

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Illinois Central College

Project Details			
<b>Title</b>	Revision of General Education Goals	<b>Status</b>	COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	1-Helping Students Learn	<b>Updated</b>	09-25-2011
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>	10-04-2011
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 11-01-2010	<b>Created</b>	10-27-2010
	<b>Actual Completion</b> 10-01-2011	<b>Version</b>	1

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The overall goal is to engage faculty in a process which reviews and updates the current ten general education goals at Illinois Central College. This project will allow a faculty-driven process which aligns ICC's general education goals with current faculty expectations for community college degree graduates.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** This project is being undertaken for the following reasons:

- The ten general education goals have not been reviewed by the faculty as a whole since the mid 1990's.
- Faculty voiced concerns about the current general education goals during a four-year AQIP assessment project.
- The project will assist in laying the foundation for addressing opportunities suggested in our recent systems portfolio feedback.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** Organizational areas affected: Eight academic departments (managing assessment of general education outcomes), Curriculum Committee (reviewing updated curriculum), Faculty (revising, implementing, and assessing goals and adjusting curriculum), Marketing (implementing catalog revisions), and General Education Committee (managing the process of change as the process owners for this review; the general education committee includes a representative sample of faculty from throughout the academic departments along with academic administrators and student services administrators).

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** The key organizational process to be changed/improved is the faculty-driven assessment process at the college. The revised general education goals will help drive assessment throughout the academic units of Illinois Central College.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** Building community and laying a solid awareness of general education among faculty in a faculty-driven process takes time. Faculty discussions, roundtable discussions, surveys, academic department meetings, and committee and subcommittee meetings, all held in the course of an academic year, are driving the sense of community that is needed for a review and revision of general education goals at the College. In addition, timelines associated with the curriculum updating process and the publication of a catalog will align to the time-frame of this project.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** The monitoring process will include feedback from academic department meetings and faculty surveys. These monitoring processes keep the voice of the faculty at the forefront of the project. The voice of faculty will be relayed through the general education committee, which is responsible for owning the project, creating the timeline, and making a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) regarding the future general education goals at the College.

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## 7: Project Outcome Measures

A: At the end of the project the faculty will either affirm the current general education goals or revise the current goals to reflect faculty expectations for community college degree graduates. The overall outcome measure/indicator is acceptance of the faculty recommendation for general education goals by the VPAA.

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## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The College's overall project goal was to use a faculty-driven process to review and update the general education goals. The College met its goal, and the faculty completed the work by staying on-task and responding to the calls and leadership of the General Education Committee. The College now has 7 General Education Goals which were written, discussed, and voted on positively by the faculty. These goals go into effect fall 2012.

The College will be retiring this project and entering Phase II: The development of operational definitions of these goals for a future college-wide assessment project.

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The primary participants of this Action Project were 10 faculty, 4 administrators, and 1 student services representative who served on the General Education Committee. This committee held active, focused, action-driven meetings during the academic year. After each meeting the Chair of the Committee along with other members would complete an action item. These items included college-wide discussions open to faculty and all staff, academic department-level discussions, college-wide caucuses and feedback sessions on proposed goals. The Chair of the General Education Committee called a vote which included full-time and adjunct faculty as well as representatives from ancillary services to decide if the new goals would be approved. The new goals were overwhelmingly approved. After this vote, the Vice President of Academic Affairs affirmed the goals. This large project was completed in one academic year.

### 3: Next Steps

A: The next step is to retire this project, and faculty will begin the development of operational definitions of these goals for a future college-wide assessment project.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The work involved many effective practices. To begin, conversations and listening techniques were used. The process was inclusive, and all faculty and staff were invited to participate. In fact, faculty did voice concerns and accolades throughout the project. All voices were heard and considered. The process started in the General Education committee; the committee encouraged discussion, and the committee practiced "inclusion" throughout the year by continually meeting with all faculty, not just the faculty who served on the General Education Committee. In the end, the most effective practice is that the Chair of the Committee, a full-time faculty member, remained a neutral mediator throughout the process.

### 5: Project Challenges

A: The process for revising the goals was quick-paced and full of opportunities. The College did not experience roadblocks along the way. The fear that we could not do this in one year quickly dissipated as we began the revision process of our general education goals. The College, particularly the faculty, are proud of this outcome because this group of faculty now has ownership of goals they developed.

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## Update Review

## 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: From the original Action Project it was noted that the General Education Committee was comprised of faculty, administrators and a student services representative. It was a strategic move to have a student service rep as part of the committee. Having input from one who represents those who will be involved in general education exhibited foresight. It also models *Category #1 - Helping Students Learn*. The fact that the goals were unanimously accepted allows you to move to the next step which will present a good share of challenges.

## 2: Institution Involvement

A: What is particularly commendable is that the participants in the discussion included a representative cross-section of academics and led to action items. The fact that the goals were overwhelmingly accepted is a testament to the creation of SMART\* goals. Securing the sponsorship of the VP of Academic Affairs provided the last necessary piece of 'buy-in'.

\*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

## 3: Next Steps

A: The selection process for faculty who will be charged with developing operational definitions is particularly important. The choice should be made on familiarity, experience and willingness to create goals that truly "*Help Students Learn*".

## 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: A very strong point is the security that comes with being able to say all voices were heard along the way. Enlisting the support of the Chair of the Committee who in turn functioned as a neutral mediator was an excellent step. Remaining neutral and being able to set your biases and judgments aside exhibits great strength of character.

## 5: Project Challenges

A: A suitable project challenge at this point may be to anticipate possible project challenges that will appear along the way to project completion. Project management at this stage will be critical in order to keep up enthusiasm for this endeavor. This Action Project is making reasonable progress towards completion.

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## Project Outcome

### 1: Reason for completion

A: The goal of the project was met: use a faculty-driven process to review and update the college's general education goals. The former ten general education goals were reviewed and updated into seven general education goals that go into effect the fall of 2012.

### 2: Success Factors

A: Everything! Conversations within and amongst the faculty; active listening techniques with feedback and reflection; inclusiveness of the process, as all faculty and staff were invited to participate. The General Education Committee started the process, but it quickly rolled out to all of the faculty during the August 2010 Celebration of Learning week. The discussions and feedback sessions continued throughout the 2010/2011 academic year. The Chair of the Committee, a full-time faculty member, maintained neutrality and played the role of mediator throughout the process. That was a huge role for her and she did it very successfully. In addition, the conversations/listening posts techniques will continue to be used with other projects campus-wide.

### 3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: Nothing. There was an initial fear that we could not get our goal completed in one academic year, but because of the continued focus on having new outcomes...outcomes that were faculty-driven...the process moved forward. The entire action project was one filled

w ith successes.