

## National Council of Instructional Administrators Award

The National Council of Instructional Administrators Award announced that KCC received an honorable mention in the 2009 Exemplary Initiatives competition in the category of Organizational Change. The college's entry was titled Continuous Quality Improvement: A Workstyle; Not an Additional Assignment. **(see next page)** Thirty entries were submitted and only 10 were selected as winners, or for honorable mentions. NCIA is an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges.

## Organizational Change

“Continuous Quality Improvement: A Workstyle, not an Additional Assignment”  
Kankakee Community College

### **Program Overview:**

The need to work smarter is no longer a choice. There are many demands on our time. Efficient and effective decision-making skills are essential. But, we know these things. The challenge lies in channeling that knowledge into systemic practices that affect the decision-making culture.

Kankakee Community College (KCC) leadership addressed this challenge by reviewing continuous quality improvement (CQI) procedures used by other institutions. Best practices were identified, modified, and adopted as preliminary procedures for KCC’s process. The procedures include five action steps: Identify, Analyze, Implement, Integrate, and Evaluate. The college’s CQI process was shared with the Quality Checkup Visit AQIP team evaluators for third party input.

In October 2006 at an all-staff meeting, a broad overview of CQI was shared and process mapping was introduced as an evaluation tool. Specific topics for improvement for the institution were identified through campus-wide staff input. These topics were used as part of small group process mapping exercises led by experienced facilitators. Based on interests expressed that day, recommendations of the CQI project co-chairs and discussion with the President’s Cabinet, five topics were identified for piloting this new process in cross-functional teams.

At the end of the October 2006 all-staff planning session, participants were asked to volunteer for action teams based on their area of interest. Participants for the action projects were selected from this volunteer list and primary stakeholders were identified. Other stakeholders were selected by the teams and were brought into the process on a consultation basis, as needed. CQI co-chairs led each group through the complete process and facilitated evaluations to verify the worthiness of the tool. Adjustments were made as a result of participant feedback. Additional CQI facilitators were trained to lead the next generation of users. An online course about CQI is being created for use in new staff orientations to induct new employees to the continuous quality improvement philosophy of the college.

***How is this initiative unique, innovative, creative and groundbreaking for both the submitting institution and community colleges in general?***

In a time of shrinking resources, there are a limited number of personnel. In order to attain sustainable improvements, we all must work smart individually and collectively. But individuals and teams need a framework to operate within. In cross-functional teams, CQI offers opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Cross-functional teams also foster a shared corporate culture and ensure that all key stakeholders are involved in

decision-making. CQI is a mindset that carries over from cross-functional team efforts to individual work processes. The CQI process is designed not as an additional work responsibility but as an effective and efficient means to accomplish the tasks at hand.

Providing background information on CQI and preliminary training on process mapping at the all-staff session in October 2006 was a good foundation for the full implementation of the college's new practice. Involving a variety of KCC voluntary staff representatives and key stakeholders in the pilot projects promoted buy-in at the grass roots level.

It is innovative and effective for Kankakee Community College to use a CQI tool that has been piloted and evaluated to guide the decision-making efforts of individuals and teams who must respond to the changing needs of its community.

***How can this initiative transfer to other community colleges or be utilized to address other initiatives?***

The CQI tool includes step-by-step procedures for teams or individuals to navigate. Terminology and the continuous improvement philosophy are defined so a basic understanding is consistent for all users. Any corporate or campus environment could follow the directions outlined in KCC's continuous quality improvement tool and revise it to meet their needs.

***How has this initiative been evaluated (one year's data) and how has that evaluation facilitated continuous improvement?***

Five campus-wide processes were identified to serve as CQI pilot projects: 1) campus emergency closing, 2) reporting faculty absences, 3) new employee orientation, 4) notification to faculty when students withdraw and, 5) work order request procedures.

CQI co-chairs administered a formal evaluation to more than 30 project team members and more than 150 faculty who were involved in either the introduction of the CQI tool or the changes made as a result of an implemented improvement. Clearly defined procedures for Projects 1, 2, & 3 have been established and tested for effectiveness. A 100% improvement rate has been noted for each of these projects. Project 4 achieves the improvement because it allows faculty immediate access to an electronic roster to verify student withdrawals. Project 5 is in the process of integrating an electronic system and will be evaluated later. Each project has sustained its effectiveness since 2007.

The college's Strategic Planning Oversight Committee will use the tool to guide staff through continuous improvement initiatives. An online module is in development and will orient new staff to KCC's continuous quality improvement philosophy.