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## Action Project

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**Institution:** Lake Superior College  
**Submitted:** 2008-01-31                      **Contact:** Sue Stenerson  
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### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 12-14-2007

Target completion date: 06-01-2009

Actual completion date: --

### A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Flexible Learning Options

### B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

This project will explore existing models of flexible learning options in terms of scheduling and modes of delivery, with a goal of developing a model that will meet the scheduling needs of both full- and part-time learners at Lake Superior College.

### C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

### D. 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:

One of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities strategic priorities is to increase access and opportunity for Minnesota's citizens. LSC has identified Lead Lifelong Learning as a College Priority by engaging, enriching and serving the community through expanded access. This action project will provide new options for our community and prospective students.

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

Primarily academic affairs and student services.

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

Scheduling, advising, financial aid, registration, business office.

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

The goal is to be able to impact the AY10 schedule and necessary curriculum development.

### H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Documentation of regularly scheduled meeting minutes and oral reports at IE committee meetings.

### I. 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:

1. Pilot a vertical scheduling model in the Business and Industry division during fy09 and expand during fy10. 2. Schedule 20 late start classes and 20 8-week online and onground courses in different program and discipline areas in fy10 3. Create three new 1-2 credit Liberal Arts courses 4. Increase part-time student enrollment by 75 students by the end of FY10 compared to FY09.

**J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):****K. Project Leader and contact person:**

Contact Name: Hanna Erpestad, Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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Phone: (218) 733-7667 Ext.

**Annual Update: 2008-08-05****A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.**

This team collected current and historical data in the following areas: current 1 and 2 credit liberal arts courses; modes of course delivery on campus and elsewhere; various scheduling practices; and late start courses. Literature on flexible and accelerated learning was also reviewed. The team conducted research on schedules of other Minnesota State College and University colleges as well as other colleges nationwide. The data collected on adult learner needs through an external survey was also considered. Analysis of all the data and information collected led the team to concentrate on developing vertical scheduling, identifying a third week and half-semester start options, and 1 and 2 credit liberal education course offerings.

**Review (09-16-08):**

The steps outlined in this Action Project are laudable. Your team began by demonstrating one Principle of High Performance Organizations: Information. The fact that you collected information from so many sources is to be commended, for it reflects AQIP's emphasis on information-based decision-making. Additionally, the team's analysis resulted in clear, specific and actionable suggestions. Well done. What progress was made this year toward accomplishing the goals listed in the Project Declaration: piloting a vertical scheduling model in Business and Industry in FY 09 and Liberal Arts in FY 10; piloting late start courses in FY 10; creating 1-2 credit Liberal Arts courses; and increasing part-time student enrollment? The goals listed are ambitious and worth pursuing; however, setting interim targets and benchmarks can help keep the team moving toward achieving these broader targets. Do you still feel all of these goals are achievable?

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

In addition to the team members, internal faculty and staff experts were invited to gather and share information on accelerated learning and its impact on financial aid, and additional team members were added from workforce development and admissions. The team also consulted with Hennepin Technical College faculty on their flexible scheduling practices. Once the project framework was developed, discussions were held with the following: the liberal arts division during their planning process; the industrial and business divisions; business faculty during course scheduling; academic affairs and students services meetings; the alumni advisory board; the liberal arts and sciences advisory group.

**Review (09-16-08):**

Involving not only a diversity of stakeholders from across the college but also peers at another institution is an effective process, reflecting the Principles of Collaboration, Involvement and People. What specific (and possibly replicable) processes did you follow to get so many people involved? You say that "discussions were held." Were participants in these discussions given specific outcomes? What were the goal and result of these discussions?

**C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.**

The next steps for this project are as follows: Identify programs, courses and faculty interested in

working on flexible scheduling; Collaborate with the Center for Teaching and Learning to plan professional development activities on flexible scheduling; Create a blog for communicating amongst stakeholders; Create 1 and 2 credit liberal arts courses; Review/rewrite existing curriculum and courses to meet flexible scheduling needs; Incorporate flexible learning options into the FY10 schedule; Market flexible learning options to both internal and external constituencies.

**Review (09-16-08):**

The next steps outlined seem logical and effective: identifying programs, planning training, creating channels of communication. Following them will move you toward achieving your identified goals. Additionally, they reflect AQIP's emphasis on Planning, Involvement and Communication. What PROCESSES will you put into place in taking these steps? That is, how will you intentionally and effectively identify the best programs, courses and faculty? How will you ensure that the blog is utilized? How will you market flexible learning? Moreover, what targets are you setting? How will you MEASURE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS? That is, how will you know if you have identified the correct and the correct number of programs? How will you know if the blog has been an effective tool? How will you determine if the 1 and 2 credit courses do, in fact, as you outline in the Project Declaration, "meet the scheduling needs" of your students?

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

None at this time.

**Review (09-16-08):**

You identify no effective practices from this Action Project, yet you did engage in a very praiseworthy process of gathering and analyzing data/information before acting. AQIP emphasizes processes and systems. As you move forward on this project, you may want to consider the processes you engage in: be intentional in HOW you go about achieving your goals; record and make public the steps you take; at the outset determine how you will know whether each step has been effective or not.

**E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?**

Two challenges the team has identified are relative to the direction of our system regarding 1 and 2 credit courses and the ability to get appropriate financial aid and student services coordinated with flexible schedules.

**Review (09-16-08):**

Certainly helping students qualify for financial aid is a concern for many community and technical colleges, as is finding means of coordinating student services for the diverse students served. Expecting such challenges shows the Principle of Foresight. Other challenges may include attaining the goals originally set. Increasing part-time student enrollment by 10% by the end of FY 10 is admirable. What specific and measurable steps can you take along the way to enhance the possibility of your achieving this high benchmark?

**F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?**

**Review (09-16-08):**