

Lorain County Community College

**Academic Quality
Improvement Program
(AQIP)
Quality
Checkup
Visit**

Quality Summary Report

**Site Visit
March 2008**

January 2008



*Lorain County
Community College*

www.lorainccc.edu

Mission Statement

Lorain County Community College, an innovative leader in education, economic, community, and cultural development, serves as a regional catalyst for change in a global environment through accessible and affordable academic and career-oriented education, lifelong learning, and community partnerships.

Vision Statement

Building a world-class community through education, innovation and collaboration.

Values

EXCELLENCE—We commit to quality in all endeavors and embrace excellence in all that we do.

LEARNING—We believe in creating dynamic environments that enhance the teaching and learning experience.

INDIVIDUALS—We strive to inspire individuals to become creative and critical thinkers to assist them in reaching their full potential.

PARTNERSHIPS—We encourage collaboration, teamwork and cooperation in promoting partnerships throughout our region.

INNOVATION—We embrace a culture of continuous innovation and quality improvement that encourages flexibility and risk taking.

DIVERSITY—We value the contribution and worth of all individuals and ideas and believe that diversity is a competitive advantage for succeeding in a global society.

STEWARDSHIP—We believe in serving our constituents and community in the most responsible and accountable ways to ensure our public's ongoing trust.

ENGAGEMENT—We promote an open environment that provides stakeholders with a voice in the planning and decision-making process.

Key Administrators

Dr. Roy A. Church
Dr. Marcia J. Ballinger

Mr. David J. Cummins
Dr. Karen A. Wells

President
Vice President, Strategic and Institutional
Development
Vice President, Administration/Treasurer
Provost/Vice President, Academic and
Learner Services

Introduction

The Academic Quality Improvement Program's (AQIP) Quality Program Summary report is a required part of the Quality Checkup visit and is intended to provide the site visit team an overview and update of Lorain County Community College's (LCCC) quality journey. This Quality Program Summary report delineates the current state of LCCC's quality and continuous improvement culture, processes, systems, and tools.

The report includes the following sections: (1) what is LCCC's institutional culture and continuous improvement philosophy? (2) what are the key quality and continuous improvement tools, processes and systems? (3) what has LCCC done the past few years? and (4) the quality program—what are the next steps?.

What Is LCCC's Institutional Culture And Continuous Improvement Philosophy?

The LCCC culture for performance excellence and continuous improvement emanate from the President, Dr. Roy A. Church and the nine members of the LCCC's District Board of Trustees (DBT). Dr. Church began laying the foundation for a performance excellence and continuous improvement culture after his arrival to campus in 1987. Since that time, LCCC has engaged in three major strategic visioning processes (Vision 2000, Vision 21, Vision 2015).

The DBT promotes this type of culture by regularly hosting community connection sessions to listen and learn from the various stakeholders within the community. In addition, the DBT receives progress reports related to the various performance excellence and continuous improvement tools the College uses on a regular basis. Many of these tools are described in the next section. Finally, the DBT periodically participates in AQIP endeavors such as the Strategy Forum to demonstrate institutional commitment and to enhance their level of understanding.

LCCC developed and maintains a culture and focus on performance excellence and continuous improvement through philosophies and concepts that accentuate and build on institutional strengths. The appreciative inquiry and abundance approach (www.bus.umich.edu/positive) are two philosophies and concepts that LCCC uses to build upon previous successes and to address opportunities for improvement. In fact, these philosophies and concepts are shared at campus wide events such as Convocation, and leadership development sessions for the Administrative Leadership Team (ALT).

Traditional continuous improvement processes include the use of various tools to identify the "root cause," and to subsequently fix the problem. However, the appreciative inquiry and abundance philosophies encourage the use of approaches that build upon strengths and focus efforts on the development of a better (vision) future, which fosters positive energy and innovation. Some of the key processes, systems, and tools that are used at LCCC are highlighted in the next section (what are the key quality and continuous improvement process and systems).

What Are The Key Quality And Continuous Improvement Processes And Systems?

This section of the report outlines the various tools, processes, and systems that LCCC uses to promote performance excellence and continuous improvement throughout the institution. The key tools, processes, and systems listed in this section include the following: Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), Vision 2015, quality award applications, indicators of effectiveness, lean/six sigma, academic transformation/course redesign, organizational unit and program improvement, general education outcomes assessment, and surveys.

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP): AQIP is an alternative process through which an organization can maintain its accredited status with The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). AQIP's goal is to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education. LCCC has been a member of AQIP since the 2000-01 academic year and has used AQIP to improve its culture of continuous improvement and to maintain accreditation.

LCCC maintains at least three action projects with each one having a design team (10-20 people on each team) that is charged with the development and implementation of key processes and systems. The current action projects focus on the assessment of student learning, human resources, and benchmarking. A description of each the three action projects and the 2007 annual update are accessible on the College's website at: (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/About+Us/Accreditation/AQIP.htm>). Two of the three action projects are either chaired or co-chaired by Vice Presidents—the Provost/Vice President for Academic and Learner Services and the Vice President for Strategic and Institutional Development.

Further, LCCC uses the feedback from the annual action project updates, systems appraisal (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/About+Us/Accreditation/AQIP.htm>), and the strategy forum to continuously improve processes and systems.

Vision 2015: LCCC recently completed a strategic visioning process called Vision 2015 (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/About+Us/Vision+2015+Initiatives/>). Vision 2015 included a large-scale civic engagement component with the Lorain County public and College employees to generate ideas. New programs and services focus on opportunities associated with the county's changing economic and educational climate. The Vision 2015 process included four key stages: listening and learning, building the vision, sharing the vision, and acting on the vision. The mission, values, and six strategic priorities were approved by the DBT on January 28, 2007, while the vision and 32 strategic initiatives were approved by the DBT on October 4, 2007.

LCCC has improved the Vision 2015 process based on the AQIP Systems Portfolio, Ohio Partnership for Excellence (OPE), and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award feedback reports. First, the College developed a model that clearly delineates how the strategic initiatives are infused in the College's annual planning and budget process. A visual of the model can be viewed in the College's 2006 OPE application (p. 15) (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/About+Us/Quality.htm>).

Second, LCCC is developing a Vision 2015 scorecard that would allow the College to monitor the progress of the six strategic priorities. The scorecard will be embedded and infused into the College's indicators of effectiveness process and document. Finally, the Vision 2015 Coordinator and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP) collaborated to host an orientation for the various initiative leaders. Part of the orientation was the requirement to complete an annual update/progress report that was modeled from the AQIP annual update report required for each action project.

Quality Award Application Process: LCCC has begun the process to complete a quality application on a biennial/triennial basis. The purpose of this process is to regularly collect external feedback and input about the College's processes, systems, and results. Since 2005, LCCC has completed two OPE processes and one Malcolm Baldrige (national) award process (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/About+Us/Quality.htm>).

LCCC has used the feedback from these reports (and AQIP) to develop and improve many of its processes, systems, and results. For instance, LCCC used one of its summer ALT retreats to codify a formal leadership system. Also, the AQIP Assessment of Student Learning Design Team developed a process to "close the assessment loop" and to use more direct measures to assess learning. Further, the selection and packaging of results has improved through these processes—clearer identification of key results, trend lines, and selection of cohort groups.

Indicators of Effectiveness: The DBT and the ALT set direction through the indicators of effectiveness process, which uses key data and information to measure the College's performance against its mission and vision. The basic process and timeline is as follows: (1) July: Identify 2-3 key indicators to monitor; develop action plans for continuous improvement; (2) August/ November: Select/remove and align indicators; (3) December: Review and communicate performance refinements within the institution or to the indicators process; and (4) January/June: Monitor progress of key indicators; update data and select/remove indicators. Currently, the DBT is monitoring the following four indicators—remedial education, recent high school graduates, students employed after graduation, and students employed in field of study after graduation.

As the College evolves, the indicators of effectiveness are constantly aligned and modified to reflect these changes. The indicators framework is being revised to reflect the four cornerstones of the new mission (education, economy, community, culture) and to include with the Vision 2015 scorecard. Further, the College's AQIP action project around benchmarking is designed to be the second phase of this indicators process. The

benchmarking process was developed to assist with the systematic process to select cohort institutions for comparison and the establishment of targets.

Six Sigma: A Six Sigma Center was developed in 2005 to manage and coordinate internal Six Sigma training, projects, and initiatives that measure process performance and develop new, more efficient processes. Each academic year, the ALT collaborates to identify three to five projects that have the potential to save a minimum of \$20,000 through improved process performance and efficiency. There have been 11 projects such as non-credit delivery, mechanical service contracts, and office supply management that were selected to undergo the process. The College has saved approximately \$320,000 among these 11 projects.

Academic Transformation/Course Redesign: The Academic Transformation initiative is focused on redesigning the top 30 highest enrolled courses to increase student achievement, while lowering the overall per student costs. The project is designed to: (1) enhance the quality of learning, student engagement and retention, (2) employ technology as a major or partial component of the course, and (3) reduce overall costs. The Center for Teaching Excellence has researched course redesign models and methodologies as they reflect the needs of students.

The College began using the redesign model in 2005-06 and to date has funded and redesigned 10 courses with another two courses beginning the process during the 2007 fall semester. To date, the results from the redesigned process have been positive. For example, the students in a redesigned macro economics distance learning course were slightly more successful (A, B, C) than their land based counterparts. Also, the macro economic course results in the spring term showed comparable success between distance learning and land based. As a result of this process, LCCC realized an annual cost savings of \$27.77 per successful student in the macro economic course.

Organizational Unit and Program Improvement Processes/Systems: LCCC uses the program and cluster review process to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the academic programs and clusters on a five year cycle. One of the core components of the process is the assessment of student learning, which requires that a certain number of the embedded general education and program outcomes to be assessed each academic year. Another essential component of the process is the external market assessment designed to ensure that the College's programs align with the needs of the market.

The Operation Systems Review process (OSR) is used to comprehensively assess the non-academic organizational units on a five-year cycle. Each organizational unit goes through the process once every five years, which features the development of continuous improvement/action plans. Also, the OSR process includes an external market assessment component that is designed to determine if the unit's functions and services are in concert with the needs of their key stakeholders.

Assessment of Student Learning: In order to publicly demonstrate its commitment to learning and achievement, LCCC has developed a plan to help ensure student success. The plan consists of four categories which outline programs and services already in place at LCCC (<http://www.lorainccc.edu/Student+Success+Plan/>):

1. **Student Support Services:** These services create a college environment that encourages academic success and assists students with the learning process.
2. **Program Outcomes:** Academic programs at LCCC clearly state their expectations for learning, which are measured against stated goals for student achievement.
3. **General Education Outcomes:** Students completing all programs of study will demonstrate a general set of intellectual skills and methods.
4. **Faculty and Student Engagement:** Various aspects of college life at LCCC are designed to develop a commitment to learning for both faculty and students and a connection with the wider college community.

This Student Success Plan is presented in accordance with four criteria established by the Ohio Board of Regents (<http://regents.ohio.gov/StudentSuccess/>):

1. Define learning outcomes and assess student achievement of those outcomes in General Education.
2. Define learning outcomes and assess student achievement of those outcomes in undergraduate majors.
3. Set not just current standards but also higher expectations in undergraduate education: content, competencies, abilities and successful completion.
4. Ensure the engagement of faculty and the entire instructional community in continuous improvement of student outcomes and student achievements.

A sub-committee of the AQIP Assessment of Student Learning Design Team—General Education Assessment Steering Committee (GEASC)—is responsible for assessing student learning across the curriculum around the College’s 10 general education outcomes. The College recently reviewed and revised its general education outcomes and is now in the process of developing rubrics to assess each of these outcomes over a period of time (e.g., 3-4 per academic year). Further, GEASC will develop a process to communicate and disseminate the results from these assessments. The highlights of the AQIP Assessment Design Team’s work is outlined in the next section.

In addition, each full-time and adjunct faculty member assesses at least one general education or program outcome for one class each semester. The faculty use the College’s course assessment record (CAR) as a tool to complete the process. Each CAR is collected by the academic divisions for the development of a divisional report. The division reports are subsequently forwarded to the IEP Office for the development of the Course Assessment Record Database (CARD) report.

Further, faculty within a discipline and program collaborate to assess programmatic outcomes that are embedded within a course (e.g., all the sections of a certain mathematics course). The program assessment record (PAR) form is used (e.g., similar to the CAR) as the tool to complete the process.

Surveys: The College administers various campus-wide surveys each academic year. The purpose of these surveys is to collect trend and/or comparative data and information to assist with continuous improvement efforts. For example, the College administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), ACT Student Satisfaction Survey, and the PACE/Climate Survey on a rotating basis. The feedback from OPE, AQIP, and Baldrige suggested considering the development of a more systematic way of using the results for continuous improvement.

As a result, the AQIP Assessment Design Team uses the CCSSE results, in part, to develop engagement action plans and to subsequently measure progress around student engagement, retention, and learning. The AQIP Human Resources Design Team uses the PACE/Climate results in the same manner to monitor the perceptions (climate) of the College's employees. Further, non-academic organizational units are beginning to use the data from the ACT Student Satisfaction Survey as part of the OSR process.

What Has LCCC Done The Past Few Years?

The purpose of this section is to outline the actions the College has taken to address the strengths and opportunities for improvement that were highlighted in the AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report along with the OPE and Baldrige Feedback Reports. This section is segmented into three key parts. The first section highlights the key action each of the College's three AQIP Action Project Design Teams has taken during the last couple of years. The second section delineates the actions that LCCC has taken to address the feedback from the AQIP System Appraisal report. The final sections outlines the actions that the College has taken to address the comments from other feedback reports—mostly non-AQIP reports.

AQIP Action Project Design Teams: Each of the three AQIP Design Teams has made significant progress during the past couple of years. Below are a few of the key actions and accomplishments.

1. Assessment of Student Learning:

- During 2006-07, 602 CAR forms were submitted, an increase of 28% over the previous year. With 75% of faculty completing a CAR, LCCC has reached an institution-wide commitment to assessment and continuous improvement. In addition, beginning fall semester, 2008, measuring and document student learning through the use of the CAR will be a condition of employment for adjunct faculty.

- The ongoing practice of assessing student learning outcomes in all sections of one course has proven to be attainable through a wide variety of assessment methods. For example, 88% of students (286 out of 342) enrolled in all sections of BIOG 122 (Human Anatomy and Physiology) participated in a national examination conducted by the Human Anatomy & Physiology Society. The exam provided relevant program assessment data compared to a national norm.
- LCCC developed institutional benchmarks that are comparable to those of cohort institutions with respect to levels of performance and measurability of program outcomes for the associate of science degree
- The CAR, PAR, and CARD were revised to include a column reporting results of continuous improvement strategies (e.g., closing the loop).
- The new Assessment Newsletter reports to the College community how the assessment of student learning is used for continuous improvement.

2. Human Resources

- LCCC's HR AQIP Design Team spent the majority of 2006-07 focused on one major aspect of the College's operations, which was the screening committee process. The HR AQIP Design Team is utilizing the principles of Six Sigma through a subcommittee. The Six Sigma Committee is addressing long-term challenges involving the screening committee process. The goal is to shorten the process, streamline certain aspects, and to make the process more meaningful to the committee members and applicants.
- LCCC's HR AQIP Design Team also continued its efforts with respect to new employee orientation with the following accomplishments: (1) The development of an on line welcome by the President, all Vice Presidents and Director of Human Resources; (2) A general orientation session for all employment classifications led by the Human Resources Office including Senior College Administration; (3) A targeted orientation for new Administrative Leadership Team Members
- The Administrative Leadership Team Performance Management System that began last summer at the ALT retreat has resulted with a system which includes a 360 review for all administrators on campus. The review is based on the abundance model which seeks to build on the College administrators' strengths.

3. Benchmarking

- During the 2006-07 academic year, great strides were made in moving the project forward. The Design Team went through an educational process to learn more about benchmarking and related activities. Several of the Design Team members attended two (2006, 2007) National Community College Benchmarking Conferences.
- The Design Team reviewed several Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winners' applications including that of Richland Community college, the first community college to win the award. The review allowed the Design Team to determine how these organizations selected cohort groups and establish targets. Initial analysis indicates no certain standard or pattern exists that organizations use to select cohort groups and/or establish targets.
- The committee members reviewed books by McCormick and Cox (2003) and Knight (2003) that provide guidance in developing a protocol to use in selecting the appropriate cohort groups (benchmarks) and establishing targets. The document is currently being reviewed and refined by the Design Team members. Once approved, the protocol will be used with the indicators of effectiveness, program/cluster review, and the OSR processes.

AQIP System Appraisal Report: The following information describes actions LCCC has taken to address some of the feedback (themes) that were outlined in the AQIP Systems Appraisal report.

- Leadership—The System Appraisal Report suggested that LCCC develop a clearly defined succession plan. While LCCC remains committed to leadership development, the AQIP HR Design Team is working to enhance and codify some of our leadership development processes. For example, the ALT performance appraisal process now includes a leadership development component.
- Data gathering and statistical analysis—A review of the quality application submitted subsequent to the AQIP Systems Portfolio shows evidence that the gathering and presentation of data has improved substantially. Further, the identification and use of the various tools, processes, and systems outlined in this report all require the use of data and information. This ensures alignment with the key processes and the data reported in the results section (e.g., do the processes align with the results).
- Benchmarking—As previously mentioned, LCCC is in the process of developing a Vision 2015 scorecard that will include trend and comparative data and information (Planning Continuous Improvement). Within this scorecard there will be specified targets and criteria that provide evidence that our system for planning continuous improvement is effective. Further, the indicators of effectiveness

include numerous measures that have comparative data and information. This is the key process and system in the Measuring Effectiveness category. Finally, the College is in the process of selecting a new ERP system and will attempt to begin collecting comparative data.

- **Measures**—The College’s AQIP Assessment Design Team is in the process of addressing the use of additional “direct measures” of student success. For instance, the GEASC is developing rubrics to assess student learning across the curriculum. Further, unit level analysis is being conducted by some of the academic divisions such as Academic Foundations. This division has developed rubrics to assess student learning across and within their courses.
- **Student Learning**—The ACT Student Satisfaction Survey results are being infused into the OSR process. This will allow organizational units to see how students perceive the effectiveness of the functions related to their organizational unit. The progress can be monitored as part of the newly developed annual follow-up report.

Comments from Other Feedback Reports: The following section outlines key actions that have been taken to address performance excellence and continuous improvement efforts. These include the AQIP Strategy Forum, quality applications, OSR, and program/cluster review

Strategy Forum

The College sent a team of seven people to attend the AQIP Strategy Forum in March 2007. The Strategy Forum is intensive and designed to promote interaction and help AQIP institutions select and commit to strategies that will drive continuous quality improvement. For AQIP institutions returning to their second or subsequent Strategy Forum, the focus is on how institutions process and learn from past Action Projects and from outside reviews, such as the Systems Appraisal; how that learning guides the formation of strategies for future improvement and the design of new Action Projects; and how the institution can strengthen its quality program so that future learning and progress become more systematic. LCCC committed to two actions as a result of attending the Strategy Forum—the development of processes to assess the various continuous improvement tools (e.g., Six Sigma, OSR) and to develop a performance excellence model (see next step section).

Quality Applications

Since 2005, LCCC submitted two state applications and one Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award application to continuously improve. Two of the key actions around the Vision 2015 process taken by LCCC based on the feedback from these endeavors were the development of a Vision 2015 scorecard and alignment with budget process. Another key action related to the development of a state-wide group to begin collecting comparative data on graduates—most institutions only have longitudinal data. Other

examples include the identification and collection of key data for some of the categories, the development and clarification of key processes and systems (e.g., leadership, human resources, and the assessment and closing the loop components to key continuous improvement tools.

Operation Systems Review (OSR)

The OSR process has been modified based on the OPE, AQIP, and Baldrige feedback reports to include the development of annual updates (actions completed that particular academic year), the infusion of the ACT Satisfaction Survey results and other comparative data and information.

Program/Cluster Review

Currently, the College has a committee reviewing and revising the program/cluster review manual to ensure there is alignment with other key processes (e.g., curriculum council, AQIP) and to enhance the quality and completion rates.

The Quality Program—What Are The Next Steps?

The purpose of this section of the report is to outline some of the specific plans that LCCC is going to take to improve its quality program or infrastructure.

- LCCC will continue to use a myriad of quality tools to continuously improve the institution. In addition, the College is committed to continuously improving each of these tools through cycles of learning. For example, the strategic visioning process was refined based on participation in and feedback from the OPE and Baldrige processes (quality award). Also, the OSR process now includes an annual update to encourage progress each and every academic year.
- The assessment of student learning and the human resource design teams will be developing new three-year action projects during the 2008 spring and summer terms. These action projects will be the third cycle around these two key institutional initiatives.
- The College will develop a new Action Project that captures the essence of how all the quality tools (mentioned above), processes, and systems work, aligned, and are integrated together to demonstrate how the entire College contributes to student learning and overall development. In effect, LCCC is committed to the design and development of a performance excellence model similar to the ones that several Baldrige winners develop and use.
- LCCC will either be writing another OPE/Baldrige application during calendar year 2008 or 2009 or updating the AQIP Systems Portfolio. Since the College is committed to continuous improvement, we requested permission from AQIP to allow us to use the

quality application and feedback report in place of the systems portfolio (we are waiting to hear back from AQIP).