

## Action Project

**Title:** ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

**Version:** 4

**Institution:** Heartland Community College

**Status:** Completed

**Submitted:** 2013-01-08

**Category:** 1-Helping Students Learn

### Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2010-01-12

Target completion date: 2012-07-01

Actual completion date: 2014-03-17

### Project Detail

#### Project Goal

Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer

Academic Integrity is Central to the Mission of Heartland Community College, yet it is a value that is at risk if not embraced by the entire campus community. This project seeks to build an institutional culture of integrity that is communicated and implemented with all college stakeholders in a meaningful and consistent way.

#### Reasons For Project

Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities

As an institution of higher learning, it is vital to the mission of this college that we value academic integrity, and that we demonstrate this to students, and all college stakeholders, in a meaningful and consistent way. Thus, the top priority of this AQIP Project would be to improve the institutional culture of integrity, across every possible level of the institution. The core mission of our institution revolves around students, and the focus of this project is foremost directed towards student learning; however, in order to affect the entire college culture, the scope of the project must also go beyond the classroom.

Therefore, the 'who' is the entire campus community; the 'what' is developing a culture of commitment to integrity; the 'where' is across the entire campus; and the 'when' is over the next three academic years, through implementation of surveys, focus groups, the development of new campus policies and procedures, communicating and implementing standards and expectations, and then re-evaluating the status of Academic Integrity at Heartland by repeating surveys and focus groups, and subsequently sharing results.

## Organizational Areas Affected

List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project

Ideally, all areas of the college would be impacted by this project. In order for these initiatives to be successful, a campus-wide systems approach must be instituted. Integrity must be presented as an integral value of the institution from the moment a student walks through our doors, or is presented with materials about our campus. From financial aid, to marketing, to information technology, to the classroom, all aspects of the college must engage in a concerted effort to promote the value of integrity, as well as systematically deal with the encroachments to that value. Constituting the work of the Academic Integrity Committee as an AQIP Action Project would elevate its stature on campus, provide a framework for development of a successful systems approach, and involve multiple minds in the development of effective tools to measure the success of the project.

## Key Organizational Process(es)

Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve

The following areas will have processes that could be directly impact by the work of this project:

- Instruction
- Student Services, Financial Aid & Advising
- Academic Support & Disability Services
- Corporate, Community & Adult Education
- Library Services
- Information Technology

## Project Time Frame Rationale

Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion)

Our ideal timeline involves kicking off of this project in January 2010, at the Spring Best Practices, with full implementation by August of 2012. All post-testing, evaluation, and improved understanding of progress will be complete and communicated by January 2013. Of course, there is a great deal of work to be done over this period.

## Project Success Monitoring

Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing

The Charter for this project listed measurable deliverables such as:

- Improving college policies in the college catalog and on the HCC website
- Integrating issues of Academic Integrity into SOAR
- Developing suggested policies, handouts, contracts, and wording for the syllabus for faculty to communicate with students
- Developing other avenues to communicate to students the importance of Academic Integrity as a core value of Heartland Community College
- This will involve developing a "Faculty Handbook for Academic Integrity" which will include:

- Proactive measures which faculty can implement to discourage and prevent academic dishonesty
- Academic Integrity Policies
- A Decision Tree to help faculty when they must confront an incident of academic dishonesty
- Suggested penalties for violations of academic integrity, to provide guidance to new faculty who are unsure of what “the college” supports and believes is appropriate when academic dishonesty occurs; and also to encourage some consistency across faculty and disciplines
- Sample violation scenarios
- An Appeals Process

## Project Outcome Measures

Describe the overall “outcome” measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals

The success of this project will be measured by the success in completing the following projects and outcomes:

- Instituting a college wide survey, to evaluate the current status of Academic Integrity at Heartland (completed)
- Improving Communication with Students (ongoing)
- Communicating Standards and Expectations to Faculty, and encouraging consistent standards and enforcement of the basic principles of academic integrity (met with most academic divisions in Fall 2010 - ongoing)
- Improving college policies and procedures for coping with academic dishonesty (ongoing)
- Utilizing focus groups to develop specific strategies for implementation with each of the major college units (spring 2011)
- Sharing survey results and implementation strategies at a college-wide assembly (January, 14, 2011)

## Annual Update

### Project Accomplishments and Status

Describe the past year’s accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project

Heartland hosted an information table at the College’s annual Spring Fest event in 2012 and although that semester is not a part of the time frame for this report, the Academic Integrity Committee (an outgrowth of the action project team) had various items at its table for students to take with them with messages about academic integrity. One item was a Frisbee which came with a short survey in which students were asked (chiefly) whether their instructors had discussed academic integrity issues with them, how many classes the student was taking, and how many of those instructors addressed integrity issues. At its first fall meeting in 2012 (FY 2013), Committee members analyzed the data and determined that most students who completed the survey acknowledged that all or most of their instructors had addressed academic integrity in their classes. The Committee interpreted this as a victory for its awareness campaign.

In the fall of 2012, the Committee premiered its new academic integrity video. This video focuses on the positive message of taking pride in doing one's own work and reinforcement of the notion that students who do this possess personal as well as academic integrity. Although part of the Committee's mission included the objective to create and enforce disincentives for students exhibiting academically dishonest behaviors, throughout the life of this action project, team and Committee members attempted to put a more positive spin on the matter by emphasizing proactivity and getting the word out to students about ethical behavior. The video is the final piece of that marketing campaign and has been well received across campus. Each semester, all faculty members are sent an email update about the College's academic integrity efforts that includes a link to the video; additionally, the video is available anytime to HCC employees on the College's network and the Heartland YouTube channel.

Furthermore, the Committee suggests to faculty that the video may or may not be appropriate at the very beginning of the semester when students are bombarded with information, but that it might be best shown later in the semester when handing out a major assignment, research paper, etc. The Committee's survey showed that while many students reported that a faculty member had told them about academic integrity, it was most often done on the first day of class. Committee members are attempting to address that with various emails throughout the semester with reminders.

As the College began hanging wall decorations and developing promotional materials emphasizing OnCourse principles (a separate student success endeavor), the Academic Integrity Committee asked to be a part of this work and to have its Honor Code placed on the walls in the College's instructional buildings. In addition, the Committee also asked that the five fundamental values of academic integrity – honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility – be given prominence throughout the college as well.

Only two items from the team's action project charter remained to be completed during FY 2013: development and publishing of a non-faculty guidebook on academic integrity (to help cultivate a culture of AI campus-wide) and administration of a post survey – one authored by the International Center for Academic Integrity (CAI). Two subcommittees were then tasked with completing these objectives. The guidebook was created with significant the input garnered from prior academic integrity focus group data and titled, "The Academic Integrity Guide for Heartland Community College Employees," (a different publication than that which is provided to HCC faculty). All areas of the HCC campus now have a guide book which includes relevant information for their interactions with students.

The Academic Integrity Committee administered its first survey about academic integrity behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes in the spring 2010 semester. This survey was authored and is owned by Dr. Don McCabe at Rutgers University, who encourages colleges and universities to partner with the CAI to follow a prescribed methodology for assessing academic integrity on their campuses. HCC conducted the survey a second time (the post survey) to see whether or not there had been any noticeable differences in students' and faculty perspectives on various academic integrity issues over the prior three

years. This survey was administered in March of 2013 and data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, was performed over the summer months. A three-person subcommittee will meet throughout the fall 2014 semester to produce the final report. Dr. McCabe has also recently provided a dataset produced from all other survey administrations performed over the prior academic year to accommodate the need for comparative data.

Another issue discussed by the Committee in the spring 2013 semester concerned its sustainability after completing the work outlined in the action project charter. The Committee decided that members who chose to remain involved with academic integrity efforts will take on the role of an advisory board that will meet regularly to advise HCC's Dean for Student Success. This board will update policy as needed, communicate with faculty and staff about academic integrity issues, and act as advisors to the Dean in academic integrity matters. The AIC's earlier accomplishments included the complete revision of the college's academic integrity policy, the creation of a process for violations handling, and a tracking system for those violations.

During the life span of the Committee, the college underwent several dramatic organizational changes and this moved the handling of these academic issues to the area known as Student Success. Given that Student Success already had purview over the processes for addressing academic misconduct and dishonesty, this area is now charged with tracking instances of student academic misconduct and is better aligned to leverage the work of the Committee and subsequently created advisory board. Hence, the committee and the work will live on after the completion of this project.

### Institution Involvement

Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project

The Academic Integrity Committee was composed of faculty members (from Nursing, Mathematics, History, Sociology, Business, Psychology, and Computer Technology), administrators (Dean, Librarian, Testing Services, Instructional Chair), pro-tech and classified employees (Division Secretary, Program Assistant for Disability Support Services, Information System/Database Administrator, Coordinator of Marketing, Academic Advisor, ESL Specialist), ad hoc members (Vice President for Learning and Student Success and the Dean of Enrollment Services), and student members. These participants were drawn from diverse areas of the college and represented a wide array of experience with academic integrity issues and with various student populations. The College was fortunate to have one or two students on the committee each year. Finding students who would be willing to serve on this committee was a consistent challenge.

Over the course of this project, stakeholders and process partners from all areas of the college were contacted to give their input, feedback, and suggestions to the group. Committee members conducted presentations on its work at numerous gatherings across campus and made engagement of faculty and staff members a priority, particularly in soliciting participation in both of the aforementioned survey administrations.

## Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

During the fall 2014 the Committee will prepare the final report from the spring 2013 survey and distribute it to the college community. Those members who have expressed interest in serving on the advisory board for the Dean of Student Success will meet to determine the duties of that body with the input of the Dean.

All of the items on the action project team's original charter are now complete, so we expect that we be retired as an AQIP action project as of the fall 2013 semester.

## Resulting Effective Practices

Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project

The Committee was consistent in asking that all work was to be done in subcommittees. These smaller groups reported their progress during the full committee meetings and would ask for help or input at those times, if needed. Participants proved highly responsible and task-oriented in this group structure. The Committee learned it was better to allow the subcommittees do their work and report it out as they were then able to accomplish clear, creative, and high quality work.

## Project Challenges

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

Academic integrity needs to be an important concept that Heartland's faculty, staff, and students have in front of them throughout their time at Heartland. The challenge will be to keep the focus on it as the formal committee disbands. It is too important to get lost among all of the other priorities of the college.

Heartland should discuss student representation on the subsequently formed academic integrity advisory board. One idea that has circulated within the larger Committee is to have two advisory boards, one made up of faculty and one made up of students to further gain insight into the student perspective on this matter.

## Annual Update

### REASON FOR COMPLETION

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

The primary reason for closing this project is that the committee completed all of the items

from our charter AQIP document. Our goal was to cultivate a culture of Academic Integrity at Heartland Community College. We identified concrete steps that could be taken and measurable actions that this committee could complete in order to infuse AI into our organizational culture. Those steps and actions are complete as an AQIP project, but now we are institutionalizing AI by having a standing advisory board that will continue to keep AI as a focus of our community college's culture.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

Successful aspects of this project include the surveys we administered (spring 2010 and spring 2013), the creation of guidebooks for first faculty and later all Heartland employees, the creation of a video on integrity, and the marketing of academic integrity on campus and to specific groups (most notably faculty and students). The initial survey provided us with information about how students and faculty perceived academic integrity and academic dishonesty as well as giving us ideas to work with such as creating a tracking system for AI offenses, creating an Academic Dishonesty tracking form, and providing input as to how faculty would like to be supported when they confront issues of academic dishonesty. The video is extremely poignant. Students who view the video come away with a sense that academic integrity carries over into their everyday life. The guidebooks are a proactive measure that people on campus can use to help teach students about behaving with integrity in the academic life.

## UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

Knowing that changing or adding to a culture is difficult, this project met with some resistance from faculty members who preferred to deal with issues of academic dishonesty on their own and not involve the college through the use of the tracking form. This indicates that there are members on campus who have not adapted to this cultural shift. One of the issues that we dealt with on the committee during the final year of its existence was the issue of what should come next. The advisory board is set to address this issue, but in order to have AI be a part of the culture, it must be reinforced often and placed in front of the members of the organization often. The AQIP committee was large and had many people to work on infusing AI into the culture which was an advantage. Moving forward the smaller advisory board will have many of the same duties as the AQIP committee but with fewer members.

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