

---

## **Action Project**

### **Institutional Quality – Connected Learning Opportunities**

**Status: Retired**

---

**Institution:** Wayne State College

**Submitted:** 2002-05-29

---

#### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date:

Target completion date:

Actual completion date:

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

Institutional Quality - Connected Learning Opportunities

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

The main goal for this project is to increase the variety and number of connected learning opportunities on campus. These include service learning opportunities, internships, co-op experiences, learning communities, blocked courses, interdisciplinary courses, and opportunities for developing leadership. Other activities include developing a spot survey process on the web, forming freshman cohort groups, continued implementation of AQIP, and enhancing the guest lecture series.

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

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

#### 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:

This was selected as one of the vital few by the AQIP Council during the self assessment process. Academic and Institutional Quality were also selected as very important by the focus groups in 1999-2000. Internships, co-op experiences, interdisciplinary courses, and leadership opportunities are established on campus, but could be expanded to other areas. Service learning and learning communities opportunities are just beginning and are being developed by several faculty. The web survey, freshman cohort groups, AQIP, and the guest lecture series were included as additional ways to improve institutional quality.

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

Academic areas will be the most affected by this project. Student housing could also be affected as we begin to work with learning communities.

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

Instruction will be the most directly affected process. Connected experiences may also have an impact on retention. Registration may also be affected as we begin to offer blocked courses.

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

AQIP topics will be a regular part of the campus bulletin, progress on projects will be reported at the fall and spring faculty and staff meetings. Open meetings will be scheduled to discuss specific activities and recruit volunteers. Specific members of the AQIP Council have been assigned to facilitate different aspects of this project.

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

The students in the service learning and learning communities blocked courses will be assessed before and after the courses and will be compared to students in traditional courses. Attendance at the guest lecture events will be monitored. The AQIP Council will be monitoring the progress on the vital few and continue to develop the project.

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:

Student evaluations from service learning and blocked courses will be compared to regular courses. Students participating in these pilot projects will be tracked as a cohort to see if there are differences in retention, and academic performance. Evaluations of the guest lecture series will be collected and reviewed.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

Double the number of service learning involved courses. Double the attendance at the guest lecture series events. Learning communities move beyond the pilot project phase and become a regular part of the curriculum.50% of the faculty involved in either service learning or learning communities courses.

---

Last Action Project Update: 2006-09-14

---

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

Learning Communities have become an established part of the Graduate Education

Program. We are in our third generation of learning communities and have 3 communities currently active at different locations. The communities average about 50 fulltime graduate students each. Some locations are in their second or third community. A new type of learning community has been developed in School Administration and a cohort is being planned for a January, 2006 start.

Service Learning has also become institutionalized. Last year we had more than 940 students participating, producing more than 9000 "service learning hours". This involved 110 representatives from 70 area agencies and 15 area schools. More than 25 faculty from 15 disciplines included service learning projects in 32 classes, 10 staff members were also involved.

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

New faculty were trained in the Learning Community style of instruction and a faculty member was given release time to help coordinate learning community activities and planning.

Faculty and staff were able to apply for grant money to support their service learning projects. Recognition was provided through a newsletter and our webpage. A faculty member and a staff member were assigned to service learning as a part of their load.

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

This action project will be retired after the review period. At the May 2006 strategy forum it was decided that these activities were sufficiently institutionalized and did not need further priority status, even though support will continue. A new action project to enhance international education opportunities was indicated as a new priority in this area by a campus wide strategic planning process.

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

The use of local grant money that could be applied for by faculty or staff to support their service learning projects was very effective.

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

None, both aspects of this project have been institutionalized.

**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?**

---