NMU AQIP Action Project Declaration

Title: Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-wide Decision-making

Systems Portfolio Category: 4: Planning and Leading

Planned Project Launch Date: June 1, 2015

Target Completion Date: December 1, 2016

Sponsors: NMU Strategy Forum Team 2015

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 will address NMU's senior level decision-making strategies with the intent to create an environment where stakeholders have easy access to information they need and the opportunity to be involved in efficient, collaborative university-wide decision-making (non-departmental, non-emergency). Providing clearer and more transparent processes for campus-wide decision-making is expected to result in an increase in diverse participation, greater efficiency and understanding of changes resulting from decisions, and improvement in a sense of trust campus-wide.

Key stakeholders are senior leadership, collective bargaining leadership and other campus leaders, the communications office, information technology, business intelligence, internal auditor and university archives.

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.

There are two primary reasons for initiating this Action Project. First, NMU's 2014 Systems Appraisal identified a lack of clarity in decision-making processes (Category 5: Leading and Communicating). Second, new leadership on NMU campus has focused on improvement in communication strategies campus-wide. For example, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members are participating in discussions regarding the development of new core values leading to a new strategic plan. These discussions have resulted in stakeholders identifying communication and collaboration as a central value on campus. Therefore, the timing of this Action Project coincides with major initiatives taking place on campus.

Major stakeholders who will be involved in this project have recommended an eighteen-month timeframe to complete the goals as outlined in this declaration.

Action Project: Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-wide Decision-Making

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.

Goal 1 to be completed in the first six months:

- Create a "Green Ribbon" Steering Committee to oversee Action Project activities.
- Identify and document existing decision-making processes and procedures that impact university-wide decisions (non-departmental, non-emergency).
- Determine routine and systematic obstacles and challenges in current decision-making policies and procedures regarding efficiency, campus-wide understanding and transparency, and collaboration opportunities.
- As necessary, rework and develop new policies, procedures, steps within policies/procedures and guidelines to enhance university-wide decision-making process.
- Develop a toolbox of informational tools (i.e., decision-making checklists, website resources, and others as identified by the Green Ribbon Committee). The purpose of the informational tools is to increase campus-wide understanding, collaboration and transparency of decision-making process, including standardized communication and change-management plan templates for university-wide decisions.
- Define the role and desired level of use of technology in NMU's university-wide decision-making process.

Goal 2 to be completed between six months and one year:

- Create a checklist of systematic steps regarding university-wide decision-making, which would include a communication plan and a change management plan for decision-making that has campus-wide impact.
- Present the framework of the Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-wide Decision-making to campus stakeholders via email communication, face-to-face campus meetings and focus groups held specifically to generate feedback regarding the proposed plans.
- Review electronic and face-to-face feedback; make adjustments to plans.
- Develop and implement training of the new university-wide decision-making approach: policy/ procedure/guidelines, communication process and change-management process.
- Begin pilot testing all three components: policy/procedure/guidelines (including informational tools), communication process and change-management process.
- Develop measurements for the Transparency Project, possibly including new question(s) on Employee Satisfaction Questionnaire and use of university decision-making toolbox tools.
- Provide an opportunity for NMU faculty and staff to respond to specific items regarding leadership decision-making on the Employee Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Goal 3 to be completed between one year and eighteen months:

- Review results of pilot testing and make recommendations for changes as needed.
- Review use of new informational materials and tools regarding university-wide decision-making and make recommendations for changes as needed.
- Present findings of pilot testing and subsequent recommendation for changes to NMU community; gather feedback and implement agreed upon changes.
- Make all components – policy, procedures, guidelines, communication plans, change-management plans, university-wide decision-making informational resources – of the Transparency Project: Communication, Collaboration, Process and Procedure in University-wide Decision-making electronically available to stakeholders and the public.
- Determine follow-up monitoring procedures.

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.

Senior leadership will support, oversee, and actively participate in the Action Project for the duration. Senior leadership will participate in the development of the Green Ribbon Committee, meet with committee members throughout the development phases of the Action Project, provide guidance and opinion to the development of the project's components and communicate results to the campus community.

Collective bargaining leadership will provide representatives to the Green Ribbon Committee and participate in data collection and analysis. Representatives will present updates to their units and bring to the Committee any recommendations from their units.

Representatives from Communications office will assist the Green Ribbon Committee in presenting updates to campus.

Information Technology, Business Intelligence, and University Archives will assist in the organization, communication and presentation of policies and procedures.

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.

Success of the plan will depend upon completing the development of the Decision-making Process, Communication Plan and Change Management Plan within an eighteen-month period. In addition, results from an Employee Satisfaction Survey to be administered in early 2016, will provide evidence of success of the Project. Pilot testing to be completed during the last six months of the Project also will provide information regarding the success of the Project.

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

The success of the Action Project will be influenced by staff availability and other resources. It is understood that having broad representation during the Action Project development process is critical to achieving success in meeting established goals.

Successful completion of this Action Project also will require agreement between stakeholders regarding the scope of the project. The goals as identified specifically address long-term solutions to challenges that currently exist on campus rather than day-to-day operational decisions, external decisions and communication, and existing curriculum decision-making processes.

Other challenges that may be encountered include a sense of apathy among stakeholders as well as "communication overload" during the development of the Action Project.

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

This Action Project was developed by NMU Strategy Forum Team in April 2015.

Transparency Project Committee Membership

Rhea Dever	**Director-Human Resources (Co-chair)**
Jessica Thompson	**Accoc. Prof. CAPS (Co-chair)**
Kim Barron	**Director-Institutional Accreditation and Assessment**
Jill Compton	**Director-Internal Audit**
Mary Crampton	**Development Officer**
Nancy Gasiewicz	**Accoc. Dean Nursing**
Erica Goff	**Director-Grants & Contracts**
Brent Graves	**Prof.-Biology**
Vincent Grout	**Director-Advancement Communications**
Amy Hubinger	**Director-Major & Planned Gifts**
Dale Kapla	**Ast. Provost – Undergraduate Programming and Faculty Affairs**
Lindsey Leike	**Student and President, ASNMU**
Jane Milkie	**Prof.-Art & Design**
Cindy Paavola	**Ast. to President – Strategic Initiatives**
Mike Rotundo	**Director-Financial Aid**
Kevin Timlin	**Director-International Programs**
Dan Truckey	**Director-Beaumier Museum**
Leslie Warren	**Dean-Academic Information Services**
Alan Willis	**Prof.-History**