
Action Project

Title: Driving Action Through Analytics (DATA)

Version: 1

Institution: Vincennes University

Status: Active

Submitted: 2013-11-08

Category: 7-Measuring Effectiveness

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2013-09-15

Target completion date: 2016-05-15

Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The goal of the DATA Action Project is to grow a culture of consistent and coordinated data via the development of a greater number of users and greater access to data tools such as dashboards, individual student profiles, user-friendly data reports, and a data warehouse environment. VU will enhance data-informed decision making by identifying key institutional metrics and program KPI's, communicating the meaning and status of the metrics, and using them to justify expenditures and guide strategic planning based on big data processes.

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

VU has a number of reasons for taking on this project:

- The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and the Portfolio Category champions identified VU as having a need for better access to and use of data to evaluate processes and justify improvement plans
- The Data Warehouse Committee, which originated out of the "Learn in Order to Serve" Action Project, developed a report supporting the need for enhanced data management and use
- While some areas like personnel, admissions, and financial services use more data, much of VU's culture leans toward the intuitive rather than the data-informed and analytics is a relatively new concept for most faculty and staff
- Current data systems and reports are insufficiently integrated to achieve the full benefits from the existing data
- Current data processes focus on collecting and reporting data, but there is not enough focus on producing actionable data or "big" data.

- Current data services are too dependent on a few data management personnel. As a result, broad data access and use is limited, and the effectiveness of these offices is reduced because they focus too much energy on meeting the demands of ad hoc data requests

Organizational Areas Affected

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

This is an institutional project. The Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students will be impacted. First, the key metrics will be grounded in the University's values (which will have been reevaluated and approved for this project) and on the state's new funding metrics. Colleges and programs will be asked to identify corresponding KPI's. In addition, student data will be funneled into the profiles and used to inform assessments, state reports, AQIP Reports, program reviews, strategic planning and other decision making processes. The project should have a heavy impact on processes and production of the offices of Management Information, Institutional Research, and Institutional Effectiveness. It should improve the quality of and access to data originating in and used by these offices, and the project should ultimately save time and energy in these offices as data is more widely available to users outside these offices, which should reduce a significant number of data requests.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

This project will impact a great number of institutional processes:

- Student retention and graduation
- Data access, production, and management
- Strategic planning
- Assessment and other required reporting
- Professional development
- Communications
- Funding in terms of the state funding formula and, as a consequence, funding for strategic initiatives, programs, and professional development

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

Because of the expansive nature of this project, one that is intended to change the culture of the institution, VU recognizes the challenges ahead and the time needed to change processes at the institution. VU is looking at completing this project in three phases (see #6 below), with specific outcomes measures for each stage, moving from activities that can easily be implemented in a short period of time to implementing practices that are more complex and require more time. In order for VU personnel to mature as data users, time will be required to develop several key processes. This project is designed to progress from more simple tasks, such as completing a data inventory and identifying key values and metrics, to more complex tasks like developing a data warehouse and completing professional development for a wider variety of data gatherers and users. Ultimately, the institution hopes to budget for and develop a full-blown "big-data" or "analytics" environment, where data is not

only used to justify, but also predict and plan.

Project Success Monitoring

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

VU has developed a strategic plan for this project to keep it on target. As part of the strategic plan, completion dates, responsible individuals, and completion measures are identified.

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 marked in two ways. First, VU's strategic plan has benchmarks to indicate completion of steps in the process. The second measure will be the accomplishment of the ultimate goals of the whole project. It will be a success if VU can use data to improve retention and make progress on the goals for VU's key institutional metrics, and if VU can use data to accurately predict three types of student persistence: students who are likely to persist, those who are on the fence, and those who are unlikely to persist.
