

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Joliet Junior College

Project Details			
Title	Implementing a Technology Plan for Improving Teaching and Learning	Status	COMPLETED
Category	Any Category	Updated	09-11-2004
Timeline		Reviewed	11-01-2004
	Planned Project Kickoff 05-11-2002	Created	11-23-2009
	Actual Completion	Version	1

1: Project Goal

A: In keeping with the stated mission of Joliet Junior College to provide “a quality education that is affordable and accessible” and offer a “rich variety of educational programs,” JJC will develop and implement an ongoing plan for using existing and emerging technologies to their fullest extent to promote and enhance teaching and learning. Effective planning will provide direction and guidance in exploiting the constantly changing educational opportunities technology offers. Assessment will focus on determining the strengths and weaknesses of the processes to that end.

2: Reasons For Project

A: As noted in Item B, this goal aligns with the college’s stated mission and goals. Systematic planning should lead to rapid, timely deployment of technologies to support student learning. Efforts to assess the extent to which technology supports learning have not been systematic or sustained. A clear alignment between planning, acquisition and use of technology, assessing outcomes, and continued growth in technology is needed, and this goal gives the impetus to achieving alignment.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: -Academic Departments -Academic computing and open students labs -Information Technology Center and administrative units

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Clearly the day-to-day operations of the college and the preparation of our students are highly dependent on timely, flexible technology and effectively trained users. Processes most affected are -Course deliveries -Access to Web-based resources -Administrative processes

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The college is fortunate to have an active Technology Planning Committee (TPC) to provide leadership for this goal. Because the TPC handles resource allocation and has access to between 1.3 to 1.7 million dollars per year, the college community is already clearly attentive to the activities of this committee. If the planning process is linked to assessment and student learning, and acquisition of equipment is linked to planning, the process will gain value to all who wish to acquire and update technology.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: -Changes in course deliveries using technology, including online courses, ITV courses, Web-enhanced courses, use of Smart and Semi-smart classrooms, and use of other emerging technologies -Usages of special services delivered using technology, such as StAR program services, developmental math and writing software, and foreign language software -Changes in use and increased access to Web-based resources, particularly in the library and computer labs -Increase in modalities of delivery of student support services and administrative processes such as online, in-person, and phone, for registration, advising and counseling, and accessing and keeping students’ records -Changes in availability of technology at sites other than Main Campus -Tracking of turn-around time for technology-enhanced services, such as transcripts, registration, and financial aids -Stakeholders’ satisfaction as identified in surveys -Stakeholders’ expectations as identified in surveys used as a starting point for the planning process -Changes in course deliveries

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7: Project Outcome Measures

A: -Preparation in the use of technology of students tracked at transfer institutions -Preparation in the use of technology of students in the workforce based on employers' satisfaction -Success of students completing technologically-enhanced developmental education and services from special needs in their college-level courses -Successful completion of courses requiring prerequisite skills in technology -Stakeholders' satisfaction with access to Web-based resources -Stakeholders' satisfaction with technologically-based administrative processes

8: Other Information

A: -70% of departments in compliance or involved in the planning process for technology -100% of the tracking measures from item F designed, in place, and in use -5% increase in retention of students in CIOS/technology courses -5% increase in numbers of students successfully completing courses with some requirement in technology -Produce an actual planning document that provides a method for cyclical updating -Design and implement tracking measures for selected process measures -Define selected learning outcomes linked to technology and tools to measure them-60% or more of employers report students from 3 different fields are well prepared in their area of technology -Complete an assessment of effectiveness of current process measures and add/delete accordingly -Track StAR students' extent of use of technology services; correlate extent of meeting educational goals with extent of usage -Track post-course performance of selected technology-enhanced and non-technology-enhanced sections of courses -Develop second-year plans -Review and refine process measures from year #1 -Add additional process measures-10% increase (to 70%) in employers reporting preparation of students in technology fields -Addition of 3 new fields (to 6) for employer surveys on preparation in technology -Track post-course performance of selected technology-enhanced and non-technology enhanced sections of courses -Track student performance in technology in capstone courses in CIOS/Technical Departments -Assess second-year plans -Develop third-year plans -Review and refine process measures from year #2 -Add/modify process measures if needed -Assess second-year outcomes and make refinements

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: This past year has been a time of accomplishment and a time of travail under extreme pressure. In March/April of 2004 one of the most important accomplishments of this three year project was nearing completion. The Board of Trustees had approved a technology replacement and technology enhancement plan along with a tuition/fees increase to ensure that approximately \$1.25 million would be available annually to support and expand the technology plan. Just when it looked like all the hard work and planning would stabilize, the college computer system was infected by a series of external viruses and worms which brought all computer functionality to a halt for 2 weeks. Unbeknownst to the upper administration, the technology center staff had failed to install appropriate security and firewalls which would have protected the college from this external "invasion". Moving swiftly and with appropriate input from the technology committees, the administration changed IT management and employed an external technology company to deal with this serious setback. After a summer of hard work, intense discussions and decision-making, and a great deal of financial resources, the college technology system has emerged stronger and much better protected. According to a couple of external consultants, Joliet Junior College may be the only community college currently operating under a CITRIX environment and experimenting with "thin client" in computer labs. The accomplishments of the past three months were done without pain and negative feedback because the "planning culture" responded in a time of extreme stress. Although far from the end, the current movement (although unplanned) was opportunistic and moved JJC where many of the players needed us to go. Even in the face of adversity, the college has continued to move forward with renewed vigor and vitality. Examples are shown in how the Goal structure of the past two years is alive and well. GOAL 1 - LEARNING: The college added an additional twenty semi-smart rooms to the 40+ it already had. The goal of having

computers, DVD's, and projection equipment in every classroom is only 12 months (and another \$150,000) away. GOAL 2 - ASSESSMENT of LEARNING: Continuous progress has been made by on-line faculty and web-assisted courses in the assessment of student learning. Surveys, pre and post-tests, and required online assignments have invaded more than 40% of the courses at the college. GOAL 3 - EQUIPMENT: Computer replacement, infrastructure enhancement, and classroom projection technology now has a budget of more than 1 million dollars a year to stay current and expand. A diverse committee of various college stakeholders assists in the decisions of the what and where this money will be expended. GOAL 4 - TRAINING/STAFFING: Another member was added to the distance education and online teaching support area. This staff also had their teaching and learning assistance center refurbished and greatly expanded. Well over 2/3 of all full-time instructors have been trained in the use of classroom and web-assisted technology. Some 50-75 of the adjunct faculty also received training last year, with another 2 sessions planned for 40 more this fall semester. GOAL 5 - ADMINISTRATION: The college continues to develop and enhance its web services to all students. Web registration now numbers about 2,000 students per semester and plans are underway to phase-out by Fall 2005 the printed class schedule. Following a successful Trailblazer experience the college formed a Students and Technology Subcommittee which addresses the needs of students as the college continues its assault on making many services web-based and user-friendly. Also, the newly structured administration in the IT Department has taken "customer service" to new heights. Although not quantifiable yet, there is little doubt that administrative computing, academic computing, internal employees, and external stakeholders have observed a new ways of doing business.

2: Institution Involvement

A: Until this summer the majority of people involved in this action project were members of the Technology Planning Committee and its various subcommittees. That group was representative of all segments of the campus although heavily weighted toward classroom teaching activities. Monthly meetings of subcommittees and the Technology Planning Committee moved the technology business through the college. Beginning this summer new groups have been needed to address Technology Security and testing the new CITRIX environment. As in the past, these committees are broadly representative and provide the upper administration with needed input for important decision-making. In the last month an ad-hoc committee of faculty, administration, and staff has read proposals, interviewed companies, and came to consensus on hiring a consultant firm to: 1. evaluate the current IT staff and their abilities and suggest training needs 2. work with the college to develop a long term technology plan in the light of recent changes.

3: Next Steps

A: This action project is effectively over now that it has completed its third year. However, technology planning is going to be as strong as ever. Soon the college will initiate a new relationship with Strata Information Group (San Diego, California) for the initial purpose of assisting in the evaluation of the IT staff, development of an appropriate training/staff development schedule, and evaluation of the current technology management structure. Their second task will be to assist the college in developing a new five year plan and evaluating the current decision-making structure. Coming out of three years of intensive evaluation and planning for technology has only whetted the college appetite to push such activities further. Although this will no longer be an AQIP Action Project, technology planning and evaluation will be annual and is self-sustaining. It's nice to know that although the AQIP requirement will be completed, the activities will live on and be strengthened. In addition to the activities described above, the Distance Education area will undertake an external evaluation of its courses and current student satisfaction. It is imperative to intensively evaluate online activities periodically and the time for distance education will be during the 2004-2005 year.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The development of an effective technology replacement plan and its related funding was an important process for the college. Although too early to fairly evaluate, the "thin client" environment and the use of CITRIX to drive technology campuswide is a potential best practice.

5: Project Challenges

A: Although the challenge of budget may have been taken care of during the last year, the issues involved in how to proceed into a new technology delivery mode (CITRIX) are challenging. The college has begun serious discussion about important issues like content-blocking software, restrictions on downloading external devices, single code log-in protocols for all students, and other security measures. Security became a serious issue this summer and continues to be a challenge for an open college environment.

6: AQIP Involvement

A: There is no need for AQIP to provide further assistance on this project. The college has had excellent assistance from ARKON Group on its development of a new computer security system. Strata Information Group is about to assist in two other important areas. External assistance in technology evaluation and development is critical and the college has had the support of the Board and administration to fund these initiatives.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Despite some very serious challenges to the whole of technology in recent months, the overall effect has been extremely positive for your technology environment. You have been particularly successful in funding technological growth in support of both instruction and administration. Additionally, you have been aggressive in providing training in technology use for both full-time and adjunct faculty. All of these achievements are substantial and you are to be commended and congratulated for your successes. However, it is difficult to know if specific annual stretch targets have been met since percentage increase in employer reporting on student preparation, the addition of new employer survey fields, post course performance tracking and capstone performance tracking are neither mentioned nor quantified. Nor is it clear that year-two process measures were reviewed and/or modified for year three. Virtually all of your reported successes, although impressive, relate to "inputs" rather than measurable outcomes of enhanced student learning and employer satisfaction. Perhaps these data are readily available and simply have not been reported. In any case, such data will be important as you continue the "spirit" of this action project in order to document progress and improvement (c.f. AQIP criteria 1, 2, 7 & 8).

2: Institution Involvement

A: It is highly commendable that the committees which have served this project as well as newly forming committees comprise "representatives of all segments of the campus" (c.f. criteria 3, 4 & 9). Further, the apparent smooth interaction of the committees with upper administration and the input provided by the committees for decision making demonstrates your commitment to AQIP criteria 5 and 8.

3: Next Steps

A: You are to be further commended for the continuation of technology planning beyond the scope of this action project. The restructuring of IT services and the establishment of relationships with outside technology companies and consultants should prove invaluable to accomplishing newly set goals. It will be important in this new phase of planning to keep the focus on student learning and on Continuous Quality Improvement (c.f. criteria 1, 7 & 8).

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Your ability to respond to extreme unanticipated difficulty in the technology area speaks well for the continuity and preparedness of your campus culture. As you gain experience with CITRIX and "thin client" you may well have new effective practices to share with other institutions. Well done!

5: Project Challenges

A: Your response to seemingly insurmountable technological challenges in recent months and your ability to address the challenges of funding suggest that you will find creative and effective ways to meet the coming challenges. Keep up the good work!

6: AQIP Involvement

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