

NMU AQIP Action Project

Title: Developing Leadership Training and Succession Planning (Version 2)

Category 5: Leading and Communicating

Start Date: 1-15-2014

Target Completion Date: 4-15-2015

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

This Action Project intends to promote a climate that will help attract and retain employees with diverse leadership skills, while focusing on training and mentoring a pool of leaders who could be promoted from within. Through training of faculty, staff and administrators, NMU can develop leadership skills used at all levels and better assist itself in facilitating effective succession planning.

2. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now - why the project and goals are high among your current priorities

At our 2011 Strategy Forum, the Leading and Communicating AQIP category was deemed a priority. A 2011-12 Action Project, Leadership Communication, addressed dialog processes and concluded with a recommendation to launch another leadership project. The 2010 Systems Appraisal indicates that, although "NMU provides numerous opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership potential, there does not appear to be a process in place to encourage such development or to identify the next generation of institutional leaders." The 2010 Systems Appraisal further suggested that a wide range of employees be trained leaders; "A program that seeks to develop and encourage development of leadership skills, regardless of a person's existing leadership ability, can lead to leadership by staff of all levels." While Academic Senate and other committees and task forces require representative membership, committee chairs often have no training or experience in leadership. This project addresses AQIP Systems Portfolio questions 5P9 and 5P10 on leadership training and succession.

Although our retention rate for employees is quite high, the 2010 Systems Appraisal suggested an employee satisfaction study to better understand why. Our employee demographics indicate retirement of long-time employees and we must ensure readiness of the next generation of leaders. Given that employees do remain, it is wise to create more opportunities for these employees to develop leadership skills and thus make possible the succession plan mentioned in the 2010 Systems Portfolio.

3. List the organizational areas most affected or involved in this Action Project.

While this project's outcomes have the potential to affect the entire university, Human Resources will provide guidance and oversight of professional development strategies. The expectation is that strategies will lead to better training of supervisors in order to help them motivate and direct

employees in a way that is consistent with collective bargaining agreements, federal and state laws and overall best practices. Institutional Research and Effectiveness and senior administrators (including department heads) from all divisions will be the closely involved in the project. The task force will include representatives of these units and will study the current state, as well as revise or develop processes for training, leadership, supervisory development and succession planning alignment.

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

- Leadership and supervision training program – provide ongoing training opportunities for current and potential leaders that may include such topics as communication strategies, work style differences, inspiring performance, conflict resolution, creating direction and vision, leadership styles, emotional intelligence, cultural awareness and hiring practices that promote diversity.
- Succession planning – develop methods of identifying employees, particularly from underrepresented groups in leadership, who express an interest in further developing leadership and supervisory skills.
- University leadership program – address key issues and concepts associated with leadership and supervision, encourage broad participation, particularly from underrepresented groups; encourage potential leaders to pursue advanced degrees.
- Mentoring program for new supervisors and administrators – develop a program including strategies to ensure that new supervisors and administrators have individualized support and guidance.

5. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project.

The project is anticipated to require 15 months. With the intent of making data-driven recommendations, sufficient time is needed for data gathering. Methods include, but are not limited to employee surveys, focus groups and personnel interviews. Much of the quantitative data we need is already available through Institutional Research and Effectiveness, but we also plan to conduct an employee interest survey to obtain information about employees' perceptions of mentoring and training in leadership skills. Research on best practices is planned through literature, models and conferences. Development and vetting of recommendations, trial of selected options and an implementation and assessment plan conclude the project.

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

A task force will distribute work to subcommittees, monitor progress, and make sure that sub-goals within the project are completed. Sub-goals include collecting particular data, identifying appropriate survey instrument(s) and drafting policies and procedures for hiring, as well as reports on methods for solving any problems identified.

As tasks are achieved or new tasks started, the task force will involve and inform impacted units or groups on its results and obtain feedback. It is not desired for the task force to work in isolation and present only a finished product; regular contact is needed throughout the project. Changes to the action plan or goals will occur if warranted by feedback.

A timetable with agreed upon milestones, expected outcomes and lead person(s) will help ensure the

project's tracking. The Action Project Task Force will employ an existing collaborative tool to manage the documentation and communication needs. In addition to the mid-term and final reports, the President's Council will receive an update presentation at least once per semester.

7. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has met its goal.

Project outcome measures include:

- Analysis report of gathered quantitative and qualitative data, with an emphasis on qualitative data gathered from formal and informal meetings with collective bargaining leadership on campus, other leadership groups on campus developed through Human Resources and supervisors who are not a part of collective bargaining units.
- Developing a university leadership training program.
- Identifying and implementing procedures, processes and policies to attract, hire and retain leaders for our future.
- Developing a process to identify internal candidates for leadership to aid leadership succession.

Given the time frame, our outcomes are focused on awareness and infrastructure. Ultimately, we desire a change in the data on diverse leadership in management and committee leadership brought about by:

- Measured increased awareness of opportunities in leadership and hiring
- Leadership training for all employees who wish to avail themselves of it
- Data collection to compare results in five years' time

NMU AQIP Action Project Annual Update

Title: Developing Leadership Training and Succession Planning

Category 5: Leading and Communicating

Start Date: 1-15-2014

Target Completion Date: 4-15-2015

1. CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

Briefly describe the current status of the project.

Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

Launched on January 15, 2014, the Action Project *Developing Leadership Training and Succession Planning* specifically addresses opportunities of improvement identified in our 2010 Systems Appraisal. Our 2014 Systems Portfolio presented this Action Project's goals, and we received favorable comments for our efforts in our 2014 Systems Appraisal. The status of the Action Project after eight months since its launch is as follows:

- The Action Project committee has been meeting regularly. Meeting minutes, various resources used by the Committee and documentation of other Action Project activities are located on NMU's internal Share drive.
- After identifying areas of high and low priority, Committee members came to the conclusion that it would be most effective to break into three subgroups: one focusing on developing a handbook for administrators, one to create a mentor program available to all employees, and one to develop a leadership framework from which leadership workshops can be developed.

2. ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

The goal of this Action Project is to promote a climate that will help attract, hire and retain employees with diverse leadership skills, as well as train and mentor a pool of leaders who could be promoted from within. Through training of faculty, staff and administrators, NMU can develop leadership skills used at all levels and better assist itself in facilitating effective succession planning. Measures for assessing the progress of each goal include the following:

- Analysis report of gathered quantitative and qualitative data.
- Development of a university leadership training program.
- Identifying and implementing procedures, processes and policies to attract, hire and retain leaders for our future, including training of search committees.
- Develop a process to identify internal candidates for leadership to aid leadership succession

3. ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year

The Committee members have investigated best practices leadership models from other institutions in higher education as well as models that exist in the United States Military. Presentations regarding these additional models have been made in Committee meetings in an effort to evaluate what attributes of external models offer leadership training improvement possibilities at NMU.

After evaluating leadership models, the Committee recognized the need to break into three subcommittees to more effectively address the “high priority” leadership needs on campus. In addition, the Committee has begun the process of creating a “Leadership Educational Opportunity” spreadsheet. The purpose of the spreadsheet is to provide a list of *effective* leadership opportunities that are available – both in our immediate geographical region as well as in other areas of the United States.

4. INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project’s duration, particularly during the past year.

By design, committee membership represents a broad scope of individuals on campus. In addition, the committee surveyed the Academic Cabinet members, department heads and others on campus who were able to provide recommendations on external learning opportunities for NMU faculty and staff.

5. EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

The committee has been effective at sending a message to our campus community that they are committed to investigating ways in which we can best support the development of leadership skills to all individuals across campus. Requesting feedback from department heads and deans has provided the committee with the ability to begin to develop a list of resources specifically for leadership training. In addition, as plans and recommendations develop through the committee, there is an awareness that leadership opportunities needs to be addressed for employees at all levels on campus.

6. ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

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

Moving forward with project goals during the summer was a challenge due to the fact that faculty are often not on campus during the summer months. In addition, NMU experienced a change in leadership with a new president on July 1. A new Human Resources Director and Assistant Vice President of Identity, Branding and Marketing also began new positions during the summer of 2014. As a result, the committee was required to re-establish communication with these key individuals on campus.

Investigation completed by the Action Project Committee found that overall, there is a need to further identify strengths and weaknesses in our existing leadership competencies framework. As a result, the committee found it necessary to modify its original goals to move forward with the Action Project.

7. PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIME LINE

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

Based on the findings of the committee, the following items of “high priority” have been identified. Over the course of the next seven months, they will be addressed.

- Organize a series of focus group meetings with collective bargaining units as well as non-represented groups on campus. The purpose of the focus group meetings will be to identify leadership needs and priorities in different areas of campus. The committee will administer a survey to participants and analyze responses. Timeline for these events will be fall of 2014.
- Develop a handbook for administrators, including template sections that can be individualized for different departments on campus. The handbook will be completed by Subcommittee 1 by the project completion date.
- Create a mentor program, including expectations and guidelines for *all* employees. Program development will be completed by Subcommittee 2 by the project completion date.
- Develop a leadership framework that can serve as a framework for leadership workshops. Subcommittee 3 will develop the framework by the project completion date.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

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