

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Northeast Iowa Community College

Project Details			
<b>Title</b>	Develop a multi-source funding strategy for the college.	<b>Status</b>	COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	6-Supporting Institutional Operations	<b>Updated</b>	09-05-2007
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b>	09-25-2007
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 06-12-2003	<b>Created</b>	11-24-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b>	<b>Version</b>	4

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** Develop a strategy and process to research, analyze, and obtain current and potential sources of funding reflective of the “state of the college” and the “vision” of the college. Utilize new sources of funding to expand existing programs, respond to community and business needs, and reduce the increasing reliance on student tuition increases. Develop a centralized process for grants, research, and resource development to support services to students, staff and faculty development, and facility improvement. Develop research capabilities to aid the process of securing funding from new and additional sources.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** The institution has been experiencing tremendous student growth over the last several years. The ability to accommodate and meet the needs of stakeholders and provide the services needed has reached a critical point due to a lack of adequate resources. Decreased State funding and the inability to increase local tax levies has led us to an option of looking at new and additional sources of funding. The college does not have a history of pursuing outside funding and resources as a planned part of supporting operations nor does it have an adequate research element to support these activities. The development of these capacities would allow us to meet the needs of our students, communities, businesses and all other stakeholders in a much more effective manner. It would have a positive impact on the quality of services that we support and deliver and allow us to improve. There is no indication that State funding will increase and there is strong evidence that our student growth will continue. These conditions make this project a timely and necessary one that will have a very positive impact.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** Student Services. Academic/Credit Programs: Arts and Sciences and Technical. Non-Credit Programming. Resource Development. Business Services. Administration.

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** Identification of appropriate areas for application of resources. Matching resource need with resource availability. Strategic planning-incorporating into the priorities of the college. Financial administration. Communication with the college community on criteria.

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** The discussion about this project has been taking place within the college over the last few years. The interest and support has been verified as we have moved through our conversations leading up to AQIP and our conversations and discussions to define and refine our projects. By creating a process, and a position, and by having good communications, we will stimulate and maintain interest and participation. Frequent requests for ideas and feedback on what has been accomplished will play a major role.

### 6: Project Success Monitoring

**A:** Create a tracking system to record and measure activity. Methods/processes used to identify needs and requests within the college. Research process for locating appropriate resources. Identifying where the leads come from within the college-arts & sciences/technologies.

## 7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Number of contacts made to funding sources. Number of applications and formal requests made. Amount of requests funded, the amounts, and the sources. Impact of funding/resources received-w hich AQIP criteria is fulfilled. Impact on the college infrastructure-IT and business functions.

## 8: Other Information

A: Establish goals for the activity. Establish a budget and position description. Hire staff to secure funding and conduct necessary research.Establish a benchmark of current funding resources. Develop procedures and policies for fielding requests from faculty, staff, and administration. Develop a process of communication of information. Compile a list of needs from faculty, staff, and administration. Compile sources of funding to match the needs. Develop a system for tracking activities.Increase the number of successful requests/acquisitions by 15%. Increase the amount of resources by 10% over the benchmark. Secure funds for at least one additional area/division of the college.

## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: When we launched this action project, we realized that it would have a major impact on our culture. We knew that broadening our funding sources would challenge our employees to think in a new way. In order to be successful, we needed to have everyone involved in identifying new funding sources, identifying needs, working with data, designing new initiatives, and establishing and maintaining relationships with funders. We also needed to have specific employees dedicated to developing a multi-source funding strategy. To date, one employee was in charge of resource development, yet most of her efforts went into guiding the NICC Foundation Board in securing funds for student scholarships. This included special events, employee campaigns, and relationships with companies and local foundations. We did not have a dedicated grant writer; nor did we have anyone designated to gather the needed data for such pursuits. This changed when we hired our first Institutional Researcher during the fall of 2006. This was particularly timely because we had just completed the initial implementation of Datatel. We had access to more data, and we needed someone to extract and interpret it. In addition to gathering and interpreting data, the Institutional Researcher also began to build a repository of information in anticipation of our plan to hire a full-time Grant Writer the following spring. In early 2007, we expanded a part-time position to full-time status and incorporated grant writing duties. Unfortunately, the person holding this position will be relocating out of state soon, and the search for a new full-time Grant Writer is underway. Meanwhile, we are preparing to manage an expanded array of grant funds. Our Business Services staff are currently undergoing Lean training to identify how they can be better prepared to monitor new and existing grant funds. Over the last year, we also expanded our data pool significantly. We hired Clarus Corporation, a consulting firm, to conduct a comprehensive environmental scan of our region. The findings will assist us in developing programs that meet gaps in the community and anticipate demographic and employment trends. Clarus also looked at community perception of the College. The firm came back and recommended that we aim for a more consistent image. This supports our plans to unify public relations under one individual. Our next step will be to study how we can accomplish this through a departmental reorganization, with the goal being to strengthen community relations and paving the way for attaining funding from diverse funding streams. Finally, the NICC Foundation Board appointed a task force to review and restructure its committees. The foundation is determined to expand fundraising responsibilities for board members in order to support the College in diversifying and increasing its funding streams.

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: A number of people have been involved in laying the groundwork for expanding our resources. • The proposals to hire an Institutional Researcher and a Grant Writer went through the same process as other initiatives. They were reviewed and approved by three college-wide committees (Vision, Strategic Planning, and Budget) before being passed on to the President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees for final approval. • The Institutional Researcher is already playing an important role in gathering and interpreting data. Once hired, our new Grant Writer will have access to a large pool of data to support applications for funding. • All employees had the opportunity to learn more about the Clarus Corporation's findings at public forums on each campus. The information was also presented to the Board of Trustees and to specific departments. • NICC Foundation Board members are committed to taking on an expanded role in fundraising for the College.

### 3: Next Steps

A: The next steps for this Action Step will be to: • Hire a Grant Writer to collaborate with faculty and staff in writing grant proposals. The Grant Writer will also offer grant-writing workshops to expand our capacity in this area. • Start the process of linking community needs with new programs and matching those with potential funding sources.

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: We have found that the following practices are effective in building a multi-source funding strategy: • Encouraging all employees to think of themselves as potential fundraisers. • Establishing positions that are dedicated to establishing a multi-source funding strategy and having them share their expertise with all employees. • Conducting a comprehensive environmental scan to get a better understanding of community perceptions and societal trends. • Reorganizing staffing patterns to help provide a more consistent image to the public.

### 5: Project Challenges

A: We have laid a firm foundation to support a significant change in our culture. We now have two positions dedicated to expanding our funding resources, but we need to continue to expand the institutional advancement area. In order to keep moving forward, the President will meet with the Board of Trustees this fall to propose a three-phase plan for a comprehensive institutional advancement program. With new staff onboard and a re-organization underway, we will integrate this action project into College structures and processes so that we can focus our efforts on a new set of action projects.

### 6: AQIP Involvement

A:

## Update Review

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) is 51 months into a project to develop a multi-source funding strategy for the college that would compensate for decreasing state support and the inability to increase local tax levies. The stumbling blocks encountered by the project team and the consequent slow start to the Action Project strike this reviewer as entirely typical of an institution that needs to develop the outlook, personnel, and capacity needed to secure external funding in a competitive environment. Recent developments related to this Action Project—most notably the hiring of the Institutional Researcher, approval to hire a grant writer, the recently completed environmental scan, completion of the Datatel project, and the buy-in of NIVV Foundation Board—all place this project firmly on track once again. The update text did not indicate to whom the Institutional Researcher reports or in what office that function is housed, but these details may prove critical once this person's role becomes established and many competing demands are made on the function. The project team may wish to ensure that the assignment of collaborating with the grant-writing personnel to develop alternate funding streams holds a prominent place in the Institutional Researcher's job description. The project team has clearly come to understand the culture change needed for this initiative to be successful, and mention is made of the end-goal of having "all employees" of NICC regard themselves as fund raisers. Now that momentum for this project has at long-last been built, this reviewer suggests the project team reflect on the sub-set of the college community most primed for acting on the support available through the Institutional Researcher and Grant Writer team. In other words, this Action Project is at a delicate juncture and would benefit from some immediate demonstrable successes in the form of funded proposals. Typically, staff, support, and service areas operate in more of a competitive / corporate culture than do the faculty, but the culture varies by institution. The project team is advised to do an 'environmental scan' of its own to identify a few short-term, tangible deliverables (i.e., funded proposals) to go after. Additionally, the team may wish to consider asking the AQIP steering committee or administrative entity to broaden or switch the AQIP category this Action Project addresses. Given the importance to the college of successfully sustaining funding, this Action Project may be designated as a partial fulfillment of Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. Such a move could place more institutional importance on the project's success. An expansion of the AQIP categories this project addresses could be made to include Category 3: Understanding Students' and Stakeholders' needs given the Institutional Researcher's role in helping analyze and utilize the environmental scan results. A link between grant-writing foci and the environmental scan may strengthen this project and its

outcomes for all involved.

## 2: Institution Involvement

A: The public forums on the results of the environmental scan clearly helped to inform the campus about the project and fulfilled an important step in reorienting the culture of the campus. Building on last academic year's campus forum by tying the environmental scanning results to fundraising and resource allocation goals may be a means of expanding further the range of people involved in the Action Project.

## 3: Next Steps

A: Hiring and utilizing the grant writer is a logical next step. This reviewer urges the project team to strategically focus the content and audience of the initial round of workshops. The natural instinct is to make professional development sessions open to all and broadly useful; however, narrowing the focus to serve those members of the campus community most immediately ready to submit competitive proposals may yield better results over time.

## 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The best practices described are all logical and fairly standard.

## 5: Project Challenges

A: The three-phase plan for comprehensive institutional development appears to be a critical opportunity for the project team to get its goals and needs written into a presidential plan. Resource needs seem to pervade NICC; therefore, demands on the new fund raising capacity (i.e., the two new hires) will be widespread and possibly too great to satisfy. The terms under which the goals of this Action Project are integrated into college structures, expectations, and plans will largely determine the overall success of the project goals. Consider this initiative for a second round of work as an Action Project. The title and articulation of the Action Project may need to be revised, but important work remains to be accomplished in this area.

## 6: AQIP Involvement

A: