Aligning Strategic Planning and AQIP Action Project Update

September 2010

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

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the action team focused on developing the strategic planning process and piloting the process by developing the college's strategic plan. The team identified five key steps to the strategic planning process:

- Prepare stakeholders for participation
- Gather data from stakeholders
- Identify major themes and strategies
- Prioritize strategies
- Develop assessment measures

Accomplishments related to each step included:

Step 1 – Prepare stakeholders for participation

- In September, faculty and staff had the opportunity to participate in a survey about their preferred methods to receive information related to the strategic planning process. More than 100 employees shared their ideas.

- In response to the survey feedback, we created a channel on the portal for strategic planning. There you can find the environmental scan, links to detailed data, a copy of our last strategic plan, and information about the planning process.

- A Knowledge Exchange (lunch-time presentation open to employees and the public) on the Strategic Planning Process was held on December 14.

Step 2 - Gather data from stakeholders

- The Planning Advisory Council (PAC) divided into three subcommittees to focus on gathering information from our primary stakeholders: students, employees, and the community. Volunteers from the campus community were also added to these subcommittees.

- Student subcommittee

    o A student survey asking three questions about Lakeland's key strengths, challenges and opportunities for change/improvement was distributed by faculty during the last week of fall classes.

- o The committee reviewed the survey data and decided no additional data was necessary.

- o The final survey report was prepared by Institutional Research and students from the subcommittee.

- Employee subcommittee

  - o An online employee survey asking the same three questions as the student survey was conducted December 8 – January 22.

  - o The committee met to review the survey data. The final survey report was prepared by Institutional Research.

  - o Strategic planning meetings were held with the faculty, staff, and administration.
    - A strategic planning meeting for faculty was held during Reading Days.
    - A strategic planning retreat for administrators and supervisory professionals was held March 18.
    - Two meetings with the staff were held on March 16 and March 24.
  - o Information from the employee meetings was summarized and shared with all employees. The PAC reviewed the information in preparation for developing strategies.

- Community subcommittee

  - o An external facilitator met with the deans and Executive Vice President and Provost to gather their input on the direction of the strategic plan and to provide a basis for the development of the community survey.

  - o A community telephone survey of 400 Lake County residents was conducted in February. The final survey report was prepared by an external research firm.

  - o A supplemental electronic survey was conducted of area employers. A summary report was prepared by Institutional Research.

  - o Findings of the community survey were shared with the Board of Trustees on March 25.

- All data were shared with subcommittee members and the deans prior to the strategy development meeting. All reports were also posted on the strategic planning portal.

Step 3 – Identify major themes and strategies

- The PAC, deans, and volunteer subcommittee members met on April 7 for a strategy development session, facilitated by the college president, Dr. Beverage.
- A SWOT analysis, derived from existing data, was reviewed and modified.
- Strategic issues from the AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report were incorporated.
- Future statements, also derived from existing data, were changed to vision statements.
- From a gap analysis, four themes or categories were identified to provide a framework for the development of strategies. These themes were: Student Success, Capacity, Delivery, and Stability.

Step 4 – Prioritize strategies

- After identifying strategies, members of the group voted (with dots) as to which strategies were the most important
- The information from this session provided a sense of priorities and a way to re-group the strategies into themes or strategic directions. The rewritten strategic directions were reviewed at the president's cabinet meeting on April 26.
- The Board of Trustees reviewed the identified strategies at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on April 29.

Step 5 – Develop assessment measures

Following the review of strategies by the Board, Indicators of Progress were identified for each strategic goal. From these, metrics are being identified in order to set targets and measure progress.

The strategies and Indicators of Progress were pulled together to create the Strategic Plan. The Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees at their June 2010 meeting.

As part of the ongoing discussions with the PAC, it was recommended that the best way to align strategic planning and AQIP was to integrate the AQIP Steering Committee with the PAC. This would create one planning group for the college and ensure that action projects are aligned with the strategic plan. To help make this happen, the college created a new planning position and hired a Manager of Planning in August 2010 to take responsibility for the alignment and measurement of progress. The college also purchased Accountability Management System software to be used to document, analyze, manage, and archive outcomes assessment and accountability initiatives for the strategic plan.

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

The Planning Advisory Council represents all areas of the college. Faculty are appointed to the council through the collective bargaining unit. Six members are appointed to represent the

teaching and non-teaching faculty. Two staff members are appointed by the staff association. Two administrators serve on the council. The academic administrator is appointed by the Executive Vice-President and Provost and the non-academic administrator is appointed by the President. Two students are selected through the student government association. The president's cabinet also serves on the council and consists of the executive vice president, three vice presidents, an associate vice president, the president's chief of staff, and the presidents of the faculty association and staff association. Ex officio members include the research director, budget manager, and Dean of Students.

The entire campus community was invited to join the subcommittees for gathering data. All employees were asked to complete a survey and to participate in a group meeting. In addition, the draft plan was available on the portal for all employees to review. Regular updates were sent electronically to inform the campus community about the progress of the development and to solicit suggestions for the plan or the process.

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

Next steps for the project include:

- Completing the identification of metrics and appropriate targets
- Implementing the system for collecting data and communicating results to the college
- Integrating the AQIP Steering Committee with the PAC
- Evaluating the process that was used for the development of the plan and institutionalizing the process

D. Describe any effective practices that have resulted from your work on this Action Project:

An effective practice was the involvement of the entire campus community to provide data for the plan. There was significant involvement by faculty, staff, and administrators in creating the strategies and prioritizing them.

Another effective practice was the co-chairing of the action team by a faculty member and administrator. Combining the two perspectives when writing and reviewing the plan helped to produce a plan that everyone could buy into.

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

The greatest challenge we face is the implementation of a combined planning group and monitoring progress toward the identified goals. Beginning this fall, we plan to integrate the AQIP Steering Committee functions with those of the PAC. On paper, this is an easy task. However, the responsibilities of the PAC will be significantly greater and will require strong leadership and a dedicated group of employees. Having a new position that assumes responsibility for planning will greatly assist this process.

Another challenge will be to collect appropriate data to measure progress toward the goals and strategies of the strategic plan and to communicate progress to the campus community. Again, having one person who is able to identify the appropriate people within the college to collect data and who will follow-up will be an asset.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your needs(s) and tell us who to contact.

The action team appreciates any feedback on this project.