

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Southeast Missouri State University

Project Details			
<b>Title</b>	Course Redesign	<b>Status</b>	REVIEWED
<b>Category</b>	1-Helping Students Learn	<b>Updated</b>	09-29-2012
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>	10-09-2012
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 09-07-2010	<b>Created</b>	09-07-2010
	<b>Target Completion</b> 06-03-2013	<b>Version</b>	2

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** During this action project we will integrate the concepts of course redesign into the curriculum at Southeast Missouri State University. Course redesign involves modifying the ways in which materials are made available to students and how students engage with those materials as they are learning. These are the characteristics of the redesign process:

- Redesign the whole course, not just sections of the course to produce economy of scale.
- Emphasize active learning, student engagement with content, and student engagement with each other.
- Emphasize a heavy reliance on readily available interactive software used independently and in teams.
- Increase on-demand individualized assistance.
- Automate only those aspects of the course that can benefit from automation - for example, homework, quizzes, and exams.
- Replace single mode instruction with a more differentiated personnel strategy, including a greater use of course assistants, preceptors, etc.

Research has indicated that, as a result of the redesign process, universities are able to increase student learning, increase student satisfaction, and reduce the cost of delivering instruction. In addition, students are exposed to technology which helps them learn the principles of information management. Southeast Missouri State University plans to implement four pilot course redesign projects by Fall 2011, and continue to expand and refine the model after that date.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** Modern global society is creating new knowledge and sharing it with people using new technologies and methods of teaching that are new in human history. Many in higher education, however, still use older transmission models and older technology that do not take advantage of the gains possible with newer models of learning. As a result of this action project, students attending classes at Southeast Missouri State University will be learning about the disciplines and their applications using research-based educational techniques and new technologies for engagement and information management. In addition, course redesign allows the University to deliver its programming at a lower cost. The current economic downturn encourages the University to increase the efficiency of the delivery of its services.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** This action project will most involve these units:

- The division of academic affairs
- The information technology unit on campus
- Two specific courses have been identified for pilot implementation:
  - o University Studies 100: University Success
  - o Math 101, Math 102: Developmental Algebra
- Two additional courses have yet to be identified

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** The delivery of instruction, including personnel strategies, the use of technology, the timing of course offerings, and the increased use

of collaborative activities.

## 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A:	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
Phase 1 (2 courses)	Structural planning	Instructional, assessment planning	Implementation 1	Implementation 2	Expansion	Expansion
Phase 2 (2 courses)		Structural planning	Instructional, assessment planning	Implementation 1	Implementation 2	
Phase 3 (2 courses)			Structural planning	Instructional, assessment planning	Implementation 1	Implementation 2

Definitions:

- Structural planning: General goals and structure of the course based on a rough idea of content resources – prototypical weeks (how many lectures, recitations, online experiences, discussions, etc.). This is needed to make the request for staffing and rooms in time for scheduling of Implementation 1.
- Instructional, assessment planning: The details of developing course materials and planning assessments.
- Implementation 1: First time the course is taught. Data collection for quality improvement.
- Implementation 2: Second time the course is taught, with improvements. Data collection.
- Expansion: Expanding implementation from the pilot phase to all course sections.

## 6: Project Success Monitoring

A: During the second semester of implementation, the course redesign process will focus on assessment and evaluation. As part of the regular University assessment program, data will be collected on student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and cost of delivering instruction.

## 7: Project Outcome Measures

A: During pilot implementation, these courses will be offered both in the new course redesign method and also using traditional techniques. Assessment will be conducted on student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and cost of delivering instruction under both scenarios. To be successful, we anticipate that the course redesign model will result in a statistically significant increase in student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and cost of delivering instruction.

## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The AQIP Course Redesign (AQIP-CR) Project continued and expanded throughout the 2011-2012 academic year, led by the steering committee whose function is the same as last year.

Meetings: members of the steering committee met with Student Government to present the Course Redesign project and address student concerns. Two members conducted a focus group with faculty in the first cohort as a way to evaluate Course Redesign and program processes. Members also presented on models employed and preliminary data for three of Redesigned courses at the AASCU meeting in July 2012. The project chairperson reported to the Higher Learning Commission visit team in early September 2012.

The Faculty seminars continued to be developed by members of the steering committee to accommodate projects in each phase of development and implementation.

Cohort 1 (5 courses) carried out two semesters of pilot studies, revising the second pilot based on findings from the Fall semester. Issues addressed included logistical issues, faculty feedback, and student feedback, including grades. Cohort 1 also prepared their departments for the full implementation that will take place in Fall 2013 using several different models for faculty development. These include brief workshops for all faculty teaching all sections of the course, regardless of campus (main or one of the regional campuses) and individual mentoring.

Cohort 2 (6 courses) spent Fall 2011 intensively designing their courses and participating in the AQIP-CR Faculty Seminar and conducted the first pilot in Spring 2012. Modifications in response to issues identified in the first pilot are guiding changes in these courses for the second pilot.

A third cohort of 4 courses was selected from those answering the call for proposals in October 2011. Four courses were selected: BS103 Human Biology, EH103 Modern European History, ED 251 Introduction to Technology for Teachers and FN235 Food and Nutrition were selected. Cohort 3 did structural planning in Fall 2011 and intensive course redesign in Spring 2012.

A fourth cohort (going beyond the requirements of the AQIP-CR project) of seven courses was selected from faculty responding to the March 2012 call for proposals. CD 371 Anatomy and Physiology of the Hearing Mechanism, CD 656, Cleft Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies, CL120/PY 120 Child Development, IL094 –ESL Listening and Speaking (Advanced Level), PS230 American Public Policy, RC100 Leisure in a Diverse Culture, and SW/SO 242 Statistics for the Social Sciences. Two of these courses involve the alignment of previously existing courses from two departments. This cohort also includes our first graduate course and upper level specialty courses. Cohort 4 did structural planning in Spring 2012.

As of the end of Spring 2012 a total of 22 courses are being redesigned by a total of 38 faculty members in this project, far exceeding the 7 courses originally proposed. Nine of these courses are in full implementation as of the start of fall semester 2012.

Further, the efforts of Southeast faculty are represented in both statewide and national projects. The College Algebra and Introductory Spanish courses in Cohort 2 continue also as participants in the Missouri statewide Course Redesign Project until the directors of NCAT removed them in Spring 2012 for being too small, thus not likely to produce the kinds of cost savings NCAT seeks in its projects. The English Composition I course of cohort I continues as part of the AASCU UCF NGLC Grant for creating blended learning courses.

Several of the faculty redesigning courses took advantage of funds earmarked for course redesign through the Funding For Results program and the Information Technology Committee in house grant competitions. Funded proposals were to support faculty development in preparation for full implementation, for student workers to help with the instructional design phase of course redesign, and for technology, notably for laptops and tablet computers and computer lab updates. Over \$100,000 in funds were garnered by faculty in this AQIP project.

## 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** The AQIP-CR project is headed and managed by the Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning. The Director and Associate Director have direct involvement, and the staff provides administrative and communications support. The project action committee included a student representative in year two of this project, and a student representative is also on the steering committee for year 3. Due to some reorganization at Southeast, the Office of Instructional Technology (formerly part of our Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning) is now represented separately on the steering committee by the Associate Dean heading that office. OIT is a separate unit from IT and both are involved. Otherwise, the campus wide involvement described in year 2 continues without change.

As far as staying on the institution's priority list, the involvement of a large number of departments, the twice yearly calls for proposals for course redesign projects, the notification of priority access to funds in the FFR and ITC funding opportunities are all ways that Course Redesign stays on the campus radar. The strong support of the Provost also makes this a visible project. Faculty members involved in the process of redesigning courses commit to participation in an ongoing faculty seminar. These meetings bring the groups together over the five semesters for sharing of progress, problem solving and networking.

Faculty Development on campus continues to emphasize Course Redesign and remind faculty of the progress of this initiative. The Teaching Enhancement Workshop for new faculty in August, 2012 included a presentation on course redesign, as did the Winter Institute in January 2012.

## 3: Next Steps

**A:** Cohort 1 completes their involvement in the project at the end of Fall 2012. The other three cohorts are continuing their progress through the Course Redesign. An RFP for a fifth cohort has been distributed with a deadline in October 2012.

Gathering data on the effectiveness for student learning is major focus this year. This involves working with each cohort and emphasizing the assessment process. A new reporting process is planned for year 3, with courses in full implementation planned to report to the Action Committee.

The steering committee is also focusing on the future of course redesign at Southeast once the AQIP project is completed. We do not see an end to faculty wanting to take advantage of the efficiencies inherent in course redesign.

In year three the steering committee will look forward to work on mechanisms and personnel to keep Course Redesign going. One idea is to take advantage of the interest in Course Redesign generated by this project, as well as the faculty participants who have direct experience and expertise in Course Redesign. Our existing full time instructional designer might be a person to lead the project. Existing CST and OIT faculty development institutes might focus more on Course Redesign, by highlighting individual courses, models and strategies that have been developed in the AQIP CR project. At present, two institutes per year are held for all faculty and a separate institute for incoming faculty is another venue. Other faculty development workshops of shorter duration than an institute have already been used by this project and Course Redesign could easily be a topic.

#### **4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:** Implementation of redesigned courses has led to some models that might be transferable to other campuses. The work of cohort 1 on planning for implementation has led to the development of faculty development efforts expressly designed for bringing all faculty involved in teaching the course on board. The Mathematics, Political Science and History departments had dedicated workshops for all the instructors to learn about the changes and structure and tools being used in the redesigned courses. Individual mentoring of faculty new to the redesigned course by those who have already taught the course was another common feature of preparing for full implementation. With multiple campuses and courses with multiple sections, not all instructors have participated in the CR process. These implementation efforts are essential to success of the redesigned courses.

Enhancing communication about the course redesigns within departments was a constant feature of the AQIP CR faculty seminar, for all phases of the process in year 2. This is a key element for the success of CR and the likelihood that instructors not fully involved in the CR process will buy into the courses. This was a marked increase in emphasis based on what we learned during cohort 1. Now all faculty involved are encouraged (to keep their department informed and especially the other faculty who will be teaching the courses).

The continuation of substantial rewards for faculty involved in Course Redesign is one key to the success of this project. These rewards include the FFR and ITC in-house grants already described, as well as the one course of release time during the instructional planning phase and the opportunity to work with faculty from across the university in the AQIP CR faculty seminar. Reallocating existing funds (the part time overload budgets pay for the course release, and FFR and ITC already existed but without CR priority access) is cost effective and keeps this project on the radar as an important university-wide initiative.

#### **5: Project Challenges**

**A:** Capturing more of the work of each cohort remains a challenge and one we are working to address in year three. In particular we are collecting assessment instruments and summarizing the redesign models and practices used in different courses.

We have found it difficult to get student learning data from early cohorts. This is likely due to our failure to be absolutely explicit that this is required. We have made it clearer to subsequent cohorts that this is a requirement and have modified the faculty seminar meetings to reiterate and structure this data collection. We are considering a reporting process to the Action Committee to make this a bit more structured.

Another challenge is the need for a long term policy about providing electronic texts and software to students. The use of commercial packages that accompany textbooks is a feature in many of our Course Redesigns. However, Southeast has a textbook rental system. Thus there is a need for new policy about new forms of non-rentable learning media.

Southeast has been a Windows campus, with a few exceptions in art and industrial engineering technology, who have MAC based software. A challenge for Course Redesign is platform-restricted software. Because things change quickly, will the Course

Redesigns still hold? We need to be prepared for faculty needing to rework their courses to adapt to software changes.

Other challenges are those we are considering as we look to the end of the "AQIP" part of the Course Redesign process. Will there be a dedicated funding source to support faculty? Since many of the redesigns have flipped the way courses are taught (by putting content on line and using class time for group work and problem solving) should more of these courses become part of Southeast Online (which oversees online instruction)? The Instructional Designer and resources of CSTL will be key in the future of this project. Our intention is clear to continue, as evidenced by the call for a fifth cohort this fall, whose tenure in the process will extend well beyond May 2013.

## Update Review

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

**A:** Southeast Missouri State University needs to be commended for the structure it has established for the implementation of this forward looking and substantive action project. The university has used a cohort model to incrementally establish the course redesign within the curriculum. In addition, information and feedback are being gathered by seeking the input of internal stakeholders (students and faculty). While the university has tied this project to AQIP Category One (Helping Students Learn), this reviewer would suggest that the effective implementation structure links the initiative to AQIP Category Three (Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs) as well.

### 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** Hats off to Southeast Missouri State University for establishing a comprehensive model of inclusion and involvement in this strategic action project. The initiative runs the gamete from students to faculty to departments to standing committees to presentations at national conferences. In addition, the culture of the university is being changed by linking the course redesign initiative to faculty professional development. Outstanding! High performing organizations are characterized as focusing on stakeholders, learning oriented, promoting collaboration, and for proactive planning. SMSU is exemplifying those characteristics.

### 3: Next Steps

**A:** The "next steps" identified seem appropriate at this stage in the implementation. SMSU needs to be commended for placing an emphasis on assessment with the course redesign initiative. The Lumina Foundation is supporting an effort in course redesign very similar to SMSU's action project. It is called the Degree Qualification Profile. Lumina contends that colleges and universities place too much emphasis on student learning outcomes when engaged in course redesign and not enough on assessment. SMSU is proving that not to be the case in their effort.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

**A:** This reviewer agrees with SMSU's assessment of the "effective practices" associated with this AQIP initiative. Besides being a model of inclusive communication and participation (see the response to 2 above) the structure of change at the university includes a commitment of support with financial resources and incentives for faculty. This is a quality initiative that places Southeast Missouri State University in the ranks of a high performing organization.

### 5: Project Challenges

**A:** This reviewer appreciates the thoughtful approach that Southeast Missouri State University has taken with this project. The challenges are clear and cannot be disputed in this reviewer's response. This response will conclude with some suggestions to consider in addressing the challenges that were noted. The technology challenges may be substantive enough for the university to consider a Title III grant proposal. The publication "Assessment Revisited" could be a good resource in refining an assessment plan with current and future cohorts. This has been an impressive review and a pleasure to read. Carry on SMSU!