

Accreditation Update February 2007

AQIP, the Academic Quality Improvement Process, is an alternative accreditation process developed by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. It focuses on *continuous improvement*.

The goal of AQIP is to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into our culture in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education at WCTC.

Instead of looking back 10 years at what has been accomplished (the former accreditation process used at WCTC), this process allows us to look forward, assess what our strengths are, and in what areas/processes we believe we need to improve. This occurs through a series of steps outlined in the timeline below:

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| <p>ONCE Apply and get accepted into AQIP Summer 2005</p> <p>Vital Focus Self-Assessment Staff Survey 11/04 Conversation Day 3/05</p> | <p>ANNUALLY Work on three Action Projects Ongoing</p> <p>Annual Updates on Action Projects Due every September</p> |
| <p>EVERY 3-4 YEARS Attend Strategy Forum Forum #1 5/05 Forum #2 2008 Systems Portfolio 11/07 Appraisal Spring 08 Check-up Visit 2008-09</p> | <p>EVERY 7 YEARS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reaffirmation of WCTC Accreditation 2010</p> |

Quality/Accreditation Website

Accreditation information is accessible through the internal WCTC portal. Accreditation and AQIP are highlighted as part of the Office of the President page. All accreditation updates, information about action projects, action project team membership and minutes, as well as an FAQ section are part of this site. Future plans for this site include posting our Systems Portfolio and adding information about other continuous quality improvement activities at WCTC.

Action Projects

WCTC listened when the staff put together proposals for improvement on Conversation Day and three Action Project teams grew from that. The teams represent cross-functional areas of the college and are meant to be models of inclusiveness. The teams are using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – an organizational change and development process that builds on past successes and peak experiences in an effort to design and implement future actions.

Pre-Enrollment Assessment – Action Project #1

This team is charged to improve/enhance student learning through appropriate pre-enrollment assessment and course placement. The team is currently using sub-teams to formulate and carry out work plans in Communication, Research, Developing a Pilot for Spring 08, and Planning College-Wide Implementation.

Using Data and Information to Drive Participative Decision Making – Action Project #2

This team's goal is to design a decision making process for WCTC. After Conducting AI interviews and research numerous proven decision-making tools, the team is currently preparing to customize a decision making process to meet the needs of the WCTC community. Following the development of the process, the team will coordinate a training and implementation plan.

Internal Communication – Action Project #3

Team Three's mission is to establish collaborative internal relationships across the college to build a sense of community. The work of this project is truly that of continuous quality improvement. The team is currently conducting interviews within all employee groups. Results of this feedback will be an actionable project focused on open communication strategies. Because this is such an all-encompassing topic, it is my assumption that WCTC will have ongoing communication action projects – each one growing from the last.

WCTC provides annual updates regarding the progress of the action projects to the Higher Learning Commission each September. In turn, we receive feedback from the commission on our work.

Systems Portfolio

The Systems Portfolio is another requirement for our re-accreditation. This 100 page document allows us to answer 140 specific questions about how our various systems and processes work, what types of results are generated, and how we use the information to make continuous improvements.

We are using the opportunity to examine the current state of our work processes by furthering our efforts to be inclusive and participative at WCTC. We have held four major feedback sessions where staff has provided input on one or more of the categories in the portfolio. In addition, teams of staff are formulating answers to the questions in each category which will culminate in an editing process that will further involve staff via the web portal.

Following final submittal of the Systems Portfolio in November 2007, we expect an Appraisal from the Higher Learning Commission sometime during Spring 2008.