CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

The goal of this action project was to conduct a comprehensive review of the general education and major-field assessment plans using a continuous quality improvement model. The start date was October 2013 with an anticipated completion date of May 2014. The project is in progress and will be finalized during summer 2014.

During Fall 2013, faculty members of the Assessment Coordinating Committee conducted a formal review of the assessment processes from the past 5 years with special emphasis on the types of measures used to evaluate the student learning outcomes.

The faculty subcommittees rated these general areas for each major and for each goal within the general education program:

1) Program has direct measures of student learning outcomes
2) Program has indirect measures of student learning outcomes
3) Program has a systematic approach
4) Results are reported
5) Fact-based improvements are evident

Faculty also evaluated the program goals, measurable student learning outcomes, data, sharing of data and program improvements based upon assessment activities by reviewing the website documents for the past 5 years.

The faculty reported the results of this review at the Assessment Coordinating Committee meetings in March 2014. The Deans of the colleges shared this information with the faculty assessment champions who will use the completed review forms as they work to incorporate more direct assessment measures into their assessment plans. The updated plans will be posted on DSU’s assessment website during summer 2014.

DSU will submit a new action project that will focus on a more extensive revision to the general education assessment plans.

This AQIP project was implemented to address opportunities identified in the university’s 2012 Systems Portfolio. Specifically, the reviewers indicated that “DSU is urged to develop direct measures for all of its student learning outcomes so that program improvements and curricular decisions are based on more
appropriate data sources.” After completion of the second AQIP Project, the university will be prepared to address these opportunities in next systems portfolio.

Reviewer’s Comments:

Dakota State University appears to be on track and continues to progress. This may be an opportunity to describe the continuous quality improvement model that is being utilized and what the measures for each goal are. This may also be an opportunity to begin planning how the data-driven decisions will be communicated.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The Assessment Coordinating Committee discussed this action project at their October 2013 meeting and developed a schedule for AY 2013-2014 with the following timeline:

1) Develop a quality improvement project using the university’s cycle of Plan, Implement, Evaluate and Decide: October – November 2013

2) Coordinate initial faculty meetings to review rubrics developed by faculty chair of the assessment committee: November 2013

3) Faculty conduct reviews and complete the program review documents: November 2013 – March 2014

4) Faculty subcommittees present findings to the assessment committee: March 2014

5) Faculty champions in each major review results of the subcommittee review and revise assessment plans as needed: March – May 2014


Specific metrics include the following:

- Development of guidelines for evaluation of assessment plans using quality improvement measures
- Completed rubric for system-wide general education and institutional graduation
- Completed rubric for each academic major
- Number of assessment plans revised and updated online
- Number of direct assessment measures incorporated into assessment

Reviewer’s Comments:

The Institution appears to have developed goals, metrics and a timeline, however, no measures have been identified; nonetheless the college does not state the involvement of key stakeholders as requested. This may be an opportunity to describe who is on the committee and what faculty and administrators were involved. This may be a good time to focus on developing measurable outcomes and a mechanism for continuous feedback and communication to ensure the success and momentum of the continuation of this action project. This may be an opportunity to include external stakeholders as well.

PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE
The first five steps of the timeline were completed as planned. The faculty developed guidelines, in the form of rubrics, using a quality improvement model. All of the assessment plans, data tables, summary analyses and changes for improvement were evaluated using these rubrics. The faculty teams reported the results of their review to the Assessment Coordinating Committee. The faculty are now revising the major-field assessment plans and those plans will be posted online and available for review this summer.

Specific accomplishments related to the goals include:

- Guidelines for evaluation of the assessment information were developed using improvement measures
- Faculty completed the rubrics for each general education goal and each undergraduate and graduate program
- Faculty champions for each major used the rubrics as a guide as they updated the major-field assessment plans
- Revised assessment plans will be posted online at [http://www.dsu.edu/academics/assessment/academic-assessment/index.aspx](http://www.dsu.edu/academics/assessment/academic-assessment/index.aspx) during summer 2014

The Assessment Coordinating Committee recommended submitting a new AQIP Action Project focused on general education assessment. This new project will include time for faculty to research best practices and will include faculty development sessions on direct assessment and how to incorporate these measures into their general education courses. Selected faculty will pilot new measures and share the results with their peers to ensure the process is well thought out and coordinated among all of the general education courses. This 2nd AQIP Action Project links to the University’s new strategic plan which will be launched during August 2014.

**Reviewer’s Comments:**

It appears the Institution has completed the first five steps and is making progress. This may be an opportunity to provide what measurement tools will be incorporated for continuous quality improvement and what model is being utilized. Continued involvement is extremely useful in maintaining and sustaining momentum. The institution may want to consider establishing a data management/review team that meets regularly to determine any additional needs. The continued and improved use of data, and the continued identification of clear, well developed goals and time-lines may serve the college well in overall process improvement.

**BEST PRACTICES**

The Assessment Coordinating Committee, which includes representatives from each of the academic colleges, the deans plus representatives from the Graduate Office, library, Extended Programs, the Center of Excellence, as well as a student representative was actively involved in this Action Project. The faculty subcommittees responsible for the comprehensive review included the following representatives:

- Undergraduate Assessment: One faculty rep from each of the three colleges
- Graduate Assessment: One faculty rep from each of the three colleges
- Assessment of the Institutional Graduation Requirements: One faculty from each college and the Center of Excellence rep
- Assessment of the System-wide General Education Requirements: One faculty from each college plus the library rep
The University’s Planning Council, which is chaired by the President and includes the vice presidents, deans and directors, approved the assessment committee’s request to submit a new action project.

The Academic Council, which includes the deans and directors reporting to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, received regular updates on the progress of this action project.

Reviewer’s Comments:

The Institution may have communicated the involvement of key stakeholders in question 2. The Institution may want to identify practices, challenges, processes that have impacted the project to date. The Institution may want to benchmark with other institutions with similar mission or goals to assist in the development of best effective practices. The Institution may want to identify practices, challenges, processes that have impacted the project to date and document and share with other colleges what was learned. The Institution may wish to research other valuable resources such as "Assessing Student Learning in the Community & Two-Year College" - successful strategies and tools developed by Practitioners in Student and Academic Affairs even though it is a University there is valuable information.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

This project included a review of the major-field assessment exams with a focus on relevance to new curriculum and the linkage to student learning outcomes. This will benefit the students who must complete these “exit exams” prior to graduating. The institution will benefit due to more direct links between the assessment data and the curriculum which supports the external program reviews required by the Board of Regents on a 5-7 year cycle. The quality improvement rubric used to evaluate the assessment plans and reports may be of interest to other institutions.

Reviewer’s Comments:

The Institution may want to identify potential challenges and/or barriers to be prepared in the continued success and momentum of the project; funding issues, communication of changes to all stakeholders, lessons that have been learned and can be shared along the way with other institutions, negative feedback from students and faculty, just to name a few. In order for the Institution to move forward the Institution may want to consider these and other potential factors. Celebrate successes along the way and continue to communicate progress throughout the institution.

ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

Challenges include the faculty time required to update assessment plans and the faculty development sessions required to train faculty in the use of direct assessment measures.

Reviewer’s Comments:

This challenge should have been discussed above in question 5 and how the Institution anticipates this challenge and how to overcome it.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

The faculty assessment champions are updating their assessment plans and incorporating more direct assessment measures.
Timeline:
Summer 2014: Faculty update major-field assessment plans and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment updates the plans online.

Summer 2014: Data tables are updated with results, if available, using the measures from the new assessment plans.

August / September 2014: Faculty review major-field assessment data and prepare Summary Analysis for Change and Changes for Improvement Reports.

September 2014: The University submits a new action plan focused on general education assessment which includes steps to pilot new direct measures of assessment in general education courses during Fall 2014 and Spring 2015.

Fall 2015: Assessment plans and student learning outcomes are reviewed using new data from the direct measures of student learning outcomes.

Reviewer’s Comments:

The college may want to list the accomplishments that have been made over the past year, these are next steps. The college has an opportunity to learn from past efforts and celebrate successes keeping in mind the journey of continuous quality improvement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

The University is in the process of developing a new strategic plan. Each of the colleges and departments submitted strategic goals and initiatives. One of the College of Arts and Sciences goals is to *Improve student abilities to understand complex material, think critically, and communicate across the curriculum*. One of the initiatives to accomplish this goal is centered on direct measures of student learning and will be part of the new AQIP Action Project. Specifically, faculty will develop rubrics, themes and standards that can be assessed within current general education courses to provide a more coherent learning environment for students.

The College of Arts and Sciences’ goal is dependent upon establishing a Reading and Writing Center. They envision completing this goal by 2018.

Reviewer’s Comments:

This may be an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned from this action project to other like Institutions. Documentation, sharing what was learned, and acting upon it for improvement is strategic for continued success.