

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Joliet Junior College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	General Education Assessment	<b>Status</b> ACTIVE
<b>Category</b>	1-Helping Students Learn	<b>Updated</b> 09-26-2013
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b> 10-10-2013
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 09-14-2011	<b>Created</b> 09-14-2011
	<b>Target Completion</b> 06-30-2013	<b>Version</b> 2

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** Develop and implement assessment for the new general education outcomes.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** New general education (gen ed) student learning outcomes were recently written with input from faculty and staff across the college. The outcomes were incorporated into JJC's revised course syllabus template in CurricUNET, an online syllabus repository. Faculty will be revising syllabi to indicate applicable gen. ed. outcomes during the 2011-12 academic year. A task force has been created to design and implement gen ed assessments for students seeking associate degrees.

A schedule to take us from pilot to full implementation was developed with opportunities to assess students at the beginning, middle and end of their program of study at JJC.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The GEA Task Force includes faculty, a department chair, institutional research and the assessment coordinator. Input from full and part-time faculty, administrators and student services will be solicited and used.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** This project is an opportunity to develop a shared basic understanding of assessment and common assessment processes. The project is also creating processes and systems that will help organize assessment and reporting efforts across the college.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** The GEA Task Force expects to have initial indicators and rubrics developed during the first year. Pilots and full scale implementations will be rolled out over three years (2 outcomes each year).

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** The Assessment Coordinator and Student Learning (Assessment) Committee are responsible for the success of the project with oversight by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### 7: Project Outcome Measures

**A:** We expect our rubrics to be able to distinguish student growth for each gen ed. outcome.

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## Project Update

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## 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

**A:** This General Education Assessment (GEA) project was developed through JJC's participation in the HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. The college completed its academy participation in June 2013 but will continue this work as an action project. The accountability associated with being an action project is a motivating force for the Student Learning/Assessment Committee (SLC).

Project accomplishments for the past year include:

- Preparing an impact report and poster for Assessment Academy Results Forum.
- Finalizing rubrics and determining interrater reliability for three (of seven) general education outcomes.
- Collecting data and disseminating results for analysis of three outcomes (math, science and writing).
  - Apply mathematical methods: 74% of students achieved a score of 3 or 4 (on a 4 point scale). The target is 90% score a 3 or 4.
  - Use scientific information: 64% scored a 3 (on a 3 point rubric). The target is 100%.
  - For written communication/diction and sentence structure, 78% scored a 3 or 4 (on a 4 point scale). Target is 90%.
  - For written communication/focus and development, 77% scored a 3 or 4 (on a 4 point scale). The target is 90% score a 3 or 4.

## 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** The SLC accepted the responsibility and has created task forces, and expanded participation to include faculty experts and entire departments in order to keep the project moving forward. Other efforts to create broader engagement include:

- SLC members reporting progress and developing assessment knowledge in their respective departments during monthly meetings.
- Assessment Coordinator providing updates to department chairs and requesting their help with next steps.
- Deans requiring instructors to identify one or more general education outcomes for each course and documenting them in CurricUNET, an online curriculum management tool.
- Chairs standardizing the college's syllabus to include the general education outcomes.
- Providing professional development to:
  - The Student Learning Committee during monthly meetings.
  - The assessment task force developing the rubrics.
  - Departments during their monthly meetings.
  - Faculty during professional development week each semester.
  - Individuals and groups as they created, revised, and articulated courses and programs.
  - The Curriculum Committee so they could monitor compliance for the courses and programs presented for committee action.

## 3: Next Steps

**A:** The project objectives are:

1. Create new general education student learning outcomes and their connection to courses.
2. Develop a plan to assess one of the outcomes (i.e. targeting what departments and faculty will participate, what data will be gathered, and how it will be measured).
3. Implement the initial assessment and report findings.
4. Use the findings to drive improvements in subsequent years.

The next steps are to accomplish the third and fourth project objectives—report findings and use them to drive improvements. The Student Learning/Assessment Committee has created subcommittees/task forces with the following responsibilities:

### • Delineation & Data

- Identify courses for collection of starting and ending data for each general education outcome.
- Close the loop for the written, math and science data collected in spring 2013 by
  - Communicating the data to faculty.
  - Asking faculty to identify specific actions they will take as individuals and departments that will help the college improve its performance

- Collect proposed actions by anonymous survey.

- **Implementation Subcommittee**

- Collect and standardize materials, processes and communication related to the data collection.

- **Cultural Outcome**

- Review effective practices.
- Define the outcome with community (academic and student development) input.
- Develop assessment and implementation strategy

#### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Effective practices have been described in previous years. No new practices were developed this year.

#### 5: Project Challenges

A: An initial and ongoing challenge has been to develop a broad-based understanding of why the college is examining general education outcomes. A survey of full-time faculty indicates that although uninformed individuals are now very few (5% of respondents), a lack of understanding about the importance and relevance of the project persists (44%).

The SLC has addressed and resolved these issues internally but additional effort is necessary to engage the faculty as a whole. We expect the value of the general education assessment to become more evident as faculty engage with data analysis and consider strategies for improvement.

While some faculty members indicate they are not currently ready to conduct the assessments, they anticipated they could be, provided support was available when they needed it. The implementation subcommittee is working to address their needs.

### Update Review

#### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Joliet Junior College has recognized the importance of improving teaching effectiveness through the assessment process. The project aligns with AQIP Categories 1 Helping Students Learn, 7 Measuring Effectiveness, and 8 Planning Continuous Improvement. JJC has made significant accomplishments in instituting the assessment process on campus. Because the original completion target date has passed and the institution is now focusing upon application of findings, JJC may want to revise the report to reflect the anticipated target date. JJC may also want to focus the implementation of assessment findings and subsequent analysis as a separate action project.

#### 2: Institution Involvement

A: Involving a wide representation of affected constituents in project teams is important. Representatives could be asked to remind their departments of the value of this initiative and the progress being made toward applying the results to improve student learning. To increase project awareness and ownership, committee membership could be limited to fixed terms to encourage rotation through department members.

#### 3: Next Steps

A: JJC has established a thoughtful and detailed plan of action for continuing the implementation process. Keeping the campus informed of the progress and success of this initiative should increase awareness among non-adopters. The Implementation Subcommittee may want to start thinking about the data collection tool, if they have not already done so. Because the original completion target date has passed and the second phase of the process is quite in-depth, the institution may want to consider closing this project and creating a new action project focusing upon the implementation and review phase.

#### **4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:** If Joliet Junior College is not already doing so, you may want to develop an area on your College's intranet to record information regarding best practices and successful projects for future committees to reference.

#### **5: Project Challenges**

**A:** Communicating the value of a project can be quite challenging. However, JJC has made great strides in raising awareness of the initiative across campus. It is important to keep stakeholders regularly informed of the improvements that the project is making in student learning. If a weekly/monthly campus newsletter is distributed internally, a column could be designated to emphasize the project and its results. In addition, if skill enhancement workshops are offered for faculty, a series of assessment workshops could be included on a regular basis and advertised in the column.