

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

San Juan College

Project Details		
Title	San Juan College Assessment Academy Action Plan	Status REVIEWED
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated 09-14-2010
Timeline		Reviewed 10-02-2010
Planned Project Kickoff	08-20-2007	Created 11-24-2009
Target Completion	05-31-2011	Version 3 of 3

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of the action project is to develop an institutional culture around assessing and improving learning through testing and documenting effective practices in assessment.

2: Reasons For Project

A: SJC leadership has identified the following frames for renewing the Strategic Plan in the 2007-08 fiscal year: (1) Resource Allocation, (2) Enrollment Growth and Management, (3) Retention of our Students, (4) Developmental Education Success and (5) Communication Systems. These priorities have emerged in light mounting concern regarding the state's and region's competitiveness in a global economy. The Retention of our Students priority will be addressed in part through the Assessment Committee, a cross-functional team charged with furthering SJC's Common Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) through assessing student learning outcomes and using the knowledge gained through assessment to improve pedagogy and curricula. San Juan College elected to participate the HLC's Assessment Academy initiative in order to advance the priority of its Strategic Plan. The project the College has undertaken through the Academy aims to broaden faculty commitment to assessment at the individual course level as well as build greater expertise in using the best practices that lead to greater student learning.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The organizational areas most affected by, or involved in this project include SJC's academic and student services departments as well as the Vice Presidents for Learning and Institutional Research & Planning.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The key organizational process (es) this Action Project will change are creating and sustaining an ongoing assessment process to improve student learning and developing and implementing a process for reporting on, analyzing, and acting on student learning

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: SJC will follow the Academy timeline for overall completion of the Action Project. Individual project completion deadlines are outlined below: 1. Revision and mapping of CSLOs to course and program objectives - timeline for completion will be developed by October 4, 2007. Subcommittees will work on revision of rubric criteria and defining artifacts in each school. Project to be completed by end of Spring 2008. 2. School Action Plans - to be completed by end of spring 2008 semester for implementation during the 2008-09 school year by each school. Revisions due spring 2009. 3. Reporting Plans and Modification - to be completed by end of spring 2008 semester for implementation during 2008-09 school year. Revisions due spring 2009. 4. Institutional system of communication from course, school, program and institution - to be developed during 2008-09 school year for implementation during 2009-10 school year.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The Office of Institutional Research will assist the Assessment Committee by providing data pertinent to student progress as well as assisting with the design of data collection procedures and processes that can be used to measure changes in student learning as a result of assessment practices put into place. In addition, the Assessment Committee will work with the Center for Teaching Excellence to provide faculty and staff with professional development related to assessment, and evaluations of such opportunities by the participants will be used to determine their effectiveness and guide improvements for the future. In addition, the Assessment Committee will continue to refine and broaden its own artifact assessment process in order to guide faculty in the improvement of curricula and teaching strategies.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: The following accomplishments will indicate if the Action Project has been a success: •Common Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) are mapped to course syllabi •School action plans are developed •Reporting plans for and results of teaching modifications based on assessment efforts and evidence are developed •Artifact process has been revised and implemented •A communication process has been developed (Course, School, Program, Institution)

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Past year's accomplishments include the following:

Common Student Learning Outcome Assessment: The Committee created a "Master" list of advanced courses across the college that produce student products that lend themselves to each of the college's six all-college outcomes (CSLO) and developed a system for randomly selecting courses and students for assessment of each CSLO using assessment rubrics designed by faculty. Using this model, 235 student artifacts that met the criteria from these courses were identified and requested for assessment over the course of fall and spring semesters. 109 artifacts were actually collected over the course of fall and spring semesters, representing an increase of 62 artifacts over the previous year's collection. The Assessment Committee used the CSLO rubrics in September to assess these artifacts to determine the extent to which they meet the characteristics of effective demonstration of the CSLOs. Faculty discussion of both the student products and the rubrics provided additional information for refining the college student learning outcomes assessment process. Report on student performance from this review will be shared with the campus during spring 2011 convocation.

Program-specific Assessment planning and reporting cycle - The Assessment committee requested assessment action plans from the eight ? schools in the fall of 2009 and received 41 plans from eight schools. Schools and departments that submitted action plans were asked to submit reports when they carried out their plans to assess student work from select program courses. Twenty-seven reports were received from six schools in spring 2010. Schools were requested to submit action plans for the coming 2010-11 school year. To date, 15 plans from three schools have been submitted.

The college has recognized the importance of providing more support for the faculty-led assessment of program-specific and college-wide student learning outcomes. As a result, the Associate Vice President for Learning position has recently been redesigned to include significant responsibilities for supporting current faculty-led student learning outcomes assessment activities and for helping faculty in more departments to become actively involved in using student learning outcomes assessment information for course, program, and student-support improvements.

Other accomplishments include hosting a poster session at the spring convocation where faculty and departments showcased their assessment efforts and leading basic assessment workshops for adjunct faculty.

2: Institution Involvement

A: *Assessment Committee Representatives:* At least one representative from each of the nine schools and programs was chosen to act as a liaison between the committee and each school. This allowed a much more personal connection and improved communication between the committee work and faculty in each school. It also involved more people directly in the process of reviewing student performance in relation to college student learning outcomes, as the decisions in the committee are shared. One dean serves on the Committee.

Assessment Action Plans and School Reports: Faculty were involved in the creation of program-based assessment plans based on the needs and student expectations of individual programs and schools. Faculty in each participating department developed the student learning outcomes and developed their own assessment project. The faculty also carried out the assessment and prepared the reports submitted to the Assessment Committee. This is part of the effort to keep the assessment process Faculty-driven and allows for sensitivity to differences between programs in the definition of student learning outcomes, the student-performance products collected, and the use of student performance results for program improvement.

Spring and Fall Convocation: Faculty from each school shared assessment of artifacts with college community during convocation.

Presentations: Assessment Committee members presented to the Learning Leadership Team (LLT) which is comprised of Deans and Executive Leadership. Committee members are presented at the annual Adjunct Faculty Learning Academy.

3: Next Steps

A: Next steps in FY 2010-11 include CSLO assessment and assessment planning and reporting:

CSLO Assessment : (1) Complete the Assessment of current collection of artifacts and report findings, (2) Implement a second round of broad artifact collection in the fall and spring semesters of 2010-2011, (3) In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, review and revise collection system and rubrics and (4) continue outreach to new leaders in Learning and faculty regarding CSLO artifact assessment and increase participation in CSLO assessment activities. (5) with another year of data, meet with the appropriate groups to discuss the implications of findings for instructional activities, college course requirements, and ways to enhance student acquisition of essential CSLO skills in the lower level courses.

Program-specific Assessment planning and reporting: (1) Work with the Vice President and new Associate Vice President for Learning, Deans, and program coordinators to increase participation particularly in the AAS programs in assessment activities, reporting, and uses of student performance data for program review (2) Continue education and outreach activities with school representatives, workshops, and presentations and (3) Promote Assessment Committee website to increase awareness, transparency, participation, and access to effective models from other programs.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: *Several academic programs have developed assessment plans and activities that are producing program-specific assessments of student performance against program-specific expectations. These pilot projects will serve as the foundation for the involvement of more diverse departments in this kind of program-specific review of student performance and the important discussions of what instructional, course design, capstone expectations, and student support activities could enhance student success and retention.*

Assessment Committee Intranet Website – A website dedicated to assessment includes the following information for faculty to access: History of Assessment at SJC, Assessment Methods, Classroom Assessment Techniques, Definitions, Strategic Learning Initiatives, President's Assessment Taskforce activities, Action Plans and Reports, Common Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) and the New Mexico State General Education Core Competencies.

The mission of the Assessment Committee has been established. It is to Communicate what we Think about Assessment. Learn to Integrate assessment into our teaching practice and Act on it toward continuous improvement. (each underlined word is a CSLO). The multiple iterations of the CSLO assessment of student performance is helping the Committee and Learning professional staff to identify changes that could help make the rubrics more effective for our AAS programs.

5: Project Challenges

A: With increased efforts to reach out to the college community, more faculty And departments are participating in the program-specific assessment processes. However, challenges still include full and broad participation across all schools and departments. The diversity of program offerings continue to pose problems in developing open-ended yet consistent assessment rubrics and effective communication about assessment.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The committee has established a significant foundation for student assessment. By systematizing this process, it has created a sustainable and effective cycle for evaluating and reporting student outcomes. Including a method for reporting this out to the campus is an important component of the overall process. The recognition that this takes continuous support for all faculty, core and adjunct, indicates that the plan was thoughtfully conceived; faculty are more likely to participate in a meaningful way as they feel the effects of the revised AVP position description. The poster session is an excellent way to show how much value is placed on this process.

2: Institution Involvement

A: Establishing liaisons to the committee is an excellent way to strengthen communication in several directions and recognizes that there are important distinctions among programs and schools. It is also significant that a dean, representing administration, served on the committee, thus ensuring a shared process rather than one that could have several levels of approval. It also ensures multiple perspectives throughout the process instead of simply at the end. At the same time, this is a faculty-driven initiative indicating a respect for what is traditionally a faculty responsibility and assurance of ongoing ownership and commitment.

3: Next Steps

A: This is an excellent example of continuous improvement as there are plans in place for review and revision as well for increased participation. This indicates that a formative process is underway and that the institution is not waiting until the end to reflect on this initiative. There is also clear involvement from leadership which adds to the credibility of the plan and from multiple units across the institution to ensure that the project is visible and articulated to all stakeholders.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The team is very much aware of the effective practices that will result from this project. These practices are reflective of high performance organizations as they include a clear focus, multi-modal communication system, much sharing of information, continuous learning and strong leadership.

5: Project Challenges

A: With this type of project and its far reaching implications, there will be challenges. Many of them reflect anxiety related to not understanding how assessment works or how to develop effective measures including rubrics. Ongoing professional development and support are important components of any plan to create a meaningful

assessment plan. The leadership of this institution recognizes the challenges and continues to refine its process by providing additional support to move the project forward.