

# Quality Highlights

## Kirtland Community College

### August 2010

Kirtland Community College received its System Appraisal Feedback Report in March of 2008. During that time the college began a revision of its committee structure to better address the issues with continuous quality improvement. Prior to March 2008 the College depended on the Assessment Committee and the College Administrative Team to steer reaccreditation and quality improvement efforts. These committees were too large and not focused enough to effectively address the issues at hand. We reorganized into three overlapping committees – The Quality Steering Committee, The Joint Strategy Forum Group and the existing Instructional Council and Faculty Chairs and Deans.

The Quality Steering committee was formed and is responsible for communication, training, engagement and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements. The Joint Strategy Forum Group, composed of members of our two Strategy Forum Teams, is responsible for overseeing action projects. The existing Instructional Council and Faculty Chairs and Deans are responsible for dealing with student outcome assessment. Some members of each team overlap onto other teams and there are representatives from across the college community on appropriate teams.

The Quality Steering committee, which includes the College President, looked at the four main “Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies” found in the System Appraisal. The four areas were:

- Leadership & Planning
- Measuring Effectiveness
- Evidence of Student Learning
- Valuing People through Communication

The committee set out to address these specific areas.

In September 2008 the college held a strategic planning summit that included the entire staff, faculty and administration of the College along with representatives from the student body and local community. The facilitators used the positive approach of Appreciative Inquiry to coax out a strategic direction for Kirtland Community College. This effort resulted in the selection of three major strategic objectives:

- Becoming a College without Borders – Connecting to the World
- Creating Unity in Purpose – Developing a Strong College Family
- Gateway for Student Success – Providing New Opportunities for Students

The goals and individual objectives are documented in “A Plan to Strategically Position Kirtland Community College 2009-2011.” Web link: <http://kirtland.edu/aboutkcc/Strategic-Plan-Executive-Summary.pdf>. This original document was used to define operational plans and administrative objectives for each subsequent year. The college is currently working on putting this year’s objectives into measurable terms.

The System Appraisal Feedback Report identified a “heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence for measuring effectiveness” that indicated a “lack of institutional buy-in to the continuous improvement model and/or a lack of systematic training for key leaders.” The Quality Steering team decided that to “institutionalize” quality improvement on our campus we would implement a series of training for all faculty and staff. The training was conducted by two of the committee members that were very familiar with and practiced continuous quality improvement techniques. After the training every employee was requested to identify a quality improvement project within their own job responsibilities, flowchart the process, use the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle to determine how they would measure whether they had been successful in improving the process and indicate what the next step needed to be. This was a yearlong project and by the end of that year it would be safe to say that most employees of Kirtland Community College knew what quality improvement was about and how that relates to our AQIP reaccreditation process. Further detail can be obtained in the College’s Action Project Directory (<http://kirtland.edu/aqip/actionprojects.htm>).

When Kirtland’s first System Portfolio was submitted the College was in the initial stages of implementing a general education core competency curriculum for all associate degree programs. Subsequently the assessment of those competencies has been put in place and student outcome assessments for all technical education programs have been identified. The College is using a systematic approach to assess each core competency and randomly selects student outcomes on an annual basis. Some programs have excelled in this area. As an example, the nursing faculty are using a commercially available set of evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of their curriculum and they are revamping their courses to address identified deficiencies. The nursing program provides an excellent model for all programs.

Kirtland has also developed a Program Review model that looks at enrollment, costs, faculty and degrees conferred for all career technical programs annually. This information is then used to identify struggling programs that need to be an area of focused effort or possibly discontinued. The model is very straight forward and function like a dashboard of information on existing programs.

The last major issue from the System Appraisal that needed to be addressed was Valuing People through Communications. The College has successfully completed (measured by survey data) a Retooling Trust through Effective Communication (2006) action project to address these issues. The college administration is very cognizant of the fact that it must stay vigilantly to this important issue.

On September 30, 2009 Kirtland Dr. Nancy Cure and Dr. William Getter visited Kirtland to performed a Quality Checkup Visit. The resulting report indicates that these reviewers found an institution that had “made significant progress in grappling with the AQIP process and thus with continuous improvement as is outlined under the strategic issues analysis of the original System Portfolio (2007).”

In June 2010 Kirtland started work on the compilation of its next System Portfolio due in November 2011. The Quality Steering Committee has identified “champions” for each category. These champions were chosen for their expertise and enthusiasm for sharing their story of how we do thing at Kirtland.

The emphasis is obviously to present the requisite information to the Higher Learning Commission, however, the plan is to collect and present the information in a format that can be used by other people on campus for grant application, other accreditations requirement, and marketing efforts to name a few.

The following times lines have been established:

- April 2010 – Identification of “champions” for each category
- June 2010 – A kickoff luncheon with all champions to share the process we will use to compile the System Portfolio
- July 2010 – January 2011 – Champions will collect the information to answer each of the questions in their category
- February – May 2011 – Executive review of the information – last date to make changes will be May 27, 2011
- May – October 2011 – The Dean of Instruction (AQIP Liaison) and the Director of the Library will write the System Portfolio using the required format and giving one voice to the document
- November 2011 – Submit the System Portfolio to the HLC
- December 2011 – Celebrate our accomplishment

Currently we are on-target with our timeline. Starting in September 2010 the champions will meet monthly to assess our progress.

The College has had ten action projects identified on the HLC Action Project Directory. Initially we struggled with very large comprehensive projects that demanded a lot of campus wide effort. As we have traveled on our AQIP journey our action projects have become more focused. Generally speaking the action projects have been successful based on the measurements used, not necessarily on popular opinion. Currently we have three active action projects:

- Implementation of the Quality Matters model for online course offerings
- Mandatory use of the college’s email system for students and employees to improve communications
- Outreach to our local area school systems

Progress on these projects will be included in the Annual Action Project Update to be submitted September 14, 2010.

Kirtland maintains a current web site - <http://kirtland.edu/aqip/> which contains all the pertinent documents related to our AQIP activities.