details about how the plan is implemented, including the progress of preparation, the training plan, and the plan target date for the move. There also may be follow-up steps that have been considered. All these elements help support the Action Project and can be written into reports to provide other institutions with information about the complexity of the project.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Recognizing the impact of the Action Project on existing operations is essential to a successful technology upgrade. Bay Du Noc Community College appears to have grasped the impact and developed a successful plan to mitigate this impact. The attention to people speaks of the institution's commitment to AQIP Category 4: Valuing People.

5: Project Challenges

A: The impact on IT seems to have been significant and it appears that the institution has met that challenge by mapping and prioritizing IT projects, hiring additional staff, and reorganizing responsibilities. The careful attention to workload shows a commitment to AQIP Category 4: Valuing People, while prioritizing and mapping show a commitment to AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating. Bay Du Noc Community College might wish to consider documenting this project so that other institutions considering undertaking a move of this magnitude will have a road map.

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: This project is being closed because the new Jenzabar EX enterprise resource planning (ERP) system was successfully installed in July. This project represented a massive undertaking that involved the implementation of a new database infrastructure, the migration

of data from our existing system to the new one, the training of users, the installation of appropriate software, and many other planning- and implementation-related tasks. Since the new system has been operating successfully for the past two months, the project itself can be considered completed.

2: Success Factors

A: This project was a success simply due to the fact that the new system has been installed and is operating as intended. The many aspects of making this transition successfully, including data migration, general module configuration, training, software installation, and more, were all carried out as planned and implemented satisfactorily. The efforts of the IT department and the many other individuals involved in this project were deservedly recognized at a special celebratory event in July.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: While most of the various components of this system were implemented without trouble, several post-installation problems did occur in a couple of the modules associated with the new information system. These problems were quickly addressed and corrected, but their occurrence was likely the result of insufficient planning and follow-through on the part of those responsible for these system components. This experience underscores the importance of fully understanding the requirements of each individual role within any kind of project implementation process and regularly communicating regarding the status of those duties. Developing and maintaining project to-do lists at all levels of project implementation might be one way to prevent this event from occurring in the future.