

Highland Community College, IL

Project: Expanding and Evolving Community Education toward “Lifelong Learning”

Version 1.0- Project

Q: What is the current status of your project?

A: In-progress

Q: Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.

A: Original project start/kick-off date, 8/25/2014

Original target completion, 5/30/2017

Anticipated completion date, 5/30/2017

Q: Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution’s most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.

A: The Life Long Learning project relates to AQIP Category 3, Understanding Students, Category 9, Other Stakeholders Needs and Building Collaborative Relationships, and a strategic initiative for the College to be more responsive to needs and expectations of stakeholders. To date, classes have been offered in every county of the district, and over 600 students have been served. Programming has been expanded to include summer opportunities for children.

List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the Q: metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.

A: Original project goals and deliverables were:

1. Develop and implement Marketing Plan
2. Create process for course development with less than 20 steps
3. Increase course offerings by 50%
4. Increase courses that are held by 50%
5. Increase enrollment in Lifelong Learning courses by 50%

Updated goals

1. Develop and implement an effective marketing plan to include an online catalog for Lifelong Learning
2. Create process for course development with less than 20 steps
3. Increase course offerings by 50%
4. Increase courses that are held by 50%
5. Recruit and increase enrollment in Lifelong Learning courses by 50%
6. Streamline the enrollment process for prospective students (online registration, acceptance of credit card payments, not requiring social security numbers) to break down the barriers to growing the program as identified by stakeholders
7. Provide increased teaching opportunities for Lifelong Learning courses to current and potential full- and part-time faculty and staff
8. Offer at least one LLL class in every county of the Highland district.
9. Expand LifeLong Learning course offerings to include additional categories of continuing education for professional advancement, and additional content areas to reach a wider segment of our district population

Implementation Timeline:

- Streamline course development process -- May 2015

- Develop Marketing plan -- August 2015
- Develop Online catalog -- August 2015
- Offer at least one class in every county of the Highland district-- Spring 2016
- Increase the number of courses offered by 50% -- August 2016
- Increase enrollment by 50% -- August 2017
- Increase courses held by 75%--August 2017
- Streamline the enrollment process for prospective students--Summer 2018
- Increase the number of completers by 50% -- June 2018

Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to
Q: include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.

A: The original goals will be referenced followed by progress to-date.

1. Marketing plan developed and implemented

- Registration form created as a fillable pdf form and on the website - Spring 2016
- HCC Lifelong Learning Facebook page created by Community Relations- Spring 2016
- Created ability to cross post to Highland Facebook page- Summer 2016
- Marketing plan was developed and initial implementation began- August 2016
- Press releases every two weeks were added to increase awareness of classes- August 2016

- Online catalog available on website through searchable pdf file- June 2016
 - Mailer created and mailed to all Highland District households for Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016.
 - Social media marketing was added by the Academic Technology Resources (ATR) Department- September 2016
 - Identify additional ways to market the classes. Too often comments from the public are they did not know HCC is offering LLL classes which contributes to the 50% cancellation rate. The age group taking classes is 65+. This data suggests we are not effectively marketing to the 18-65 age group, Ongoing
2. Create process for course development with less than 20 steps, Spring 2016
- Process has been streamlined as much as possible within the perimeters identified by the human resources department and the payroll department.
 - The addition of a 10 hour per week administrative assistant has decreased the number of departments involved by two.
 - The time between steps is decreased as the assistant creates the courses in Banner, updates the spreadsheet, completes room requests, assembles employment packet for new instructors, assembles instructor packets including class lists for all instructors, delivers contract to payroll for payment, and reviews employment packet for completeness and accuracy.
 - Each step that can be completed within the Academic Technology Resources Department equates to less time to complete a process- March 2016
3. Increase course offerings by 50%. In FY15, there were 12 sections offered. In FY16, there were 69 sections offered indicating a 608% increase.

4. Increase courses that are held by 50%. In FY15, 12 classes were held. In FY16, 66 classes were held, indicating an increase of 550%

5. Increase enrollment in LifeLong Learning courses by 50%. In FY15 131 were enrolled. In FY16 529 were enrolled indicating a 403.8% increase

6. Increase enrollment in LifeLong Learning courses by 50%. In FY15 131 were enrolled. In FY16 529 were enrolled indicating a 403.8% increase.

7. Streamline the enrollment process.

- Highland has explored and vetted three options for online registration, accepting credit cards, and not requiring social security numbers.
- The first option would add \$5 per course to cover the fees with a pay-as-you-go format.
- The second option is a yearly subscription fee which uses HCC's credit card gateway.
- The third option is a continuing education software with the highest cost of the three.
- Implementation times vary from several weeks to a semester.
- All three options would include an online course catalog, searchable by location.

- Unfortunately, this goal has been delayed due to the State of Illinois budget impasse. IL community colleges only received 27% of their expected funding in FY2016 and only 40% thus far in FY2017.

Additional Goals Identified Fall 2016

8. Offer at least one class in every county of the widespread Highland district- Spring 2016

- Fall 2015 all courses were held on the Highland campus.
- Spring 2016, courses were offered at 17 locations including at least one location from every county in the Highland district.

9. Hold 90% of courses offered.

- To date, approximately 50% of the courses offered have generated enough enrollment to be held.
- This was a very ambitious goal, and one we are struggling to meet. Thus, it has been adjusted to 75%.

10. Provide increased teaching opportunities for LifeLong Learning courses to current and potential full and part-time faculty and staff, Fall 2016

11. Expand LifeLong Learning course offerings to include additional categories of continuing education for professional advancement, and additional content areas, Summer 2018

Additional Project Information

An evaluation form which every LLL participant is requested to complete has yielded overwhelmingly positive comments. Participants have also requested several types of classes. Through the surveys, HCC has realized that the demographics of

students taking classes are mainly 65+ years of age. Thus, there is a large percentage of the population currently not being reached. It is hoped that better marketing and the ability to register for courses online will address this demographic gap.

The success of this project can be contributed to a true team effort. This project increased the duties of many, did not adhere to existing processes in many instances, and has involved many people and departments across campus. To thank everyone for their contributions, willingness to expand their duties, and going beyond expectations, a dessert celebration was held recognizing the efforts of those involved.

Q: Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration, particularly during the past year.

A: This project has demonstrated a true team effort across many areas of Highland's campus. The Academic Technology Resources Department, Admissions, Business Institute, Cashier, Payroll, Human Resources, Executive Vice President, and Cabinet have all been involved with ideas for classes, finding instructors, hiring instructors, registering students, and creating and streamlining the process. Their involvement can be summarized as the following:

- Academic divisions -- instructors to offer ideas and teach courses
- Academic Technology Resources Department -- support faculty who teach the courses
- Admissions & Records Department -- create course offerings in Banner
- Business Institute -- collaborate with LLL regarding the entire process
- Cashier -- identify and implement payment options

LLL Instructors have been identified and represent more than ten communities across the Highland district, several communities outside of Highland's district, and at least two communities outside of the State of Illinois. These communities include: Sterling, Freeport, Mt. Carroll, Lena, Byron, Rockford, Davis, Belvidere, Elizabeth, Pecatonica, Cedarville, Oregon, Apple River, Stockton, Benton, WI and Bettendorf, IA.

LLL classes have been held in at least 17 different locations across the Highland district and online. These locations include Freeport Public Library, Lanark Public Library, Mt. Morris Senior Center, Stephenson-JoDavie's Senior Center, Savanna Chamber of Commerce, Warren Community Building, Jo-Carroll Career & Technical Academy, Apple Canyon Lake Property Owners' Association, Fitness Lifestyles, Generations Brewing Co., St. John's United Church of Christ, Campbell Center for Historic Preservation, DOLL Memorial Apartments, Cedarville Historical Museum, 4 Seasons Bowling, Country View Equestrian Center, and Haywire Farms.

The initial LifeLong Learning task force consisted of the Executive Vice President, Deans, Admissions, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), LifeLong Learning instructors, Information Technology Services (ITS), Vice President of Student Services, and the Vice President of Administrative Services. This group re-convened in Spring 2016 to assess strengths and challenges of the LLL program and to re-evaluate the goals.

Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as
Q: a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?

A: The effect LifeLong Learning has had on the institution is increased head counts reported to the IL Community College Board (ICCB), improved positive awareness of Highland throughout the district, and additional income generated from the classes. The institution and students have an increased awareness of the quality and variety of instructors available in this area. Furthermore, HCC has a better understanding of the demand for these type of classes by the residents of the district.

The positive effect this project has had is Highland became evident through the Strategic Planning process. One aspect of the process was to hold focus groups throughout the Highland district. For the first time in recent history, all feedback was positive for what Highland is trying to accomplish, and comments highlighted ways for HCC to further improve. Good practices identified as related to LifeLong Learning are the hiring process for instructors, the process for paying instructors and serving instructor needs, the variety of course being offered, and the buy-in from community members.

Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully
Q: completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: The current project has been implemented using few college resources. As the program continues to grow, staffing will become an even greater challenge. Currently, one person is on staff 8 hrs./wk. for course creation, another is on staff 10 hrs./week in a secretarial position, and the Academic Technology Resources (ATR) Coordinator receives a stipend to also oversee LifeLong Learning. To continue the success of the program, there should be a separate Lifelong Learning Division/Department. The department should include a Coordinator dedicated to continuing the program and staffing sufficient to complete required paperwork for Human Resources and payroll. It is not sustainable to have the ATR Coordinator continue with two areas of responsibility. Furthermore, it is a detriment to the growth of both programs.

The second challenge is the inability to register and to accept payment for classes online. This is further complicated by the requirement that social security numbers be provided for registration purposes. As a result of these barriers, many classes in locations other than Freeport, IL, are canceled. Anecdotal evidence is people begin to register, find out they cannot complete registration online, and/or must provide a social security number and cease the registration process.

To hopefully improve the rate of classes held, marketing of the classes needs to reach all ages and incomes of the Highland district. Currently the majority of people taking classes are 65+ years of age, leaving a large segment of the population untapped. Lifelong Learning has invested in Hootsuite to enable the social media marketing of the classes in an attempt to reach the 18-65 age group. Additional time needs to be spent to learn how to better leverage social media for Highland.

Additional areas for improvement are identifying (1) the types of classes people desire; (2) the days of the week available for people to take classes; (3) the times people prefer to take classes; (4) the time in a semester when people will sign up; (5) the locations people are interested in; (6) ways to encourage people to register again; and, (7) a registration process prospective students will complete.

In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the Q: course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.

A:

1. Improve marketing of the LLL classes in order to lower the cancelation rate of classes, Fall 2016.
 - Highland recognizes once a student enrolls in a class, if the class is canceled, it is unlikely they will register for another class. Our adjusted goal is to hold 75% of the classes.
2. Increase number of classes held in locations throughout the district, Spring 2016
3. Implement an online registration system to include the following: Fall 2017
 - Credit card payment
 - Online catalog
 - Ability to search courses by location

- Social security number not required, yet meeting IRS mandated reporting requirements
 - Registration process does not require mailing or coming to campus.
4. Social media marketing targeted to specific geographic regions and interests, Spring 2017
 5. Strategic plan created to encompass Business Institute, Lifelong Learning (commonly known as Community Education), and Continuing Education areas, Spring 2017
 6. Create campus department that includes Business Institute, Lifelong Learning (commonly known as Community Education), and Continuing Education, Summer 2017
 7. Identify a Coordinator of LLL/Business Institute, Summer 2017
 8. Add staff to support the ongoing success of the program, Fall 2017
 - Create 75+ classes every semester,
 - Hold 75% of the classes
 9. Expand children's programming, Summer 2017
 - Summer 2016 partnered with the YMCA to offer 45 minutes classes led by Highland instructors
 - Summer 2017 partner with YMCA and Black Rocket to offer computer programming classes to students ages 8-14.
 10. Begin offering continuing education credits, badges, etc., Spring 2018

Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes Q: reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.

A: The goals for LifeLong Learning were aggressive. Many within the institution were skeptical and did not believe there was a need in the community for the classes nor that Highland should waste precious resources on the project. The positive focus group comments for the strategic plan, the number of instructors that have called inquiring about offering their class, the number of students who have taken a class, and the successes experienced with the low investment by the College clearly indicate this project should be ongoing and supported by the institution.

Declaration

Q: Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

A: Ultimately, by serving increased numbers of students in what would ideally be re-branded as "Lifelong Learning", Highland could expand our diversity and number of positive learning experiences for students primarily from our district, but also for those out-of-district

Academic Technology Resources Department, Admissions, Business Institute, Cashier (?)

1. Improved registration process for lifelong learning courses, including the ability to accept registrations online
2. Convenient payment methods for lifelong learning courses
3. Streamlined course offering process (currently 20 steps are required)
4. Offer an on-line catalog
5. Marketing of courses through a variety of methods following implementation of the marketing plan

Q: Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this action project now and how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution's current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted Systems Portfolio.

A: A number of years ago, Highland had a robust collection of Community Education offerings. As this program and related staff dwindled, many constituents have asked that we consider making more Community/Continuing Education courses available. We also have a significant number of individuals who have offered to teach these types of courses in their areas of interest, and see growing the program into areas that would expand our reach and personal connections with individuals and communities that we serve. Many small businesses utilized the community education offerings to expand the knowledge-base of their employees. Some businesses still take advantage of the offerings through Business Institute. The relationships the offering of these classes between small

businesses and their employees has benefited the college in numerous ways including support of the HCC Foundation.

Q: List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress toward each goal. Be sure to include when you anticipate submitting the project for formal reviews.

A: 1. Expand Community Education course offerings to include more learning opportunities for additional categories of continuing

education for professional advancement, and additional content areas reaching wider segments of our populations served

2. Create an effective marketing plan for Lifelong Learning

3. Marketing plan developed and implemented

4. Process for course development with less than 20 steps

5. Increase of course offerings by 50%

6. Provide increased teaching opportunities for these courses to current and potential full- and part-time faculty and staff

7. Increase of courses that are held by 50%

8. Recruit and enroll more students into these types of courses

9. Streamline the enrollment process for prospective students (online registration, acceptance of credit card payments, not

requiring social security numbers) to break down the barriers to growing the program as identified by stakeholders

10. Increase enrollment in lifelong learning courses by 50%

Timeline:

1. Streamline process -- May 2015

2. Marketing plan developed -- August 2015

3. Online catalog -- August 2015

4. Increase the number of courses -- August 2016

5. Increase enrollment -- August 2017

6. Increase the number of completers -- June 2018

Q: Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

A: Academic divisions -- instructors for ideas of courses to offer and to teach the courses
 Academic Technology Resources Department -- support faculty
 Admissions & Records Department -- enrollment process and course offerings
 Business Institute -- the entire process
 Cashier -- payment options
 Based upon the Review er's comments, additional individuals w ill be added to the Life Long Learning Task Force:
 Board of Trustee Member-- input for the entire process
 Community Leader-- input for course offerings, instructors, and community aw areness

Q: Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

A: 1. Process for course development w ith less than 20 steps -- May 2015
 2. Increase of course offerings by 50% -- August 2016
 3. Increase of courses that are held by 50% -- August 2016
 4. Recruit and enroll more students into these types of courses -- August 2017
 5. Streamline the enrollment process for prospective students (online registration, acceptance of credit card payments, not requiring social security numbers) to break dow n the barriers to grow ing the program as identified by stakeholders -- May 2016
 6. Increase enrollment in lifelong learning courses by 50% -- September 2016

7. Marketing plan developed -- May 2015

8. Marketing plan implemented -- Fall 2015

Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.
Q: project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: Barriers to refining and simplifying course development, registration, and payment processes will likely be encountered. Also, finding well-qualified instructors available to teach a wider range of course offerings may prove to be difficult, locations, increasing awareness to community, building community relationships.

Provide any additional information that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project.
Q: understand regarding this Action Project.

A: This project encompasses the support of all divisions on campus, community relations, admissions, cashier's office, and Business Institute. It also connects well with our action project "Cultivating Collaborative Relationships with External Partners of HCC" in terms of new interests in expanding these offerings that have been expressed by our constituencies.