NMU AQIP Action Project

Title: Developing a Student Inquiry and Complaint Tracking Process

Systems Portfolio Category: 2: Meeting student and other key stakeholder needs

Planned Project Launch Date: April 15, 2015

Target Completion Date: April 15, 2016

Sponsors: Cindy Paavola, Assistant to the President – Strategic Initiatives
Jill Compton, Internal Auditor

1. 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.

NMU currently collects information regarding student complaints and inquiries. However, the process varies across campus. The purpose of this Action Project is to develop a campus-wide process for accepting, logging and evaluating student complaint and inquiry data. The development of this process will take place primarily within Business Intelligence and Information Services. Major gateways of student complaint and inquiry data such as Dean of Students, Financial Aid, Housing and Residence Life, and others will participate in the development. NMU expects to gather data that will lead to a more accurate view of our students’ experiences.

2. Describe your institution’s reasons for initiating this Action Project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your 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 portfolio.

Currently, NMU is in the process of developing a new strategic plan and core values. A central component to this discussion is “student success” and the value that NMU places on the experiences of our students. Understanding student complaints/inquiries on a campus-wide level will allow NMU to more accurately track our students’ experiences and how, specifically, we as an institution respond to student complaints and inquiries. It is our expectation that these data will provide evidence for effective decision-making processes, leading to policies of improvement.

The timeframe selected is based upon current recommendations from major stakeholders in this Action Project; specifically, Business Intelligence and Information Services and several representatives from departments across campus who are among our largest student complaint/inquiry gatekeepers.

3. List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed.

Action Project: Developing a Campus-wide Student Inquiry and Complaint Tracking Process
Months 1-3:

- Identify largest informational gateways on campus
- Interview gatekeepers and document how student complaints and inquiries are currently handled via the primary gateways
- Map a process of gateways to determine commonalities and distinctions; discuss communication flow issues
- Begin preliminary development of database components

Months 4-6:

- Develop preliminary database components, input and reporting procedures
- Review with gatekeepers and revise as necessary
- Create a prototype plan and debut to key stakeholders campus-wide; revise as needed
- Send prototype plan to Information Technologies to begin programming process
- Provide Action Project Update report to key stakeholders and to AQIP

Months 7-8

- Program database; outline metrics that will be available as a result of the tool

Months 9-12

- Review prototype; revise as needed
- Develop pilot program
- Revise database based on pilot program use

4. 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.

The Assistant Vice President of Information Services will oversee her team in the development of the new student complaint/inquiry tool. As revisions are required during the development of the Action Project, the same team will make necessary adjustments. In addition, the following student complaint/inquiry gateways have been identified:

Dean of Students, Financial Aid, Housing and Residence Life, Student Services Center, Registrar, Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Services, Academic and Career Advisement Center, College and Academic department heads offices, Public Safety, Dining Services, President’s Office, Finance and Administration, Identify, Brand and Marketing, Human Resources, Center for Native American Studies, Athletics and Recreation Sports Center, Engineering and Planning, Library, Alumni, NMU Foundation and Auxiliary Services.

The Action Project Committee will develop subgroups to interview all stakeholders identified above, as well as student groups on campus.

5. 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.

The measures of campus-wide trends that are of most significance to NMU at the current time are as follows:

Action Project: Developing a Campus-wide Student Inquiry and Complaint Tracking Process
• Time taken for an individual to receive a response from a complaint/inquiry and the nature of the response
• Time taken to come to a resolution
• Method by which complaints/inquiries are received on campus
• Offices handling the most/fewest complaints on campus
• Demographics of students who make complaints/inquiries
• Changes in workload of staff who are implementing the new tool
• Changes in the number of complaints/inquiries resolved since implementing the new tool
• Changes in the manner/elements of resolution of complaints/inquiries since implementing the new tool

6. Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project’s goals.

The success of the Action Project will depend upon buy-in from various departments on campus that currently have departmentalized data collection processes in place. A successful new database collection tool will glean useful information for campus decision-making purposes without significantly increasing the workload of our information gatekeepers’ daily schedules.

7. Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.