

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Joliet Junior College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	Centralize and Improve the College Communications Structure	<b>Status</b> COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	Any Category	<b>Updated</b> 09-13-2007
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b> 09-25-2007
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 03-31-2005	<b>Created</b> 11-24-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b>	<b>Version</b> 3

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** This project will bring together a representative group to study the current communications structure and determine the “real” structure for the purpose of centralization and improvement. There are many information sources but they need a new organizational structure. A more centralized system could be advantageous to the various constituencies across the college and beyond. Employees will be educated about accessing existing information and we will consider the establishment of an Intranet for that purpose. The overall goal is to improve communications between faculty, staff, students, and all departments, and between the institution and the various publics.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** The rationale for addressing this issue arose out of concerns expressed from college wide faculty and staff during campus conversation day. A major part of leading and communicating is making sure the entire campus is informed and has appropriate avenues to express their feedback.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The faculty, staff, students, departments, and various publics which may include but is not limited to: • Community Relations • Human Resources • Administrative Council • Academic Departments • Student Services Departments • Business Services • Extended Campuses • Board of Trustees • I.E.T • Alumni/Foundation • Vendors • Outside agencies • ICCB • Centennial Commons • Adjunct Faculty • Advisory Committee • Students

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** The critical processes that are most affected are the processes of interaction within and between the college and its internal constituencies and its external constituencies.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** Periodic updates to the community. Periodic audits of the effectiveness and satisfaction with communication, quality, quantity, channels, timeliness and accuracy.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** Information seeking Information sharing Information using

### 7: Project Outcome Measures

**A:** The outcomes measures we plan to track are: • Satisfaction with quality of information received • Satisfaction with quantity or volume of information received • Satisfaction with channels used for communication • Satisfaction with accuracy of information • Satisfaction with timeliness of information

## 8: Other Information

- A: Quantitative: Develop internal communication and distribute it to 100% of internal constituents and review Claris report to assess strengths and weakness of external communication processes. Qualitative: Incorporate open ended questions in the initial audit to solicit anecdotal responses. Quantitative: Collect critical incident reports through audits, interviews, and observations of internal constituents. Record and analyze completed internal audit data. Expected a minimum of 80% response rate from constituents. Qualitative: Implement interventions to overcome the communication barriers and difficulties identified in the audit. Quantitative: Distribute to 100% a post-intervention audit to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the interventions with the goal of significantly increase of satisfaction with the quality, quantity, channels, timeliness, and accuracy of information and communication. Qualitative: Make necessary modifications based on the post-intervention audit.

## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: We have met with our team to discuss the survey results from September 2006. Based on those results, the team is in the process of putting together recommendations on how to develop communication practices and policies that will enhance organizational effectiveness. Audit Results: The goal of the AQIP Communications Action Project was to bring together representatives from across the college to study our current communications structure to determine what the structure is or is not for the purpose of centralizing and improving it. This past year, the team developed a communications audit in order to obtain feedback from the JJC community about the current internal communications structure and use the feedback to recommend improvements. The communications audit was administered to the campus community in an on-line format and paper format for those without computer access. Raw numbers indicated that 208 employees participated in the audit, which was conducted in September. Participants were given three weeks to take part in the audit. In addition to general questions, the audit also included opportunities for respondents to provide comment. Once completed, results were recorded and analyzed by the three team leaders. The next step in the process will be to meet with the larger AQIP communications committee to discuss the results. Once the results have been discussed by the larger group, the group will identify areas of concern brought forward by the respondents regarding in-house and external communications. Once the areas of concern have been identified, the committee will recommend actions to address those concerns. These actions will be determined through a series of brainstorming sessions. The actions may take many forms, including changing the way in which information is disseminated; determining the best formats for communications; and tweaking the timing of certain communications. These recommendations will be sent along to the administration for study and possible implementation. Once implemented, the new procedures and processes will be reviewed in the next phase to determine their effectiveness. Through the audits, we have learned one key piece of information: individuals may be more satisfied with a communication system that is tailored towards individual needs. This is something the committee will address in its brainstorming sessions.

### 2: Institution Involvement

- A: The leadership came from a variety of faculty, administration, and staff. During our meetings, the team was asked to identify headings/categories for the survey comments. The motivation behind this part of the project was that each member knew he or she was a part of the process because individual input was valued.

### 3: Next Steps

- A: The next step is to continue brainstorming with our team to come up with recommendations about the communication issues identified under each of the categories. Our project has not moved as quickly as we would have liked because we faced several challenges. We lost a few key members who left the college during the three-year course of this project, with one being a team leader. One of the team members likes to challenge or debate all proposals under discussion, so rules for conduct had to be implemented. Finally, several members have not been able to attend meetings due to other obligations/priorities, and it was not possible to find a suitable time for all participants.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A: While the team has not yet worked through all categories resulting from the survey, at this point, recommendations include: • The

college staying focused on the value of strong communication and making it a top priority. • The college hiring someone whose main focus is internal communication, including the responsibility of gathering valuable input from employees and putting together a communication plan. • The college should revisit the role of the AQIP Communications Team and communications as a whole, due to the changes resulting from the transition of a new president and the restructure of the administration. The original charge of the AQIP Communications Team was based on an entirely different era at JJC. The college should consider building bridges between other committees with similar interests/goals.

## 5: Project Challenges

A: This team continues to face challenges related to membership because its team members are not able to attend meetings on a regular basis due to other conflicts/priorities. The co-chairs have discussed the possibility of the team disbanding altogether to allow for a focus on communications as they relate to the new administration. As the team continues to brainstorm solutions to communication issues, it can also envision budget constraints being another challenge.

## 6: AQIP Involvement

A: This team continues to face challenges related to membership because its team members are not able to attend meetings on a regular basis due to other conflicts/priorities. The co-chairs have discussed the possibility of the team disbanding altogether to allow for a focus on communications as they relate to the new administration. As the team continues to brainstorm solutions to communication issues, it can also envision budget constraints being another challenge.

## Update Review

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: It appears that Joliet Junior College has completed the task of administering a survey that will provide feedback on developing communication practices and policies that will enhance organizational effectiveness, both internal and external. The Communication Committee plans to make recommendations to their administration based on the feedback they received. This Action Project demonstrates the College's desire to identify ways to improve the quality of their communication system while involving leadership in the process (Category 5). It also supports internal collaboration and the use of fact-based information and gathering to support decision-making, both of which are principles of high performance organizations.

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The College involved a number of key stakeholders in this project, including faculty, staff, and administrators. Respect for people was demonstrated by valuing individual input. From this report, it is not clear if students were surveyed to determine areas where communication practices could be improved for students (Category 3).

### 3: Next Steps

A: It appears that the Communication Committee has encountered challenges but identified ways to address those challenges. The team was able to gain insightful information from the survey conducted and developed recommendations for administration to consider. A key piece of information identified is that individuals would be more satisfied with a communication system that is tailored to individual needs. The College is demonstrating agility by responding to the changing needs of its stakeholders and is using foresight by considering recommendations that will assist in establishing a quality communication system.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The College and the committee are to be commended for developing a survey on the current communication process and ways it can be improved. The response rate should provide the College with reliable and valid information.

### 5: Project Challenges

**A:** The college should consider retiring the project since the survey is completed and recommendations were developed for administration to consider. A new project focusing on one of the recommendations could be developed to follow-up this project.

**6: AQIP Involvement**

**A:** This statement is the same as the statement in Question E. It appears to be more of a challenge statement than a request for help.