

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

San Juan College

Project Details		
Title	Designing and Piloting a Program/Discipline Review Process at SJC	Status REVIEWED
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated 09-14-2010
Timeline		Reviewed 09-20-2010
Planned Project Kickoff	08-19-2008	Created 11-24-2009
Target Completion	06-30-2010	Version 2 of 2

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this action project is to ensure relevancy, currency, and quality of curriculum programs at SJC so that completers will be prepared to successfully enter the workforce or transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Sustaining continuous improvement in curriculum through a process that periodically reviews SJC's academic programs has been an on-going challenge. This ongoing challenge was identified in the April 2008 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report as both strategic issue (SJC must expand on the depth and breadth of data used for decision making) and in Category 1: Learning as an Opportunity for Improvement (1P8). The Learning Leadership Team formed a Program Review Task Force that investigated program review processes at other community colleges to determine which might be most suitable for adaptation at SJC. The team has designed a process of review for SJC that includes criteria for review; data to analyze, schedule of implementation, and a vehicle for carrying out the review process.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The organizational areas most affected by, or involved in this project include Learning and Institutional Research and Planning. In addition, review teams for each program/discipline will be comprised of representation from faculty, administration, and advisory committee members. Vice President of Institutional Research and Planning will present a report to the Board of Trustees on findings of pilot review process with subsequent annual report on findings of each review cycle.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The key organizational process this Action Project will change or improve is academic program/discipline review.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The review will be piloted in academic year 2008-09 with the intent of establishing an ongoing review cycle in which each program/discipline will be reviewed every three years with annual progress reports on improvement that each develops as a result of its review. Seven programs/disciplines have been identified to participate in the pilot to be conducted August 2008-February 2009. The time frame for this Action Project allows for two cycles of deployment and process improvement.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Progress will be monitored through the following activities: (1) Formation of review teams (11 members per team with representation from each school) for each program/discipline, (2) Review team recommendations and commendations reports submitted to Vice President of Learning, (3) Development of program/discipline improvement plan based on team recommendations, and (4) Annual progress report on improvements.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Outcome measures include: (1) Curricula revised to ensure responsive to labor market demands and/or articulated with the curricula of institutions to which students intend to transfer, (2) Commendations and recommendations given to Vice President for Learning for continued improvement of reviewed programs/disciplines and (3) Student learning assessment is documented and being utilized for improvement purposes.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Accomplishments included redesigning and piloting an academic program review process that includes both a Desk Audit (Phase I) and Comprehensive Review (Phase II). The Academic Program Desk Audit model was designed by the Learning Leadership Team (LLT), Vice President of Learning, Associate Vice President of Institutional Resources and Planning and the President. The LLT is comprised of the Deans of each school, Associate Vice President of Learning and Vice President of Learning. The following programs/disciplines were included in the Desk Audit review: Commercial Drivers License, Auto Body, Accounting, Math, Nursing and Psychology. Phase II will be piloted in FY 2010-11.

The Desk Audit review consists of the following indicators: Enrollment, credit hours, outcomes (end of semester completers, completers with A,B,C grades, program graduates), and cost effectiveness (program expenses including total program/discipline expenses, direct instruction expense, direct instruction as percentage of total program/discipline expenses, and program revenues including program fees, reimbursement revenue). The point system is based on a maximum possible of 75 points. If needed, the Academic Program Evaluation and Review Advisory Committee will request additional information, and determine if a full Phase II review is necessary to be sure that the program is on track for such items as students academic progress, course delivery, learning outcomes, and budget. Desk Audit results of the pilot were Commercial Drivers License (61 pts), Auto Body (63 pts), Accounting (67 pts), Math (72 pts), Nursing (53 pts) and Psychology (69 pts).

The Nursing Program had the lowest score but is one of our most complex programs. This program will make an excellent example for refining the process of determining which programs required a Phase II review in order for the institution to be assured that the program still fits with the College mission, is high quality and also financially viable.

Current Status: Active

2: Institution Involvement

A: The Academic Program Desk Audit model was designed by the LLT, Vice President of Learning, Associate Vice President of Institutional Resources and Planning and the President. The desk audit was conducted by Associate Vice President of Institutional Resources and Planning working with the design team, Institutional Research, Business Services and Human Resources, and in communication with the Vice President for Learning.

3: Next Steps

A: Next steps include the following: (1) Organize an Academic Program Evaluation and Review Advisory Committee, (2) Conduct an academic program desk audit of all programs, (3) Develop Phase 2 (full and comprehensive) review process. Key stakeholders to be involved in development of Phase 2 include the Learning Leadership Team (LLT), VP of Learning, faculty (representatives from each school), Institutional Resources and Planning and the Academic Program Evaluation and Review Advisory Committee (4) Develop a program review handbook and (5) Identify program review software to assist in program review data management.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Effective practices learned from revising the review process piloted the previous year include the following which should better serve the needs of both industry focused and academic programs: (1) Improved analysis of data based on a agreed set of measurable outcomes (eg. credits rather than faculty load, completers; completers with passing grade of A,B or C (2) revised computation of Program/Discipline (Cost Center) Reimbursement to Cost Center expenses which are now included in program income through student fees and other funding sources, (3) All programs are reviewed based on same indicators, (4) A Phase I desk audit process which allows for the review of all programs, (5) A revised desk audit review practice that includes cross-campus involvement in the analysis of potential program opportunities and challenges, and (6) Desk audit review practice that specifies the group and process for determining if a Phase II further review and analysis of a program is needed.

5: Project Challenges

A: A current challenge is determining how to include programs that have an outside accreditation review process in the internal Academic Program Evaluation and Review process. These programs provide yearly reports to their accrediting agencies which include much of the information collected in the College's Phase 1 desk audit. More analysis of these accreditation reports is needed to determine the overlap between those accreditation-specific processes and the needs the college has for internal program reviews. We recognize the significant time that is involved in providing accreditation reporting. However, the college potentially has additional questions beyond those raised by the accreditors (e.g., In reduced budgets, is the program comparatively strong for students and the community relative to other programs? Is the program's need for expanded facilities manageable by the College? Given community needs and staffing issues, should the program be slated for growth relative to the needs of other programs?)

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The redesign and piloting of the Desk Audit (Phase I) academic program review process appears to have been a comprehensive endeavor. The Learning Leadership Team, the design team, was cross-functional allowing for multiple perspectives to be considered in the design process. This broad-based involvement provides for planning that is inclusive of those individuals with a vested interest, as well as upper level administrators showing their support for quality improvement processes. It is unclear, however, if faculty representing the specific academic programs had input into the design process.

Six diverse program areas were included in the pilot process, and four multi-faceted indicators were used to measure program effectiveness. Points totaling 75 were assigned. While the pilot programs scored 53 points and above, there is no indication of what that means, how points are assigned, what target is to be reached, or what specifically drives a program into the Phase II evaluation.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The involvement of college personnel in the design and deployment of the Desk Audit model was diverse but seems to have represented only administration. Were there input opportunities for faculty associated with these programs or with external stakeholders such as advisory committee members? While many aspects of program review are administrative in nature, such as counting enrollees, completers, and dollars, these are all closely dependent upon the curriculum and its effectiveness. Likewise, course delivery methods play a primary role in student success when considering differing student learning styles. Planning for improvement should include all those with a role in process. It is also an indication of respect for those closely aligned to a program to have input in the process that will measure their effectiveness, as well as the program's effectiveness.

3: Next Steps

A: The five "next steps" you have outlined are comprehensive. They also reflect a big job with considerable work for many individuals and work groups across campus. It is good that faculty are included in this future planning. You might want to contact Hawkeye Community College for information on program review software. They use a program that is all electronic, very comprehensive, and very user friendly. The program supports fact-based information gathering that will be useful for program analysis and decision-making.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: There are several potential "effective practices" to be gained from this Action Project that could be shared with other institutions for their own tailoring and use. Even though many aspects of your Action Project would not transfer directly to other colleges and universities, your ideas and practices will stimulate their thinking and reduce the time they need to develop workable program review procedures. Collaboration among institutions is a promising way to stimulate operational improvements.

5: Project Challenges

A: The college has made meaningful progress on this Action Project and is moving toward its goal of designing and implementing an across-campus program review process that will help in the analysis of data for the purpose of data-based decision making. Your completed work will add measurably to the quality culture on your campus and you have potential "effective practices" that may be utilized by other colleges and universities. Keep up the good work!