ACADEMIC DEAN AND PROVOST INSTRUCTION 1553.1J

From: Academic Dean and Provost

Subj: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Ref: (a) USNAINST 5450.3E

Encl: (1) Procedures and Guidelines for Continuous Improvement Projects
(2) Format for Continuous Improvement Projects
(3) Format for Progress Reports on Continuous Improvement Projects
(4) Format for Continuous Improvement Project Final Report

1. Purpose. The primary objectives of this instruction are:

   a. To fund Department or Division curriculum projects that support the strategic goals of the Master Academic Plan; significantly impact pedagogy and/or curriculum development; are outside the scope of regular course renewal activities; and are important, suitably broad in scope, and sufficiently impactful on Midshipman learning to warrant Academic Dean and Provost financial support for summer labor.

   b. To ensure that funded Department or Division curriculum projects are based upon the assessments of student learning obtained and analyzed over a number of semesters as part of Department or Division ongoing assessment process, support strategic goals reflected in the Master Academic Plan or are motivated by institutional initiatives affecting the academic program.

   c. To guarantee wide-spread faculty and chain of command support for adopting pedagogical and/or curricular changes as a result of successful projects.

   d. To ensure that embedded assessment practices are used in the formative evaluation of projects and that assessment results inform summative decisions about the success of projects.

2. Cancellation. ACDEANINST 1553.1H. This directive is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety; no special markings appear because revisions are extensive.

3. Background

   a. In the face of changing curriculum demands and new educational technologies, the Naval Academy must be able to ensure that its academic program maintains state of the art curriculum and pedagogical approaches, and that changes to the academic program are made based on the evaluation of assessment data collected over a number of semesters.
b. Continuous Improvement Projects (CIPs) are a means for academic Departments, academic Divisions, and multi-Department or multi-Division teams to gain summer intersessional funding for the purpose of developing significant and non-routine curricular and/or pedagogical improvements.

c. Each Academic Department is responsible for the continuous improvement of courses in both the major academic programs and the core curriculum overseen by the Department. Consequently, while CIPs will originate with faculty of the appropriate academic Department, they must be submitted via the appropriate Chair and Division Director to a CIP Review Committee, formed from the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Faculty Senate Assessment Committees, and forwarded for possible approval in accordance with this instruction. If a Department submits more than one CIP proposal, then the Department will prioritize its multiple CIP proposals.

4. Information

a. A portion of annual funding available from the Academic Dean and Provost will be set aside, when possible, to support approved CIPs. Typically, CIPs should be designed to be accomplished in one year. The Academic Dean and Provost may approve multi-year projects, though funding will depend on sufficient and continuous progress by the CIP grantees and the availability of out-year funds.

b. Approval priority will be given to those CIPs that are mostly likely to result in broad, non-routine curricular and/or pedagogical improvements. Department Chairs should ensure review of each proposal by the relevant Department committee(s) in order to verify that the proposal has significant merit and exceeds the standard for routine course maintenance that is expected to be carried out during the regular academic year. If there are multiple proposals from a Department, the Chair must rank order them according to Department priority in the endorsement. Department Chairs should also submit a list of previously funded CIPs and comment on the successful incorporation of results in the curriculum.

c. A CIP Review Committee, formed from the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Faculty Senate Assessment Committees, will review proposals and make recommendations to the Academic Dean and Provost based on the guidelines in enclosure (1). If a proposal involves a core course, a member of the Faculty Senate Core Curriculum Committee should be a member of the CIP Review Committee.

5. Action

a. Initial CIP proposals will be presented to the Academic Dean and Provost, via the Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment in the form prescribed in enclosure (1). The purpose of the one-page proposal summary is to receive feedback from the Dean on the likelihood of support.

b. CIP applications will originate with faculty of the appropriate Academic Department and will be submitted via the appropriate Chair and Division Director to the CIP Review Committee, formed from the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Faculty Senate Assessment Committees, in the form prescribed in enclosure (2). At dates announced via an annual notice, Department Chairs will submit the original of each proposal to their Division.
Director. Division Directors will forward the signed copy of each CIP proposal along with their recommendations to the CIP Review Committee. The CIP Review Committee, in turn, will submit its recommendations to the Academic Dean and Provost.

c. Normally, Division Directors and Department Chairs will receive written notice from the Academic Dean and Provost concerning the action taken on their CIP proposals. Copies of this notice will be sent to participating project faculty.

d. Faculty participants will submit written progress and final reports via their respective Department Chairs and Division Directors as prescribed in enclosures (3) and (4).

Distribution: All Non-Mids (electronically)
Procedures and Guidelines for Continuous Improvement Projects (CIPs)

1. **Definition.** To fund Department or Division curriculum projects that support the strategic goals of the Master Academic Plan; significantly impact pedagogy and/or curriculum development; are outside the scope of regular course renewal activities; and are important, suitably broad in scope, and sufficiently impactful on Midshipman learning to warrant Academic Dean and Provost financial support summer labor.

2. **Commitment.** Submission of a CIP proposal implies a commitment by the Department and/or Division to complete the project, to provide appropriate reports, and to broadly implement the results of the project as suggested in the CIP proposal. CIPs are awarded with the expectation that they involve year-round improvement activities, not just activities limited to the period of the summer intersessional. (In the case of multi-year projects, funding for the succeeding years will not be awarded until interim reports have been received and reviewed by a CIP Review Committee formed from the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Faculty Senate Assessment Committees, the CIP Review Committee has provided a positive endorsement to the Academic Dean and Provost, and the Dean has made an affirmative decision to support continuation of the CIP.)

3. **Proposals.** The process for considering Continuous Improvement Project (CIP) proposals is as follows.

   I. Develop an initial Continuous Improvement Project proposal (1 page summary)

      a. The proposal should briefly describe the intended CIP (what and why).

      b. The proposed CIP should be based either on (a) assessments of student learning that were obtained and analyzed over a number of semesters as part of the Department or Division ongoing assessment process, (b) support strategic goals reflected in the Master Academic Plan, or (c) are motivated by institutional initiatives affecting the academic program.

      c. The proposed CIP should have significant Department and Division support; that is, there should be evidence of wide-spread faculty and chain of command support for the proposed Continuous Improvement Project. Compelling evidence of widespread support typically consists of the intent to make changes to the curricular or pedagogical approach across multiple sections of a course, a department, or a division.

   II. Present the initial Continuous Improvement Project proposal to the Academic Dean and Provost, via the Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment, for feedback. The purpose of the one-page proposal summary is to receive early feedback from the Dean on the likelihood of support.

   III. If encouraged to proceed, prepare a full Continuous Improvement Project (CIP) proposal (no more than 10 pages) consisting of:

      a. Brief description of the CIP (100 word abstract).
b. Rationale for the CIP (problem being addressed) including evidence of the need for the CIP (based on embedded assessment data gathered over time) and, as appropriate, relevant research on teaching, learning and assessment.

c. Intended outcomes (specific course or curricular changes and their intended impact on student learning), and connection to and support for course, department, or outcomes or the Seven Attributes of Graduates.

d. Details of the CIP (timeline, tasks and responsibilities).

e. Budget for personnel (internal); see part VI below.

f. A plan for evaluating the success of the project including the monitoring of project tasks and the embedded assessment of intended improvements in student learning. Of special importance is the ability to gauge the impact of the project on the academic program and, ultimately, on student learning. (Indicate conformity to guidelines on protection of human subjects in USNAINST 3900.1, where appropriate, with the understanding that most projects will fall under the statutory exemption guidelines).

IV. Submit the CIP to the CIP Review Committee.

a. The proposal will be reviewed for its:

1. Comprehensiveness. Does it include a comprehensive description of the required elements listed above?

2. Quality. Does it clearly and succinctly describe the need for the CIP, and is the proposed idea of sufficiently high quality combined with a strong likelihood of success?

3. Importance. Does it address an important USNA need and/or is it sufficiently justified by ongoing embedded assessments of student learning? Is it sufficiently broad in scope or sufficiently impactful on Midshipman learning to warrant financial support?

b. Proposals will be evaluated relative to the above criteria and categorized as

1. Not Recommended

2. Recommended

3. Highly Recommended

V. The CIP Review Committee's evaluations and comments relative to the criteria for each proposal will be forwarded to the Academic Dean and Provost for a final decision.

VI. Funding will be a fixed dollar stipend similar to senior NARC support. The funding will be for labor and benefits only. No funds will be provided for material support.
Format for Continuous Improvement Project Proposals

The following documents are required:

1. A cover letter:

   To: Academic Dean and Provost
   From: Chair(s), Department(s) of ...
   Via: (1) Director(s), Division(s) of ...
        (2) Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment

   Subj: SUBMISSION OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

   Ref: (a) ACDEANINST 1553.1J

   Encl: (1) Proposal Description

   In accordance with reference (a), a Continuous Improvement Project Proposal entitled "..." is submitted for consideration and approval.

2. Include the following items in the proposal description as enclosure (1).

   a. Name, Department, telephone extension, and email address of each project participant.

   b. Title and abstract (100 words or less) of proposed project.

   c. Complete project description including the following:

      Initial Continuous Improvement Project proposal (1 page summary)

      I. Rationale. The proposal should briefly describe the intended CIP (what and why)

      II. Project Basis. The proposed CIP should be based on

          1. Assessments of student learning that were obtained and analyzed over a number of semesters as part of the Department or Division ongoing assessment process, and/or

          2. Institutional initiatives affecting the academic program.

      III. Support. The proposed CIP should have significant Department and Division support; that is, there should be evidence of wide-spread faculty and chain of command support for the proposed project.

If approved a full CIP should be submitted using the following format:

Enclosure 2
Full Continuous Improvement Project (CIP) proposal (no more than 10 pages) consisting of:

I. Abstract. A brief description of the CIP (100 word maximum)

II. Rationale including:
   1. evidence of the need for the CIP (based on assessment data gathered over time);
   2. summary of relevant research on teaching, learning and assessment

III. Intended outcomes
   1. specific pedagogical, course or curricular changes;
      a. intended impact on student learning and specific contribution to the accomplishment of the Seven Attributes of Graduates

IV. Plan of action (timeline, tasks, milestones and responsibilities)

V. Budget for personnel

VI. Evaluation Plan. A plan for evaluating the success of the project including the monitoring of project tasks and the embedded assessment of intended improvements in student learning. Of special importance is the ability to gauge the impact of the project on the academic program and, ultimately, on student learning. (Indicate conformity to guidelines on protection of human subjects in USNAINST 39002D, where appropriate, with the understanding that most projects will fall under the statutory exemption guidelines.)
Format for Continuous Improvement Project Progress Report

The following documents are required:

1. A cover letter:

   Subj: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

   Ref: (a) ACDEANINST 1553.1J

   Encl: (1) Summary of progress

   In accordance with reference (a), a progress report is submitted for the Continuous Improvement Project Proposal entitled "______________________________ ."

2. Describe progress made and work remaining. State any changes made to the original plan. As appropriate, indicate any improvements in the curriculum which are a result of the project and include the results of the assessment of the project's impact on student learning as specified in the project proposal.

3. Provide a projected date for final report to include a valid assessment of the project's impact on student learning.
Format for Continuous Improvement Project Final Report

The following documents are required:

1. A cover letter:

   Subj: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FINAL REPORT

   Ref: (a) ACDEANINST 1553.1J

   Encl: (1) Summary of final project results

   In accordance with reference (a), a final report is submitted for the Continuous Improvement Project Proposal entitled "______________________________"

2. Describe the final project results. State any changes made to the original plan. As appropriate, indicate any improvements in the curriculum which are a result of the project and include the results of the assessment of the project's impact on student learning as specified in the project proposal.