

March 23, 2006

Jerry W. Weber
President
Kankakee Community College
P.O. Box 888
817 River Road
Kankakee, IL 60901

Dear President Weber:

Thank you for providing AQIP with the current *Systems Portfolio* for Kankakee Community College. Enclosed, you will find two paper copies of the complete *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*, the first portion of which is an Executive Summary that may be useful for groups that do not need the full detail. The second section provides detail about the strengths and opportunities that were identified by the Appraisal team. Please take the time to examine *both* the strengths *and* opportunities, so that your institution can celebrate and build on its strengths and understand and explore its opportunities for improvement. The members of the Appraisal team, all knowledgeable about continuous quality improvement, devoted many hours to appraising your *Systems Portfolio* to ensure that their feedback would represent the consensus of the entire group and could serve as thoughtful, actionable guidance. To reap maximum benefit from it, you and your colleagues should also plan to invest substantial time in discussing and considering the team's observations and advice, and in identifying the actions that will move your institution forward.

Your *Systems Portfolio* will undoubtedly serve as a model for other colleges and universities. We applaud the effort you put into its development up to this point, and expect you to continue to refine, expand and publish (on paper, or, even better, on your website) updates of your *Portfolio*. This will enable you to communicate effectively to both internal and external stakeholders what your institution is trying to do, what processes it is using to get there, how it is currently performing, and how it strives systematically to improve. Widely studied, the current version of your *Systems Portfolio* can be an important lever for institutional change. Please make the electronic link to it prominent on your institutional home page, and send the URL to Mary Fleming (mfleming@hlcommission.org) so that she can add the link to our AQIP website.

We are emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this letter and an electronic version of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. Please circulate these materials widely, and keep notes on the use you make of this feedback — with whom you share it, what discussions arise from it, actions you take as a result, etc. In the next 12 months at your next AQIP Strategy Forum you will be sharing this experience with other veteran AQIP institutions, all eager to learn how others are using their feedback effectively to shape strategies and drive additional improvement.

Let me draw your attention to one aspect of this *Feedback Report* that will probably not please you. The Systems Appraisal team could not find satisfactory evidence (in your Systems Portfolio or any other documentation pointed to by your Index to the Portfolio) that you currently satisfy Core Component C of Criterion 2 of the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, particularly evidence of planning processes that look beyond a year into the future. They also raised general concerns that the evidence of a comprehensive approach to student assessment, and the use of its results, necessary to meet Criterion 3 is not clear. They raised these as "accreditation issues" in their Strategic and Accreditation Issues section, which appears early in your *Feedback Report*. Please read carefully their specific comments, for you need to determine whether each of these issues is apparent or real, and decide what to do about it.

- If the issue is apparent, and you already possess hard, persuasive evidence to demonstrate that you currently meet this accreditation requirement, then you have nothing to worry about, and you need merely fill us in on what you could have shown the Appraisal team to reassure us that all is well. Don't fret about what the Portfolio might have demonstrated, and don't waste time and energy allocating blame for what was omitted. AQIP views every institution's Systems Portfolio as a developing resource, so you just need to make sure that the next revision of yours includes what the last one missed.

- If the issue is real, and the team's concern points to an existing problem, vacuum, or inadequacy that you need to address further, please get to work on it immediately, so that you will quickly move your institution to a position where you can demonstrate to the Higher Learning Commission your compliance with this requirement. If AQIP can be helpful in this, by pointing out means to address or rectify the concern, or by networking you into other institutions or recourses that have been helpful in similar situations, don't hesitate to call on us. Understand that we are on your side, anxious to do all we can to make sure you are in a strong position to demonstrate that your institution meets all of the *Criteria for Accreditation*.

At present, AQIP relies on the two-day Quality Checkup to let institutions demonstrate that they have rectified any "gaps" in the evidence that they meet the *Criteria for Accreditation*. A team of AQIP Peer Reviewers will visit your institution for a Quality Checkup one or two years before to the academic year in which you are scheduled for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, an opportunity for you to demonstrate to those peer visitors what wasn't clear to the Systems Appraisers. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions about how to proceed in putting to rest this "accreditation issue" please call me at 800-621-7440, ext. 106.

I know this *Report* will give additional fuel to Kankakee Community College's already strong commitment to quality. Both AQIP and the Higher Learning Commission continue to look forward to ongoing reports of progress and success. If you have not already scheduled one, we will soon contact you regarding your next Strategy Forum, at which we will ask you to focus on the results of this Appraisal and your other planning information to identify the major strategic issues that will drive the creation and pace of your institution's future Action Projects. Unlike your first Strategy Forum, this next one will focus on helping you make your strategic priorities so clear that you can go back to campus confident that you can generate a steady stream of Action Projects that move your toward your goals.

Thank you again for all the hard work you have put into creating your Systems Portfolio. We hope that the Feedback report provides you with useful information that will help guide your quality movement forward.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Spanghel
Director, Academic Quality Improvement Program