Action Project

Institution:	Indiana University Northwest		
Submitted:	2007-04-09	**Contact:**	Kwesi Aggrey
Email:	kaggrey@iun.edu	**Telephone:**	219-980-6966

Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 04-09-2007

Target completion date: 12-31-2010

Actual completion date: --

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

Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement

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

The goal of this Action Project is to increase Indiana University Northwest's capacity to use data derived from institutional measures of effectiveness for continuous improvement. Additionally, the work to be done relative to this Action Project will help integrate the continuous improvement process into all relevant processes on campus, making it a "driver" rather than a separate process. This, in conjunction with our Action Project titled "Measuring Institutional Effectiveness" will greatly improve the coordination of assessment and improvement efforts in a centralized manner and will assist units across campus with unit efforts to measure effectiveness and continuously improve.

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

Primary Category: Planning Continuous Improvement

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:

Based on IU Northwest's Systems Appraisal Feedback Report (April 11, 2006) and the information gleaned at the 2007 AQIP Strategy Forum, the Strategic Planning Team and the AQIP Team has realized the opportunity the campus has for developing a culture of continuous improvement. In many of the AQIP Categories, opportunities related to continuous improvement exist: for example, • "IUN demonstrated initial efforts to become a continuous improvement organization through submission of the November 2005 Systems Portfolio. The institution has not incorporated the presentation and use of results for improvement across all of the units on campus. More widespread use of results to drive continuous improvement will be necessary to move IUN to the next level. Additionally, the absence of benchmarking with other institutions compromises IUN's ability to view itself comparatively." • "The process used to set targets is provided but there is considerable opportunity here to collect more data and directly address how results and improvement priorities are communicated." • "Some new processes are listed, but no results of these changes are given." Thus, we concluded that we need to examine our current structures and processes (specifically Strategic Planning and AQIP structure and processes) in order to find ways to integrate data-based decision making and continuous improvement into our planning as a matter of routine campus operation.

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

Every unit, department, and division will be affected by this Action Project as our efforts will extend across the

campus.

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

This Action Project will change and improve the processes of using data for continuous improvement and decision-making in every unit.

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

The rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project relates to both the breadth and depth of the project as well as its relationship to Action Project "Increasing our Capacity for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness." Together, these two Action Projects will make up one of our campus' AQIP "campaigns" that is focusing on becoming a continuous improvement organization. • Strategic Planning Team develops and approves a plan for its stated role in the continuous improvement process for the campus, better integrating AQIP with the current planning processes—2007-06-31; • Analysis and revision of structures and processes related to continuous improvement for major administrative units—2007-12-31; • Analysis and revision of structure and processes related to continuous improvement for the next unit level—2008-12-31; • Analysis and revision of structure and processes related to continuous improvement for remaining units—2009-05-31; • All units have implemented continuous improvement processes—2009-12-31; • All units assess their continuous improvement processes-2010-05-31; and • All units demonstrate that decisions are data driven—2010-12-31.

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

We will monitor the campus's progress in terms of the creation of a centralized and systematic plan for continuous improvement and the creation/revision and implementation of the processes related to continuous improvement.

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:

The outcome measures include • the development and implementation of a systematic plan and process to measure institutional effectiveness and provide continuous improvement, • the development and implementation of a plan and process to disseminate assessment results, and • the use of assessment results for continuous improvement.

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

Note: This Action Project is part of a previous Action Project that we revised and reposted because we determined that it was too broadly conceived; therefore, we retired it, we created two new related projects, and we are posting both.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

Contact Name:	Linda R. Delunas, Faculty Assistant to the Chancellor
Email:	ldelunas@iun.edu
Phone:	219-980-6643 Ext.

Annual Update: 2007-09-12

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

At its February 2007 meeting, the SPT adopted the following new 2010 Strategic Outcome: o IU Northwest systematically measures effectiveness in its organizational structures and processes, and uses data derived from these measures for continuous improvement. At its May 2007 SPT retreat the SPT reaffirmed its commitment to being a continuous improvement organization and clarified how AQIP and Strategic Planning

will work together. The following recommendations were approved by the SPT: o Because accreditation is a part of continuous improvement, the chair(s) of the AQIP Coordinating Committee should always serve on the SPT, o We should keep the existent AQIP Category Working Group structure to avoid separation of the continuous improvement structure (thereby making the AQIP Coordinating Committee and the Category Working Groups the implementation arm of the continuous improvement process and accreditation), o Standing time at each SPT meeting should be reserved for continuous improvement and specific accreditation initiatives, o In consultation with the appropriate constituents, the AQIP Coordinating Committee should be responsible for recommending which continuous improvement initiatives should become AQIP Action Projects, always considering IU Northwest's Strategic Outcomes in conjunction with the AQIP Categories, and o When the SPT develops or revises outcomes, the AQIP Categories should be considered. The Director of Institutional Research is leading a task force that has been charged with identifying key performance measures. Once these measures are approved, the campus will use them to measure institutional effectiveness and target continuous improvement initiatives. The initial list of measure will be presented for discussion and approval at the November 2007 SPT retreat.

Review (09-21-07):
The new strategic outcomes from the February 2007 meeting accompanied by the May 2007 clarifications of goals,roles,participation, and procedures provide the necessary breadth to support the goals of this extensive project.Once key performance measures are determined in the November 2007 retreat, the guidelines formulated in the planning phases should support implementation.

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

First, in the last year, we have developed a structure to involve a cross-section of faculty, staff, and administrators in our campus treatment of the various data needs and improvement initiatives related to AQIP. Next, the SPT (consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators) analyzed how best to integrate the AQIP processes with our strategic planning processes to produce a more coherent approach to continuous improvement. Concurrently, the SPT charged a task force to provide recommendations on a campus structure for continuous improvement in the two areas of student learning outcome assessment and institutional effectiveness. At every level, a conscious effort to include the various constituents that comprise the university has been made. Information related to all of these efforts has been communicated widely to the campus via the Strategic Planning website, AQIP website, IU Northwest Faculty/Staff listserv, Enhancing Community, Harmony and Organization (ECHO) Group, Deans' Council, and Faculty Organization meetings.

Review (09-21-07):
The actions taken reflect the institution's efforts to involvement to build commitment to implementation. Appropriate project-related communications appear to have been directed toward the necessary stakeholder groups. The process for making final decisions based on conctituency inputs is unclear.

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

The next step is for the major administrative units (Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Fiscal and Administrative Affairs) to analyze and revise (if necessary) its structures and

processes related to continuous improvement. This process is to be repeated at successive levels until all units have implemented continuous improvement processes.

Review (09-21-07):
The institution could consider a follow-along process for all stakeholders to make public the deadlines, lead persons, and accomplishments concerning implementation of project segments to create an historical document a well as a shared project plan.

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

One of the most effective practices we have adopted is our AQIP Steering Committee and Category Working Group structure: this structure involves a Steering Committee of representative individuals as well as working groups formed around each AQIP Category, and these committees include faculty and staff members from a wide variety of units and disciplines. Membership on these working groups was self-selecting as we asked for individuals to volunteer to serve on a committee that fit their interests and needs. This structure has allowed for continuous dialogue and interaction among over 50 individuals from all units and at all levels. The different skills, knowledge, and perspectives make it possible to approach issues in a more substantive manner. This structure has also resulted in enhanced communication and data collection.

Review (09-21-07):
This appears to be a good learning experience if it continues as a practice when necessary in the future.

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

A continuous challenge has been articulating the difference between AQIP as an accreditation approach and continuous improvement as culture. We make every effort to explain how they are connected, yet distinct. Another challenge involves providing enough funding to support the necessary professional staff for data collection and analysis. Furthermore, creating a culture that goes beyond the surface level will take successive waves of changing perspectives on continuous improvement for individuals who are already working to capacity.

Review (09-21-07):
These challenges are quite normal during a cultural transition. Has the institution considered grants, foundations or business funding support for the project?

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?

Review (09-21-07):