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## Action Project

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**Title:** Identifying the Lewis University AQIP System of Practice

**Version:** 1

**Institution:** Lewis University

**Status:** Active

**Submitted:** 2016-01-22

**Category:** 6 - Quality Overview

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### Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2016-01-22

Target completion date: 2016-10-07

Actual completion date:

### Project Detail

PROJECT SUMMARY

Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

This initiative identifies the Lewis University practices that align and integrate AQIP action project activities within other processes and planning. Involvement of faculty, staff and administration will be key groups that will improve our processes of initiating, communicating, and sustaining university initiatives such as action projects. A clear set of expectations will be identified for current and future action projects - the “explicit, predictable processes” that demonstrate HLC’s integrated stage of systems maturity.

The project will also develop an easily accessed internal presence for disseminating reports and documents regarding Lewis University AQIP action projects, systems portfolios, quality check-ups, and strategy forums, connecting closed projects with the ongoing practices and planning where data analysis initiated in an action project continues to inform decision-making.

#### PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe your institution’s reasons for initiating this action project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution’s current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution’s recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio.

A robust CQI culture draws connections across improvement activities, and identifies how continuing analysis occurs and informs institutional practices and planning beyond action project closure. The Lewis University AQIP Coordinating Team, however, has identified a gap in the broader university community understanding regarding how we sustain these processes and continue to use the results of work initiated by AQIP action projects in decision-making. While a small group of individuals involved with reporting on our AQIP activities is aware of these connections, the action projects are viewed by some faculty and staff members as discrete projects rather than activities that are part of a sustained and integrated web of practices. As the number of closed action projects increases (currently 15), this becomes increasingly more difficult. Having a clear system of practices will assure sustainable continuation of work initiated by action projects beyond their closure.

This action project is important to complete at this time as we continue to charter and close action projects. It will assure and clarify the ongoing contributions to continuous quality improvement that these projects have, as well as the connections of past and future action projects with Systems Portfolios, Quality Check-Ups, and Strategy Forums. Additionally, when the valuable work of action project teams that continues to inform and improve institutional practices is transparent, this validates the engagement of stakeholders who have been involved with some aspect of the projects and the larger AQIP pathway.

Beginning this ongoing quality improvement work at this time enhances work on the 2016 Systems Portfolio currently being prepared, specifically subcategory 6P1. It is directly related to AQIP Category 6: *Quality Overview focuses on the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure of the institution. This category gives the institution a chance to reflect on all its quality improvement initiatives, how they are integrated, and how they contribute to improvement of the institution.* We believe this action project will clarify the maturity of our AQIP processes and results, and help us move from alignment to integration within Category 6. We anticipate this project taking 9 months with specific goals and measurable outcomes outlined below.

#### PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed.

This action project has two objectives.

- (1) Identify and disseminate the Lewis University system of practices for sustainably continuing work initiated by AQIP action projects beyond their closure.
- (2) Develop an easily accessed repository of information for AQIP action projects, during and after closure.

Deliverables connected these objectives include

- (1) a clear system of practices that aligns and integrates action projects within existing practices and planning, including Systems Portfolios, Quality Check-Ups, Strategy Forums, and the Strategic Plan.

an easily accessed electronic repository that is available to the campus community for information and documents related to Lewis University AQIP

action projects, System Portfolios, Quality Check-Ups, and Strategy Forums.

Project milestones and due dates will occur between January 15 and October 1, 2015.

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Project start date: January 15, 2016

January 2016 Convene working group representative of key stakeholders. With input from leaders and members of closed action projects, project co-chairs create a spreadsheet of closed and current AQIP projects clarifying how activities align and integrate with existing practices and planning, including the strategic plan.

February 2016 Working Group reviews AQIP action project activities to date, identifying how work has been aligned and integrated with existing practices and planning.

March 2016 Working Group identifies best practices and areas for improvement, identifying those practices that sustainably integrated action projects.

April 2016 Working Group identifies needed and missing steps for sustainability of elements of action projects that inform a continuous and sustainable feedback loop.

May 2016 Working Group finalizes the draft the system of practices for Lewis University that is grounded in our examined experience with closed action projects and CQI.

System of practices is posted for comment.

June 2016          Comments received on the system of practices are reviewed by the Working Group, and the system of practices is finalized. Identify electronic repository for information dissemination to the campus, and the process for keeping information current. Identify key positions with responsibility for keeping internal information current and available.

July-August 2016          Populate electronic repository and identify maintenance process.

September 2016          Disseminate system of practices and publicize the electronic repository for the campus community to access information on action projects and the system of practice Lewis University AQIP information.

Proposed project closure: October 1, 2016

#### INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

Given the broad, institutional nature of this action project, it will be co-chaired by Dr. William Chura, Associate Professor of Biology and current AQIP Director, and Dr. Kathy Kremer, Associate Provost for Academic Administration and Accreditation. The co-chairs will lead the activities of a working group representing key stakeholder groups from institutional business units and academic colleges, including members of open and closed action projects and University committees whose work connects to the action projects.

Dr. William Chura, Associate Professor of Biology and AQIP Director

Dr. Kathy Kremer, Associate Provost for Academic Administration & Accreditation

Dr. Jordan Humphrey, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs

Dr. Cathy Ayers, Professor of Communication

Dr. Nan Yancey, Dean of Graduate Studies

Pamela Maciulewicz, Bursar

Alison Rios, Director of Advancement Communication

Chris Crnkovic, Director of IT Projects

The Working Group will solicit input from leaders and participants of all 16 action projects and the Lewis University committees whose work connects to the action projects. Members of the working group will both represent their stakeholder groups and serve as a liaison between their stakeholders and the working group. The involvement of the Associate Provost links the action project activities to the Provost's Office oversight of institutional planning, including our AQIP Pathway activities. The working group will also post for comment on the internal Blackboard site (accessible by all university faculty, staff, and administrators) the identified system of practices. It is hoped that while the working group is small, it is designed in a way that encompasses input from across the university.

#### PROJECT CONTROL

Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

Success will be measured by whether a systems of practice that aligns and integrates AQIP action project activities within other processes and planning is developed. The sequence of the milestones build on each other and, in many cases, the completion of one is necessary for the subsequent goal.

January 2016      Convene working group representative of key stakeholders. An email invitation went out to individuals in various departments with the charter of the action project and an explanation for their involvement. All people accepted the invitation.

With input from leaders and members of closed action projects, project co-chairs create a spreadsheet of closed and current AQIP projects clarifying how activities align and integrate with existing practices and planning, including the strategic plan.

All of the following milestones will be evaluated by whether there was completion of the goal.

February 2016 Working Group reviews AQIP action project activities to date, identifying how work has been aligned and integrated with existing practices and planning.

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#### ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

As the timeline for this action project is aggressive (completion in 9 months), the greatest project challenge may be staying on schedule to close the project by October 1, 2016. The timeline is also viewed as necessary so an identified system of practices is in place before we close additional action projects.

Critical Success Factors for this action project include assuring that the electronic presence is continuously maintained with current information; institutionalizing the system of practices beginning with the work of the AQIP Coordinating Team; and making sure the system of practices are embedded within other university committees and planning activities.

One risk in institutionalizing the outcomes is insufficient outreach to those in the university community who perceive action projects as discrete activities and for whom the connections to ongoing operations and decision-making is not clear.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.

None

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