

Quality Highlights Document



Kankakee Community College

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KANKAKEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE QUALITY HIGHLIGHTS

As background, Kankakee Community College (KCC) submitted its first [Systems Portfolio](#) (11/05), received its first [Appraisal Report](#) (3/06), and hosted its first Quality Checkup visit (4/07). The college's current quality improvement focus is to align college planning with strategic planning, strategic goals, AQIP Action Projects, the assessment of institutional effectiveness, budget development, and resource allocation. KCC records key improvement activities on its web site.

- KCC's AQIP main page <http://www.kcc.edu/FacultyStaff/aqip/Pages/default.aspx>
- Project information including Action Projects <http://www.kcc.edu/FacultyStaff/aqip/kccprojects/Pages/default.aspx>
- KCC's Quality Program Summary, Federal Compliance Report, and HLC final report are available at <http://www.kcc.edu/FacultyStaff/aqip/hlcdocuments/Pages/hlcdocuments.aspx>.

Sections I - V below answer HLC's specific questions.

I. Major Changes and Improvements Since the Quality Checkup Visit

A. Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness produced the college's first formal data report that will serve as the foundation for future reports as well as inform the college's new strategic planning process. The report, entitled the [2008 Institutional Effectiveness Report: Key Performance Indicators Trend Analysis \(1999-2007\)](#), presented data regarding six key performance indicators (KPIs) across a total of 34 variables describing fall, full-and part-time credit students from FY 1999 to 2007. These variables are a subset of data (and associated definitions) used by the National Community College Benchmark Project (of which KCC is a member). This alignment allows the college to compare its quantitative results with a national cohort. By design, the report does not include information about the college's Adult Education Program or the Continuing and Corporate Education Division. These two units produce comprehensive annual reports which will be incorporated into future reports of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The findings from this report were shared with the campus community and have already begun to prompt attention to issues related to improving student success, community and student outreach and overall organizational effectiveness. Key findings show that from 1999-2007 the college has experienced: 1) a steady rise in overall enrollment, African-American and Hispanic student enrollment, FTE and total number of graduates, and credit hours (since 2005); 2) success recruiting high school graduates; 3) consistently high fall-to-spring retention rates; and 4) improvements in measures on student engagement and student success.

B. Strategic Planning

In its continued efforts to formalize short- and long-term strategic planning, KCC's President appointed a Strategic Planning Committee in January 2008, which gathered input from community residents and KCC employees about the future direction of the college. Methods used to gather input included surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings and a planning event with representatives from business, education and industry in District 520. As a result, the committee identified six [strategic goals](#) that span FY 2009-2013, and detailed 2008 activities in the [strategic planning process](#). KCC's Board of Trustees approved the six FY 2009-2013 Strategic Goals and implementation plan in August 2008. Strategic planning will now be overseen by a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC) chaired by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and a tenured faculty member. The SPOC consists of representatives from three sub-committees each designed to bring college planning into alignment with strategic goals, AQIP, the

assessment of institutional effectiveness, budget development and resource allocation. Importantly, AQIP campus-leadership will no longer function as a separate entity from strategic planning. Instead, AQIP leadership will be integrated into the strategic planning process as one of the three central sub-committees of SPOC. As the Strategic Plan is launched and evaluated, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will provide data to plan, implement, and assess quality improvement projects, and disseminate reports of findings. The six FY 2009-2013 Strategic Goals (not in rank order) are to: 1) grow sustainability initiatives as a local and regionally recognized feature of the College; 2) strengthen community outreach through strategically developing partnerships and target marketing; 3) promote effective hiring and increase morale through strong professional/staff development; 4) benchmark and promote best practices in all aspects of student services and student success; 5) align college strategic planning linking facility plans, budgeting, resources, and institutional effectiveness; and 6) Improve curriculum development.

C. Three Action Project Updates

1. Action Project 1 Update: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Action Project (five pilot projects). A detailed fall [2008 update](#) on this Action Projects is available at KCC's website or the Higher Learning Commission's action project directory. This project implemented five pilot projects to create and revise a KCC [CQI Handbook](#). Furthermore, staff and faculty were trained as facilitators to guide others through the continuous quality improvement process. These facilitators will be available to assist project teams associated with the FY09-13 Strategic Goals. Facilitators are also available upon request to any department of the college. After receiving final AQIP reviewer comments in November 2008, this project will be closed. An update of each of the five pilot projects is provided below. All but one of these five pilot projects have reached the fifth and final phase (integration) detailed in the KCC CQI Handbook, i.e., identification, analysis, implementation, evaluation, and integration. The pilot project carried out by the Physical Plant Department has reached the "implement" phase of its work order improvement project.

1.a. CQI Pilot Project 1 Update: Notification of employees of campus emergency closures and reopening: Staff stated that the process used to notify employees and students of campus closures was not uniform or well defined resulting in inconsistent and untimely notification. The policy was reviewed, revised, and implemented. The notification system now includes public service announcements from area radio stations as well as a post on the college's web site, and staff is personally informed through a department telephone-tree system. The college has also invested in a registry that provides another option for timely notification; all staff and students may choose to be notified through text or e-mail message regarding campus closures and re-opening. The college successfully tested these changes. An improved process is now in place.

1.b. CQI Pilot Project 2 Update: Class cancellations due to faculty unplanned absence: The college reviewed its procedure for canceling classes due to full-time and adjunct faculty absences, and improved this process as a result of using the CQI process. To evaluate the new process, comparisons of the problems with class cancellations before and after the changes were put in place. The results showed 18 documented discrepancies in faculty absence reporting before the new process was implemented and none once it was in place. The new reporting procedure has been integrated into the daily workflow and continues to be an effective way to document faculty absences. At this time, students are notified of class cancellations by telephone but by spring 2009, students will be notified using a computerized calling service which will be less labor intensive.

1.c. CQI Pilot Project 3 Update: Provide effective orientation for new employees for using Datatel: Staff members now have access to online Datatel training modules. In the 2007-2008 academic year,

Human Resources began including these online training modules in new employee orientation. Staff/faculty progress can be monitored by Human Resources staff using the course management tool. Additional resources can be added as needed in a timely fashion. Modules provide tutorials, printable handouts, help manuals, video demonstrations, Internet links, and communication links for all college resources.

1.d. CQI Pilot Project 4 Update: Student class withdrawals: Faculty identified a need to improve the student withdrawal process after the 10th day roster has been circulated. Faculty needed timely notification about student withdrawals both for record keeping and to counsel students. A team consisting of the Dean of Instruction, academic division chairs, admissions and records staff, and IT staff came together and developed an electronic notification process for faculty. The system is ready for implementation in the fall 2008 semester.

1.e. CQI Pilot Project 5 Update: Work orders for physical plant: Staff noted that the process to complete requested work orders was not working well. The CQI process helped to identify work flow gaps and possible solutions. Physical Plant staff has recommended a software program to replace the current paper work order system. The software will facilitate timely feedback and quick turnaround time from request to completion. There are plans to purchase and implement this software in fall 2008.

2. Action Project 2 Update: Assessment of General Education Outcomes. Faculty, led by the Assessment Committee, developed a process to assess student learning associated with KCC's eight general education outcomes. A process to assess three of these eight outcomes is underway. Over the past two years, each semester a team of experts in one of the eight general education outcome areas developed an assessment tool and a rubric to measure student learning relative to the selected outcome. These tools have been pilot tested during subsequent semesters in all classes (or randomly selected classes) that have been identified by the faculty as having the selected general education outcome as a learning outcome for that course. Once results are analyzed and reported, the team recommends teaching (or other) strategies to improve learning outcomes. Then, this cycle is repeated. At this time, the cycle has been completed for three general education outcomes: 1) [scientific literacy](#) – improvements have been made and learning has been reassessed and analyzed; 2) cultural diversity – the outcome has been assessed and analyzed and is ready for improvement; and 3) critical thinking – an assessment tool has been developed and piloted with plans for a fall 2008 implementation. The fourth of the eight general education outcomes will be identified and a team of experts chosen in the fall 2008. The [HLC annual update](#) for this project is linked.

3. Action Project 3 Update: Communication. The college convened a group of faculty, support staff and administrative members in the fall of 2007 to study how to improve communication across all campus constituents. Their task was to identify communication processes that most needed attention based on the analysis of the college's employee satisfaction survey and reports from prior meetings with support staff, administrators, and faculty groups. [Results](#) include the establishment of a middle management communication network, publishing minutes for all meetings on the intranet, and increasing recognition opportunities for staff. Further, the president's Cabinet is working to clarify communication channels for all college committees and teams. The project will be closed following the completion of this activity.

II. KCC's use of the Systems Portfolio since its last Systems Appraisal

The Systems Portfolio has been used primarily for two purposes: 1) to inform strategic planning; and 2) to focus attention on how the college improves its assessment of institutional effectiveness. Additionally, since the creation of the [Quality Program Summary](#) for the HLC Quality Site Visit, KCC has improved the way the

Systems Portfolio is updated, specifically how reports of the progress and results of the FY07 Priority Initiatives were gathered and organized for the Systems Portfolio. Each AQIP category was assigned a "Category Manager" who contacted project leaders for information. The long-term goal is to align AQIP project reporting for the Systems Portfolio with the new Strategic Planning process described above. The college has also purchased e-folio world to streamline the creation of the Systems Portfolio.

III. KCC's use of the feedback from its last Systems Appraisal and Quality Checkup visit

KCC's AQIP Leadership Team reviewed the feedback from the appraisal, focusing on the O and OO references and updated the portfolio before the site visit. Please see the [Quality Program Summary](#) for the HLC QCV in addition to activities related to Strategic Planning, Institutional Effectiveness and Data and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) documented above.

IV. KCC's current commitment level to continuous improvement

Over the past two years, KCC has substantially increased its support of continuous improvement. The college has launched a new strategic planning process that aligns AQIP with college planning, the assessment of institutional effectiveness, and strategic goals. The college has also hired additional staff to assist in ensuring the success of continuous quality improvement projects, i.e., a new Dean of Sustainability and Planning and a new Director of Institutional Effectiveness (IE). In addition, KCC's Board approved two additional full time staff members to assist the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, i.e., a Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness and an Institutional Effectiveness Specialist. The AQIP Leadership Team is being reorganized to more closely tie to both IE and strategic planning. Furthermore, the college has reorganized to create stronger links between the Office of IE, Illinois Community College Board MIS reporting, and KCC's Information Technology Services Department.

V. Other factors the AQIP Review Panel on Reaffirmation should weigh in making its recommendations

Kankakee Community College has changed significantly in the past five years as a result of using the AQIP method of accreditation. We have moved from anecdotal decision making to data informed decisions. We have improved our organizational structure and dedicated our resources in order to develop a college culture based on process thinking and process improvement. Staff has been hired to focus on planning and providing data. KCC has committed funds to electronic resources to assist with data capture and analysis. A powerful electronic data reporting tool (i.e., *Informer*, which interfaces with Datatel) was purchased and will greatly expand end-user reporting. [ClassClimate](#) (an online electronic software program) was also purchased to improve and standardize students' evaluation of instruction. In addition, the college purchased EMSI's Strategic Advantage online software program to assist in planning and support for continuous improvement projects. Each of these programs will increase the usability of data and allow more detailed analysis of surveys. As stated above, the college also purchased the MnSCU e-folio world software program to post the Systems Portfolio and IE data.

Our efforts have produced results. All college faculty are actively involved with assessment of student learning. Data have been collected, analyzed and decisions have been made as a result. At any meeting staff can be expected to talk about process and define areas that need improvement. Strategic planning has been improved and is now aligned with IE, AQIP, and budgeting as outlined above. KCC is a different place as a result of our decision to become an AQIP institution. The journey has not been without bumps but the road has led us to become a better institution. The destination is still not within sight but we now understand the road that must be followed.