
Action Project

Title: Mission Assessment Action Project
Version: 1

Institution: Lewis University
Submitted: 2012-11-29

Status: Completed
Category: 5-Leading and Communicating

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2012-11-28
Target completion date: 2014-03-31
Actual completion date: 2014-03-28

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The project's goal is to identify appropriate mission measures, define an effective mission assessment process, review existing mission assessment tools, develop a Lewis-specific mission assessment tool, measure mission awareness among the Lewis faculty and staff stakeholders, utilize the knowledge gained to develop initiatives to increase mission awareness, and to improve mission advancement, and finally, systematize use of process by development, initiation, and execution of a cyclical assessment plan.

Reasons For Project

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

Support for and advancement of Lewis University's Catholic and Lasallian mission and values has been a long-term hallmark of Lewis University since the arrival of the Christian Brothers just over 50 years ago. Historically, multiple attempts to measure mission effectiveness have been undertaken. The purpose of this Action Project is to take the assessment of mission effectiveness to a more robust and sophisticated level.

The Mission Assessment Committee examined several externally created instruments and found them wanting. The Committee unanimously agreed that an in-house assessment tool needed to be developed. This project is considered a high priority project. Its creation dovetails with the formation of a new *Division of Mission and Ministry*, which is meant to communicate the primacy of the University's Catholic and Lasallian identity within the University's organizational, administrative and leadership structures. The new organization arises at a time when we have no prior assessment of mission and no defined means of assessing mission. The project and its goals are therefore very high among our priorities.

Opportunities for this project include:

- The potential to have a data-driven assessment of the faculty and staff understanding of the Mission of Lewis University.
- The potential to identify areas of improvement in Mission awareness and understanding.
- The potential to expand Mission advancement into additional new areas at Lewis University, with activities and programs that promote and advance the Mission of Lewis University

Additional mission formation opportunities (professional development for mission) for faculty and staff.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

All organizational areas are likely to be affected by the project.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

Mission is a long-term hallmark of Lewis University. Bringing a systematic and comprehensive approach to the assessment of mission awareness and effectiveness will have a broad and wide ranging impact across the organization. Multiple groups and processes will be able to utilize the findings; specific processes that will be affected are not identified.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The project's sixteen month time frame is needed to study mission assessment, develop and test an assessment instrument, administer the instrument twice (faculty and staff), analyze the results, develop an action plan, and "systematize" the processes developed or altered.

Project Success Monitoring

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

Project co-chairs will discuss progress bi-weekly and take corrective action as needed.

Project co-chairs will report progress / issues at AQIP Coordinating Team meetings.

Project Outcome Measures

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 key measures of performance will be answers to the following questions:

- Has Lewis met the basic milestones for each of the stated objectives?
- Has Lewis tested the assessment instrument with faculty?
- Has Lewis tested the assessment instrument with staff?
- Has Lewis acted on what has been learned?
- Has Lewis systematized an ongoing assessment of mission?
- Has Lewis identified future goals related to improving mission?

At the conclusion of the project we should be left with a utile instrument, a process to enhance our system, and a metric, which we can use in subsequent years to track our performance and to help us identify areas for improvement.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

The Mission Assessment action project continues to move forward meeting the established milestones.

The entire Mission Assessment team convened for a brainstorming session to identify mission-specific topics to be assessed. A list of topics was generated, and subsequently refined by the team co-chairs. Following this initial group meeting, the team co-chairs met to define a focus group approach to clarify and develop survey questions and topics.

A smaller core team (an internal focus group) of the Mission Assessment team met to identify an approach to assess specific topical areas. The two core topics identified were mission understanding and mission performance (mission effectiveness). A gap analysis was suggested as a technique to quantify and then prioritize areas to be improved. Progress to date will be reviewed with other university assessment-interested professionals.

Institution Involvement

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

The members of the existing Mission Assessment Committee have all agreed to participate as members of the AQIP Mission Assessment Action Project. These members represent a cross section of the University. Funding is available for the purchase of any necessary assessment instruments, research materials, etc.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

1. Working: Completion of the draft of a Lewis-specific mission assessment tool.
2. October 31, 2013: (a) Test the tool on a small pilot sample of faculty and staff;
(b) Adjust tool, as appropriate.
3. November 30, 2013: (a) Draft procedures outlining administration of the assessment tool during the Spring of 2014;
(b) Draft implementation timeline covering future years.
4. December 31, 2013: (a) Prepare terminal report on the project.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

None to date

Project Challenges

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the

review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

There was only one minor challenge experienced over the summer of 2013. Several key participants were not able to be involved to the level that was initially anticipated. This resulted in a summer “slow down” of this Action Project. However, the overall importance to the University, and expected deliverables of this Action Project have not changed.

Annual Update

REASON FOR COMPLETION

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

This project is being closed because the original objectives for this multi-phased action project have been met. The action project identified the specific measures appropriate to mission, defined an effective mission assessment process, reviewed other existing assessment tools and lastly, developed a Lewis-specific mission assessment tool. The completion of this project is important for the continuous improvement of mission assessment. In the future, this process and tool will be utilized to measure mission awareness among the Lewis faculty and staff stakeholders, which will support the development of initiatives to increase mission awareness and improve mission advancement.

SUCCESS FACTORS

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

Aspects of this action project that were successful include the identification of mission-specific topics, and the development and review of mission specific questions and items. A team of faculty and administrators from multiple departments and multiple colleges within the University reviewed these items several times. The items were then informally tested on a small pilot of faculty and administrators for comprehension and inclusion of mission elements. The successful identification of criteria to be assessed resulted in the development of both an on-line and a paper-and-pencil survey tool (survey format may be modified in the future if necessary to utilize an objective and independent outside agency for data collection and data analysis). The projected administration of the survey is Fall 2014.

The successes of this project were due to strong administrative support from the action project team leaders: Vice President for Mission and Academic Services and the Director of ACBSP Accreditation. The action project team strongly supported this mission assessment initiative, recognizing the long-term importance and the level of future impacts that this project embodied. Finally, there is a resulting sense of ownership across the University because of the participation of faculty and administrators throughout the University.

UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

An unsuccessful aspect would be the delay to complete this project by the targeted date of December 31, 2013. The reason for this delay was due to the previous summer, where key participants were not as involved to the level that was initially anticipated. The expectations and availability of participants over the summer months will be taken into consideration for future action projects.
