1:   Project Accomplishments and Status

#1. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Sept 2011 – June 2012

The new Admissions and Advising Associate joined the team in late November. Her position was replaced with a new advisor. This change in advisors gave opportunity to reassess the program break down for each advisor. Some programs were realigned, allowing one advisor to focus on Fond du Lac and West Bend programs, and another advisor to focus on Fond du Lac and Beaver Dam programs. The reduced expectations for travel increased office time for the advisors, allowing them to spend more one-on-one time with advisees. In addition, instead of stretching their loyalties across all three campuses, this gave the advisors a chance to develop stronger relationships with the staff at the outlying campus they travel to.

The pre-core health advisors took the first semester to understand the processes of how students move from being a new pre-core student, how Admissions manages the wait lists, what students need to petition, and how students are eventually moved to core status. This was a crucial step because of the complexity involved. By the second semester, the advisors had taken the reins of advising the healthcare students. They continue working closely with Admissions, who still manages the wait lists.

The advisors played a key role in unveiling significant curriculum changes for some programs. They were part of the team created by the dean to ensure students were informed and had a plan in place.

Advisors have become successfully ingrained in many of the programs they oversee. This is evident in the advisory committee meetings, team meetings, and ad hoc discussions occurring at a regular basis between them, the deans, and the faculty. Advisors are part of the data review team for programs in QRP. Program areas without a full-time advisor are asking for us to provide an Academic Support Specialist for them. This sentiment speaks volumes for the positive work this team has done across the college.

The Academic Support Specialists also became key players in developing and directing program-specific orientations and program update sessions. Criminal Justice, Health Information Technology, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Associate, Automotive Technologies, Welding, and IT-Technical Support have had a program-specific orientation or update session implemented this past year.

Some reporting tools have become available. Based upon these reports, the team has been able to reach out to non-returning students, a group that they were unable to easily identify before. They are also receiving notification from the Registrar if students have graduation deficiencies.

The Academic Support Specialists attended the WACADA state conference in the fall and a half-day professional development day sponsored by WACADA and hosted at Marian University.

Knowing the team will be growing for the 2012/2013 academic year, the team has developed a "Handbook for Academic Advisors". The purpose of developing this handbook was two-fold: create a document to assist in consistent, effective training of new advisors; and retraining and reaffirmation for current advisors. Up until this time, training has occurred with each new advisor spending time with a "seasoned" advisor. This personal training is great for relationship building, but lead to some inconsistencies about processes and knowledge of resources and policies. The handbook is available to advisors through myMPTC.

A consistent reporting model was developed by an Academic Support Specialist. This is used by the team for tracking student contacts, providing uniform reports.

2: Institution Involvement

#2. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The Admissions and Advising Associate continues to present at New Faculty Academy (all new faculty) and during faculty Reflections training (returning faculty). She is on the agenda to unveil and demonstrate the new Academic Alert process via Banner class rosters during the faculty in-service and adjunct faculty updates in August.

The academic advising team had the opportunity to be on the agenda during a General Education faculty team meeting. They have developed relationships with program faculty, but have had a harder time getting to know the general education faculty. The advisors gave an overview of who they are and what they do, talked about how they collaborate with the faculty, and opened the door for ongoing dialogue.

Since the new model has been in place for three years, the associate met with each dean to discuss what has worked, what areas they feel could improve,

what expectations have been set, and what is each area needing from the other area (program area versus advising area). The dialogue indicated great success stories and wonderful experiences from faculty and students. It also showed a need for more thorough training and adding more advisors to reduce the overall advisor caseload.

Admissions and the Academic Support Specialists joined for a one day "Day of Sharing" to exchange what is happening in each area, what trends they are seeing, and to discuss grey areas of overlap. Deans, the Registrar, Financial Aid, and Employment Services also spent time providing updates for both teams.

3:   Next Steps

#3. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.
Be specific about the next critical steps you are planning to move the Action Project
ahead. If your planning is vague or there is no planning at this point, explain why.

There are three new Academic Support Specialists starting in July 2012. Adding these new advisors gives us one more chance to add a few more new programs to the mix and realign if appropriate.

- One will be located at the West Bend campus, giving advising a more permanent presence at that campus.
- Another Academic Support Specialist has a Non-traditional Occupations focus. Her two programs have a heavy load of NTO students.
- The third position is a part-time advising position focusing on undeclared students. This is a one-year, grant funded position.

A plan will be developed to request two more Academic Support Specialists for the 2013/2014 academic year. Adding two more advisors will allow us to move *all* programs to the same advising model. It will also help reduce the advisee load and number of programs some advisors are responsible for. It will give a full-time advising presence at the Beaver Dam campus. Beaver Dam is currently serviced part-time as the advisors travel.

This team growth is exciting, but reiterates the importance of training and professional development opportunities. Training and team development is going to be a focus next year. The professional development will go back to some of the basics: Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising; Moraine Park processes, including Credit-for-Prior Learning, Understanding Academic Amnesty, and program development and review; and Financial Aid updates.

Finally, clearly defined roles for the position need to be established. A new Vice President begins his duties in July. Role definitions and expectations need to be established and shared. What role does the position play in regards to:

- Admissions and new students
- Program and general new student orientation
- Program review and curriculum changes
- Program data clean up

4: Resulting Effective Practices

#4. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project. Share practices (or processes, policies, procedures, or initiatives) that could be adopted or adapted at other institutions. AQIP is most interested in practices that would give value (better educational services, cost-savings, improved morale, more satisfied stakeholders, etc.) to another institution if they copied your innovation. If you believe that your work on this project has little or no value for other institutions, explain why.

This project has been successful because programs are allowed to work *with* the Academic Support Specialist to determine the best ways to reach the students (i.e. classrooms, labs, offices), understand the special issues each unique program faces (i.e. students jobbing-out, developmental course needs), and dictate how involved the Academic Support Specialist becomes in the program. By giving the faculty and deans some control, it gives time to develop a respectful and trusting relationship. This eventually leads to smooth integration.

Each advisor is responsible for a specific set of programs. They understand they will be able to deliver the good news to the students, and are responsible for delivering the hard news as well. This gives them a great deal of autonomy and accountability.

5: Project Challenges

#5. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your

blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share *both* the challenge *and* your strategy for meeting it.

1. Growth. Growth is exciting and is still necessary as we strive to add more programs under the new model each year. With growth comes growing pains – maintaining team cohesiveness, understanding expectations, blending old ideas with new ideas, and effective communication. The team plans to meet bimonthly for a shorter meeting time instead of monthly. This will help us address issues as they arise, increase our communication with one another, and help develop a team atmosphere.

2. Caseload. The advisors are still carrying a very heavy caseload. We will continue to reach students through classroom visits, e-mail, myMPTC, and group advising when appropriate.

3. Reports and data. Reporting capabilities have been limited. This creates a challenge not only for the advisors to reach their students, but also for the Admissions and Advising Associate in planning. The college has identified data and reporting as a priority for the new year.

4. Consistency. We still have programs with faculty advisors, we have Academic Support Specialists reporting to the Admissions and Advising Associate, we have one Academic Support Specialist reporting to a dean, and we have two other Academic Support Specialists reporting to the TRIO/SSS Grant Director. All advisors strive to help the students; however, there are gaps in training and advising information.