

Reaffirmation of Accreditation Recommendation

for

Moraine Park Technical College

Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

of the 2007-08

Academic Quality Improvement Program

Review Panel on Reaffirmation

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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AQIP Review Panel on Reaffirmation (lead reviewers)

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I. Context And Nature Of Review

A. Review Purpose, Process, and Materials

AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation reviews are scheduled seven years in advance, when an institution first joins the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) or when an institution already participating in AQIP is reaffirmed via the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation process.

In conducting these reviews, the AQIP Reaffirmation of review panel examines the following materials for each institution:

- Current Commission History file of institutional actions
- Current Commission Statement of Affiliation Status
- Current official Commission Organizational Profile
- Annual Updates of year's Action Projects
- Application to join AQIP
- AQIP Review Panel Report(s) on Institutional Status Change Requests
- Focused visit report(s) and action letter(s)
- Institutional websites
- Key correspondence between the institution and the Commission
- Last Comprehensive PEAQ Evaluation team report, institutional response, and Commission action letter
- Quality Checkup report(s)
- Summary of Action Projects attempted
- Summary Update of institutional activity and dynamics since the last Quality Checkup, provided by the institution on September 1 of the review year
- Systems Appraisal Feedback Report(s)
- Systems Portfolio Index(es) (to compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation)
- Systems Portfolio(s), including update provided by the institution on September 1 of the review year
- Any other major reports or documents that are part of the institution's permanent Commission files

Two lead panelists from the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation draft a recommendation that is reviewed and approved by the entire panel before it is forwarded to the Institutional Actions Council.

B. Organizational Context

The institution was first accredited by the Commission in 1975, having been admitted to Candidacy for Accreditation in 1972. The institution was admitted to AQIP on July 9, 2001. It participated in a Strategy Forum in February, 2002 and again in February, 2006. Since admission to AQIP the institution has officially declared and attempted nine individual Action Projects, and has provided AQIP with Annual Updates of ongoing projects and received Annual Update Feedback Reports on these. The institution proposed a change in its relationship with the Commission that was reviewed by staff, and approved on September 26, 2003. The change permitted the institution to include distance delivery of its AAS degrees and stipulated that accreditation at the Associate's degree level is limited to vocational-technical curricula. The institution provided its Systems Portfolio for review in May, 2005, and received a Systems Appraisal Feedback Report on October 25, 2005. AQIP conducted a Quality Checkup visit to the institution on February 7 through February 9, 2007 and provided a report of the findings of the visiting team in February, 2007.

D. Organizational Scope and Structure (including extended physical or distance education operations)

Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) is a public, non-profit, non-residential two-year College offering certificates and associate degrees for a student population of more than 1,100 full-time and more than 5,400 part-time students. In 2007-08, the College offered 38 Associate of Applied Science degree programs, 22 technical diploma programs, 13 apprenticeship programs, and 43 certificate programs in occupational areas including: agriculture, apprenticeship, automotive and engine technologies, building trades, business, marketing and publishing, computer and web technologies, engineering and integrated manufacturing technologies, general studies, health science, and public and human services. The College has Commission approval to offer all of its AAS degrees and several of its certificate programs in an online format. The Moraine Park Technical College District covers a predominately rural area of 2,450 square miles in east-central Wisconsin. The College has three main educational facilities: Beaver Dam, Fond du Lac, and West Bend. Regional Centers are also located in Hartford and Ripon. The College is one of 16 technical college districts in Wisconsin, with overall guidance provided by the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

A Quality Checkup site visit to the institution was conducted on February 7 through February 9, 2007. In compliance with Commission requirements, the institution notified its constituencies and the public of this visit, solicited third party comment to be sent directly to the Commission. The Commission shared all comments received with the institution and the team, and the team discussed both the comments with the institution and reviewed evidence of the institution's compliance with Commission's notification and third-party comment requirements.

E. Compliance With Federal Requirements

The Quality Checkup team that conducted a site visit to the institution on February 7 through February 9, 2007 examined evidence provided by the institution of its compliance with the

Commission's federal compliance program. The Quality Checkup site visit team concluded that the institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations. The panel reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information and found the institution to be in compliance with federal requirements.

F. Evidence of the Organization's Responsiveness to Previous Commission Concerns Regarding Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation.

The panel considers the response of the institution to previously identified challenges to be adequate.

II. Fulfillment of The Criteria for Accreditation

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met.

- A. Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) uses its mission statement to determine educational goals, strategies and activities [SP, p. 1.1].
- B. The college uses its web site to list its strategic plan, mission, and vision.
- C. The college has program advisory committees the meet at least once a year to review program outcomes and cite occupation trends to ensure academic program curriculum is current and relevant [SP, p. 1.13].
- D. The Systems Appraisal indicates that "the college has a well-established process for determining common student learning objectives that involves personnel from across the institution and other key stakeholders" [SA, p. 15].
- E. The college uses a strategic planning process that involves administration, district board members, community representatives and members of the College Planning and Leadership Team [SP, p. 8.3].
- F. The Systems Appraisal states that "MPTC has a formal planning process that is intertwined with budget planning and the five year cycle of strategic planning" [SA, p. 36].
- G. The college completed and Action Project to obtain feedback from learners to determine the extent to which needs and goals are/are not being met and used this project to improve student satisfaction.
- H. The Systems Appraisal indicates that the mission statement includes guiding principles that provide the foundation for the operation of the college [SA, p.11].

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None

- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None

- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None

Recommendation of the Team

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- A. MPTC has a strong institutional vision, One Vision, which was the driving force behind the community listening sessions held by the College as part of the strategic planning process [SA, p. 36].
- B. The College has a well-entrenched method of determining its short and long term strategies, and ensuring that those strategies are aligned with the mission and vision [SA, p. 36].
- C. MPTC has a formal process for planning that is intertwined with budget planning and the five year cycle of strategic planning [SA, p. 36].
- D. MPTC selects short-term and long-term strategies every five-years during a special strategic planning workshop. The workshop participants include the president, district board members, community members, and CPLY members [SA, p. 36].
- E. MPTC develops key action plans to support institutional strategies, primarily through the planning and budget managers and work teams. The process is aligned with the budget cycle [SA, p. 36].

- F. The planning processes involve all nine systems of the College with accountability for the action plans resting with the system leaders. In addition, the system leaders have set measurable metrics for five-year strategic goals or annual objectives that correspond to the Institutional Plan. For example, the college will monitor the Breakthrough Goal *Increasing Enrollments* to assure that the College will realize a 15% increase in both FTEs and headcount by 2011 [SP, p. 8.5].
 - G. The institution of the Quality Council and the College Planning Leadership Team were recent structural changes that demonstrate the centrality of continuous quality improvement and institutional planning to the College [QCU, p. 5].
- 2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None

- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None

- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None

Recommendation of the Team

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- A. The College has integrated essential skills or core competencies in each of its program courses. The Core Abilities, which are defined by behavioral indicators, are common learning objectives that make it clear what students need to achieve for personal and employment success [SA, p. 14].

- B. Occupational programs at MPTC each have an Advisory Committee to aid in the development of educational programs to meet the needs of individuals, the community, businesses, and employers [SA, p. 14].
 - C. MPTC uses the WIDS (Worldwide Instructional Design Systems) as its curriculum development model so that all courses use the same performance-based model that emphasizes interactive teaching and learning strategies and criterion-referenced assessment [SA, p. 14].
 - D. The College has a well-established process for determining common student learning objectives that involves personnel from across the institution and other key stakeholders [SA, p. 15].
 - E. The College has a well-established pre- and post-test process at the beginning and end of the student's program of study to assess student learning based on assessment of the Core Abilities [SA, p. 15].
 - F. The College has a wide range of well-established methods for communicating learning expectations and objectives to prospective students, starting with elementary/middle school students and continuing through adults seeking additional education opportunities [SA, p. 15].
 - G. The College has Student Success Centers, Support/Transition and Counseling Services, and the Career Center which identify and address discrepancies or deficiencies between the necessary and actual preparation of students. These services complement the College's collaborative advisement process [SA, p. 15].
 - H. The College describes three methods it uses to determine student readiness for the workforce, and has implemented a Guaranteed Retraining Procedure for those graduates who discover they really are not prepared [SA, p. 16].
 - I. Annual performance evaluations occur for all faculty, with probationary faculty receiving three evaluations over an academic year for a probationary term of two academic years. The performance evaluation categories include the following: Demonstrate Delivery Skills, Fulfill Assessment Responsibilities, Manage Program and Course Information, Provide Support and Guidance for Learners, Implement an Individual Professional Plan, Provide Program Support, Participate in Work Team Activities, and Support College Mission Through Participation [SP, p. 1.10].
- 2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

Core abilities are tracked using only student self-assessments via a core ability tool administered in their introductory course, Student Success. The tool is completed a second time in their final course, Career Development. MPTC should continue to explore options for measuring direct student learning outcomes on the core abilities.

- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.

Recommendation of the Team

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- A. MPTC has a Guiding Principle addressing lifelong learning. “We value the personal and professional growth of individuals through lifelong learning.”
- B. MPCT has professional development opportunities to help employees build knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the needs of learners and move the organization towards its vision. These opportunities include: mentoring, new staff and faculty orientation, yearly professional development opportunities calendar, required and optional training, summer institute, in-service, team framework, and facilitation services [SP, p. 4.2].
- C. The training for faculty includes Technology 101, Seven Habits for Highly Effective People, Reaching for Stellar Service, Linking for Learners, Teams Today, Reflections on Teaching and Learning, and the Learning College. [SP. p. 4.2].
- D. The college uses Quality Review Process to ensure its academic programs are current and meet the employment needs of the district [SP, p. 1.13].
- E. The college uses the Learning Cycle Model to accommodate different learning styles [SP, p. 1.3].
- F. The college has developed an International Curriculum to prepare students to live in a diverse world [SP, p. 1.3].

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

MPTC lists numerous activities associated with acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge, but provides little evidence relative to the efficacy of these initiatives with actual impact on developing life long learning and preparing students to live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. Linking actions and results for the initiatives would help determine the extent to which current activities are completed and the impact these activities have on students, faculty, and the organization.

- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.**

None

- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None

Recommendation of the Team

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- A. The college uses external partnerships to develop Guiding Principles, offer students increased educational opportunities, provide staff with professional development opportunities, and provide a skilled and qualified workforce for employers [SA, p. 39].
- B. The Systems Appraisal indicates that the college has been proactive in building a large number of collaborative relationships in education, business, the community, and economic development to accomplish its mission and goals [SA, p. 38].
- C. The college involves numerous stakeholders in its strategic planning process to ensure it is being responsive to the constituencies that depend on it for service.
- D. The college assesses the satisfaction of employers with MPTC graduates, business ad industry training results, and future needs of various industry partners in the district [SP, p. 2.7].

- 2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.**

None

- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and that actions taken and improvements achieved be described in the**

institution's Systems Portfolio before its next scheduled Systems Appraisal, to permit Commission follow-up.

None

- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up via declaration of a specific Action Project(s) and the submission of Annual Updates.**

None

Recommendation of the Team

The Criterion is met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

The Criteria are all met, and no Commission follow-up recommended.

III. Participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)

A. Comments and counsel on specific improvement projects

The record of Action Projects attempted during this period testifies strongly to Moraine Park's desire to improve critical systems and processes. Since 2002, the college has formally declared a total of eight AQIP Action Projects, and has successfully completed and retired four of them. Several of its current Action Projects involve upgrading and using technology to better serve the needs of students as well as faculty and staff.

An Action Project that deserves special commendation is the use of assessment portfolios for program evaluation and planning for improvement. This is a good example of how the college used an Action Project to drive process improvement. After a three-year effort at requiring all programs to use student portfolios for assessment, there was evidence that the portfolio process was not effective and appropriate for all programs. The college changed its policy regarding assessment to allow programs to select from a variety of options in addition to portfolios such as capstone experiences, competency checklists, and rubrics.

B. Comments and counsel on key institutional processes and systems

Evidence from the Quality Checkup Report demonstrates a positive trend in systems relating to AQIP Category 1, Helping Students Learn: The college used evidence that the portfolio assessment model was not effective and appropriate for all programs and created

policy to allow programs to select from a menu of assessment options that include portfolios, capstone projects and competency checklists and rubrics.

The Quality Checkup Report indicates that MPTC has a long tradition of continuous improvement practices [QCU, p. 5].

The Quality Summary indicates that the Quality Council is receiving training on Quality and Lean tools to better assist in quality initiatives and quality improvement projects.

The college has used Action Projects to address operational process improvements.

The Quality Checkup Report indicated and the college self-identified that it needs to improve its processes with alumni and this represents an opportunity for the college to initiate an Action Project to improve relationships with alumni.

The Systems Appraisal identified strategic issues including the absence of a leadership succession plan and the absence of evidence to support student learning and effective teaching processes. The Quality Summary indicates that the college is actively working to develop a succession plan, but it does not include actions associated with addressing the other strategic issues. Using the issues identified in the Systems Appraisal to drive Action Projects will help improve key institutional processes and systems.

The Strategic planning process is driving organizational improvements and is an example of how key processes drive organizational performance.

C. Comments and counsel on the institution's culture of quality and its quality program or infrastructure.

The institution's commitment to building a culture of continuous quality improvement is particularly evident in its achievements related to Collaboration: The Quality Checkup Report indicates that the college has made structural changes that are perceived by all constituents as having great promise for focusing on quality improvement. 34 members of the faculty and staff stood for election to the council.

The college is maintaining Focus: the Quality Checkup Report indicates that "there is ample evidence of MPTC's commitment to be a data-driven and quality-focused institution" [p. 5].

The college is establishing a sound infrastructure through which to drive continuous improvement and high performance. To facilitate establishing a culture committed to continuous improvement communication is essential. The Quality Checkup Report illustrated numerous examples of areas to improve communication including between the administration and faculty regarding Action Projects and between the administration and faculty union representatives. Communication is essential to the successful development of continuous improvement structures.

The Quality Checkup Report and Action Projects demonstrate that MPTC has used feedback to improve processes (student portfolios, quality review process, planning process) that illustrate an emerging culture committed to continuous improvement. The college should continue to use data where available to drive decision-making and improvement strategies as well as developing metrics for key processes along with benchmarks to improvement to ensure it continues to drive performance through continuous improvement.

Evidence indicates that MPTC demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement at a level that warrants continued participation in AQIP.