



NMU Action Project Declaration

Title: Integrating and Advancing Campus-Wide Assessment of Student Learning

Systems Portfolio Category: 1: Helping Students Learn

Planned Project Launch Date: April 15, 2016

Target Completion Date: April 15, 2017

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1. 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 Action Project addresses NMU's need to further integrate and advance assessment of student learning practices and procedures in the general education program, program assessment of learning, co-curricular and student support areas of campus. While previous Action Projects resulted in clear assessment practices for specific areas of campus, there currently exists a need to align these practices with NMU's new mission, vision, and Core Values. In addition, the Action Project committee will review and make recommendations regarding communication pathways between academic, co-curricular, and student support areas of campus aimed at increasing awareness of the value of assessing student learning.

2. 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 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 portfolio.

NMU has made significant progress in assessment practices in the last six years. Co-curricular, student support, and program-level assessment procedures have been established, and the new General Education Council is preparing to pilot its first round of assessment procedures. Although solid frameworks for assessment exist across campus, NMU's 2014 Systems Appraisal indicated that

alignment among these activities should be improved. Furthermore, alignment between assessment practices and NMU's new mission, vision, and Core Values is necessary to strengthen faculty, staff, and student understanding of assessment practices which will create a more positive culture for campus-wide assessment.

A one-year timeframe has been established for this Action Project. NMU faculty and student committee members will participate for two semesters – Fall 2016 and Winter 2017. Staff will conduct Action Project tasks during summer 2016 as deemed necessary by the entire committee.

3. 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.

April-May 2016:

- Send a campus-wide message to faculty, staff, and students describing details of this Action Project; invite participation in the committee.
- Assemble the Action Project committee and plan the summer schedule.
- Present Action Project Declaration and committee members to NMU Provost and Board of Trustees.

June-August 2016

Develop an NMU "State of Assessment Report" describing assessment activities on campus.

- NMU assessment activities will be compared to best practices in higher education assessment.
- Recommendations from previous consultants and Higher Learning Commission reviewers and mentors will be included.
- Results from a prior faculty survey measuring attitudes toward assessment will be reviewed.

September-December 2016

- Full Action Project committee will review State of Assessment Report and revise as necessary.
- Chair of the General Education Council, Coordinator of Assessment of Learning Committee, Chair of Service Unit Assessment Committee and assessment committee members will meet with the Action Project Committee to discuss alignment strategies, communication strengths and areas in need of improvement based upon the State of Assessment Report. The coordinator and committee chairs will develop a "communication pathway plan" between their committees and submitters. The "communication pathway plan" will include targets for increased submissions, improvement of annual reports, strategies for training opportunities for submitters, as well as collection of baseline data regarding submitters' understanding of and perceived value of assessment processes.
- Action Project committee will provide a mid-project update to AQIP, NMU Provost, academic committees, and student support units.

January 2017-April 2017

Develop an NMU Assessment Guide with the following information:

- Oversight of assessment activities
- Charge of assessment committees
- Purpose of assessment activities across campus, mapping to NMU mission, vision, and Core Values
- Assessment of professional development opportunities available for faculty and staff
- Opportunities available for faculty, staff, and students to communicate with assessment committee members on campus

Develop an NMU Assessment website

- Currently, assessment activities are displayed in various places on the web and on NMU's intranet. A website linking campus-wide assessment activities will assist all stakeholders in understanding and participating in assessment activities across campus.

The committee also will provide a list of recommendations to the Provost regarding oversight and review of assessment activities after completion of the project in April 2017.

4. 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.

Assessment activities will take place in all areas of campus; therefore, participation will be broad. The Action Project Committee will survey assessment submitters across campus (Assessment of Learning program submitters and Service Unit submitters). The General Education Council will hold informational workshops to provide support and assessment feedback from submitters. In addition to Action Project Committee members, the following individuals will be key participants in this Action Project:

Coordinator, Assessment of Learning Committee

Member, Assessment of Learning Committee and General Education submitter

Chair, General Education Council

Chair, Service Unit Assessment Committee

Student representative

Additionally, staff from the Office of Institutional Research and the Center for Teaching and Learning will participate in data collection, analyses and reporting, and faculty assessment training. Staff from Marketing and Communications will participate in the development of an NMU Assessment website.

5. 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.

In addition to the Action Project completing tasks on time and as described above, the following will be evaluated during the course of the Project:

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- The State of Assessment Report will be reviewed by the full Action Project Committee for a thorough, clear, and complete analysis of assessment activities on campus. Key contributors also will collaborate to ensure accuracy in the presentation of previous assessment data. This activity will take place by October 2016.
- Completion of the communication pathway plan between submitters and assessment committee members will be developed by January 2017. The plan will be developed with survey data from submitters as well as feedback from Assessment workshops. Assessment committee chairs, assessment coordinator, and Action Project committee will approve the final plan. The plan will serve as baseline data for future revisions.
- An NMU Assessment Guide will be completed by the end of April 2017. Feedback will begin to be collected immediately in preparation for annual Guide updates.
- An NMU Assessment website will be completed by April 2017. Action Project committee members will provide necessary requirements to the Marketing and Communications team.

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

Completing the project on time will involve a commitment from several key individuals on campus at a time when resources are limited. While NMU has assessment frameworks in place, the campus climate regarding assessment can be described as accreditation-driven rather than mission and vision driven. This Action Project will be NMU's university-wide attempt at shifting the attitudes of faculty and staff to view assessment activities as a meaningful tool to evaluate and improve our work with NMU students.

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

This Action Project is the result of work completed at the Higher Learning Commission's Professional Development Week, February 2016.