

Wayne State College Quality Effort October 2009

AQIP Background

Wayne State College was one of the original 14 institutions who joined AQIP after it was developed and launched in 1999. During the past decade, our college has benefited by many of AQIP's quality principles—focusing on key processes, basing decisions on data, decentralizing control, and empowering faculty and staff to make the decisions that directly affect their work.

The AQIP process and introductory material were presented to faculty and staff at the opening meetings in the fall 2000 term. It was openly discussed and endorsed by our Faculty Senate, Student Senate, Academic Council, and the Academic Divisions on campus. The College's plan to participate in the AQIP process was also approved by the State College Board of Trustees in September 2000. A Partnership Request to participate in AQIP was filed in October 2000 based on the support of the campus community and the Board of Trustees.

In November 2000, WSC was accepted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and now uses the AQIP process of continuous improvement for its method of maintaining accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission.

The AQIP Council and the Strategic Planning Council were integrated into one council as part of a well thought-out, sequential process in the fall of 2008. Previously, the AQIP Council had been instrumental in organizing AQIP at WSC and the Strategic Planning Council had been instrumental in organizing a systemic, continuous strategic planning process at WSC. As the Strategic Planning Council integrated AQIP categories for improvement into its strategic planning a natural migration of the AQIP process occurred. Thus, the former AQIP Council transitioned and was combined into the Strategic Planning Council. The Strategic Planning Council meets annually to discuss and analyze the strategic needs of the institution. The WSC Strategic Plan is systemically reviewed at these meetings with recommendations made for continuous improvement utilizing AQIP guidelines. The Strategic Planning Council hosts a biennial retreat that embraces a cross-section of the entire institutional environment to review the previous recommendations and develop a Strategic Plan for the next biennium. The recommendations are continually analyzed by the administration and the Strategic Planning Council and AQIP Action Projects are developed in areas where improvement has been strategized.

Action Plans

Wayne State College has initiated seven Action Projects since joining AQIP. Four of the seven Action Projects were started in 2002, and their goals have been satisfactorily met and those projects have been retired. These retired AQIP Action Projects have enabled our institution the opportunity to focus on areas of needed improvement and complete the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle that is the cornerstone of AQIP. AQIP has enabled our institution to target specific areas for improvement and "shine a spotlight" on these areas as noted improvement has been accomplished through the AQIP process.

Accomplishments through AQIP Action Plans and Initiatives

- AQIP Action Plans receive priority funding
- Strategic Planning Process implemented
- Human Resource Development
 - Human Resource Department established
- Enrollment Growth—Steady increase the last 10 years
 - Marketing Director and Admissions Staff and efforts expanded
- Building Community
 - Professional Staff Senate established
 - Support Staff Senate established
- Institutional Quality – Connected Learning Opportunities
 - Learning Communities Program initiated
 - Service Learning Programs expanded

- Enhance International Learning Experiences
 - International studies programs expanded
 - Wayne State Semester in Greece Program and Taiwan Program established
- Improve Student Success
 - Retention rate increased to a high of 74%
 - Expanded student orientation and freshman only endeavors
- General Education Program Revision and Web site completed
 - Assessment of General Education Program developed
 - Innovative, culminating courses in General Education called *Educated Perspective Seminars* (EPS) developed to assess the goals of the General Education Program
- Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, February 2008 Cohort
 - All-campus assessment retreats, classes cancelled
 - In-service faculty

Colleague Involvement

A survey completed by administration, faculty, professional staff and support staff and conducted during August and September of 2009, indicated that 83% of the respondents had been moderately to highly involved in AQIP activities. In addition, 85% of those responding agreed that AQIP was a good instructional process to meet accreditation requirements.

Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Survey respondents listed some of the following positive changes that have resulted from involvement in AQIP's continuous improvement process:

- AQIP helps to focus our resources and energy and created a culture of accountability and continuous improvement
- More focused strategic planning and assessment
- Formation of the Human Resources Department
- More involvement in planning by all employees
- Better understanding of what we do well, and what we need to improve—better documentation of what we do
- Streamlined the assessment process

Future AQIP Expectations

As Wayne State College continues its involvement in AQIP, survey respondents were asked to list what they hope or expect from the process in the future. A few of the survey expectations follow:

- Continued progress in involving the whole campus in the principle of continual improvement
- Continued awareness of the benefits of continuous improvement—things really can change and improve when data supports the need
- Continuing improvement of teaching and learning
- Continued focus on quality
- Expectation to continue to be student centered and people oriented
- Program improvement
- More action and changes

Future Implications

The challenge in the future will be to sustain this as part of the campus culture and to articulate AQIP efforts with the strategic planning initiatives and the legislative appropriations process. The AQIP/Strategic Planning Council is just beginning to have discussions concerning these issues.

Summary

The decision to participate in the AQIP process has had a positive impact on the campus. The quality action plan teams are active and various groups of faculty and staff are committed to improving student learning through assessment processes. Faculty and staff are continuously looking for ways to improve all aspects of the entire campus community.