Waukesha County Technical College
Quality Highlights for Reaffirmation of Accreditation (August, 2010)

The evolution of quality principles and processes at Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) first began in 1983. This consistent focus for more than 25 years of training, application, and results document the College’s quality journey. Since its inception, the quality process at WCTC has remained focused on three central principles: Customer Focus, Continuous Improvement, and Personal Empowerment.

WCTC’s commitment to quality and performance excellence is woven throughout all parts of the organization and aligns with its strategic plan. WCTC has continued to make significant changes and improvements since the last Systems Appraisal (2007-2008) and Quality Check-Up Visit (2010). The next Systems Portfolio is due in fall 2011 and is currently in revision and update status. Major institutional changes and initiatives align with College Strategic Goals and AQIP categories emphasized by WCTC’s last Strategy Forum (2009) team as well as with ongoing Action Projects as follows:

I. Helping Students Learn (Category One)-Student Learning/Competent Graduates (WCTC Strategic Goals)

Student Learning Evidence

In spring 2010, WCTC created a standing cross-functional College-wide Student Learning Evidence (SLE) Steering Team and targeted Division-specific teams in Academic Foundations, Business, General Education, Industrial, Service/Health, and Student Services. The Steering Team’s focus is to guide the use of data/evidence to improve teaching and learning across the College; to advocate/coach the work of the six SLE Division teams; and to develop a process to collect and store evidence of student learning for future improvements. This team evolved from a newly-retired Action Project team of the same name. It was determined during the course of the action project, and during WCTC’s attendance at a past AQIP Assessment Workshop, that this topic is one that needed a permanent commitment. The College’s executive vice president has championed this work.

Student Learning Evidence Division teams are representative groups within each of the major instructional and student service divisions of the College comprised of faculty, deans, associate deans and other staff. Each team will use the “Plan, Do, Study, Act” (PDSA) process for improvements on all strategies and practices. They will focus on work started during 2009-10 in aligning program outcomes to both course competencies and Critical Life Skills (known in other institutions as Core Abilities). Competencies are each aligned to specific assessments that will measure student attainment of industry-recognized skills. The goal of each team is to ultimately enhance and improve teaching and learning through effective assessment of skill attainment.

In preparation for the Fall roll-out of the SLE Division teams, the steering team determined that it would be value-added if representatives from each division team could participate in the Alverno College Summer Institute: Connecting Student Learning Outcomes to Teaching, Assessment, and Curriculum. Known internationally for their innovative approach to student assessment, Alverno’s Summer Institute attracts hundreds of educators each year. A team of 15 WCTC instructors and other staff attended this 3-day workshop from June 14-18, 2010. WCTC attendees will share their learning during SLE Division Team meetings and assist other division team members in transferring the knowledge to action in the classroom.

Service Learning (Action Project)

WCTC is beginning the second year of its formalized Service Learning initiative. By current WCTC estimates, 1200 students participate in service learning every year, producing a total of approximately 16,000 hours of service to their communities. As a result of these efforts by students and their instructors, WCTC was named to the President’s Honor Roll in Higher Education and Community Service in 2010. Something that separates Service Learning from traditional community service is the requirement that students discuss, reflect, and write about their experience. This “reflection” is then used by the student and the instructor as part of the course assessment and evidence of student learning. Required service learning projects are being integrated into at least one course in every instructional program major at WCTC.

Examples of recent service learning projects and those that demonstrate evidence of student learning include: Nursing students provided care for low income patients at several area clinics; Dental Hygiene and Dental Assistant students provided oral health education at a variety of venues; Carpentry and Bricklaying/Masonry students built homes for the Waukesha County Housing Authority; Architectural Club members participated in building a house for Habitat for Humanity; Administrative Office Management students provided services for La Casa de Esperanza, Inc. in Waukesha as well for the Lupus Foundation in Milwaukee; Medical Assistant and Phlebotomy students provided services at various health fairs throughout the year; Information Technology students created a custom database for the Hispanic Health Resource Center;
The expected outcomes of this team for all online instructional areas are to:

- Build understanding and develop consensus around definitions of online and hybrid course success and retention;
- Analyze current online and hybrid course success and quality data (success rates, demographics, learner attributes, readiness levels, reasons for non-success, teacher training, technology problems, etc.);
- Determine future data collection methods and processes for ongoing monitoring of online and hybrid course success and quality;
- Improve current processes or create new processes to facilitate improvements in online and hybrid course success and retention; and
- Identify improvements and provide recommendations that address issues impacting online student success.

**New Teacher Boot Camp**
WCTC introduces new instructors to the student-learning-centered philosophy of the College at a focused 2-day workshop before the start of every academic year. In its eighth year, New Instructor Boot Camp acclimates new instructors to the specific practices and methods which define the focus on teaching and learning that is part of this culture of learning. Participants learn and apply classroom assessment techniques, strategies for active learning, classroom technology, library skills, classroom management strategies, and a variety of feedback tactics that they can use in their teaching.

Immersing new faculty in WCTC’s student-learning centeredness aligns with the College’s emphasis on Student Learning Evidence as described above. Our goal is to assist all faculty in their practice of hands-on, experiential teaching, student learning and sound assessment practices.

**II. Understanding Students and Other Stakeholders Needs (Category Three) - Student Learning/Competent Graduates (WCTC Strategic Goals)**

### Advising/Counseling Model
Based on the results of their Quality Review Process (QRP – Evaluation), the Student Services Division developed and began the implementation of a new formalized Advising/Counseling model. The academic advisors are working with an “intrusive” model of advising designed to provide more outreach to students and tracking of student retention/persistence. The counselors provide counseling services to our students as well as teaching the new Student Success Course beginning spring of 2011. Counselors also see students who are identified as “at risk” through the College’s Early Alert System whereby students are identified by behaviors observed in class by faculty, as well as via a new initiative implemented in 2010 – the Student Strengths Inventory. Incoming students complete this Inventory along with their course placement tests. At that time they may be identified as needing additional assistance due to their “at risk” status.

**One-Stop Student Enrollment Center**
The College has also invested in the next phase of a true “one-stop-shop” for its Enrollment Center. Admissions, Financial Aid and Registration have been located together since 2002 in the Enrollment Center which is now being expanded and re-configured to allow for the relocation of the Assessment Center, a dedicated office supporting veterans’ services, and the centralization of the advisors and counselors into a common area. This will provide students with access to multiple departments and services that are co-located. A continuous feedback process will be implemented to assess student satisfaction with this enhanced student service model.
Multi-Cultural Resource Center
WCTC has seen an increase in diversity among its students and, in fact, the percent of students of color is almost 2.5 times that of the minority representation of our service area, Waukesha County. To support these diverse populations and to enhance our commitment to valuing diversity, WCTC is hiring a diversity coordinator and creating a Multi-Cultural Resource Center during 2010-11.

III. Measuring Effectiveness (Category Seven) - Student Learning/Competent Graduates/Collaborative Partnerships/Technology (WCTC Strategic Goals)
During the 2010 Quality Check-up Visit, the reviewers stressed, and WCTC agrees, that the College is data rich but needs to continue its efforts to turning that data into information in order to make improvements. Following are a series of aligned initiatives currently in process:

- Continued work on Program Viability Indicators (Action Project) to inform faculty and administration on health of current programs and assist them in making data-driven decisions about continuance or discontinuance of programs.
- Implementation of Electronic Quality Review Process (QRP) – an online self-study program evaluation tool facilitated by College Advancement staff in conjunction with faculty and associate deans. A pilot is planned for Fall-Spring 2010-11 with full implementation in 2011-12.
- Continued participation in the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN), a national network of two-year colleges working to improve quality and performance. WCTC sent a cross-functional team of eight administrators and staff to “Achieving Performance Excellence: Accountability, Alignment and Integration,” the 2010 CQIN Summer Institute. This opportunity to learn from three Baldrige Quality Award recipients will assist our team in turning our data into useful information for improvement.
- Approval of a new position to be hired by fall 2010 that will assist in determining institutional effectiveness through the use of data and informational analysis. This institutional effectiveness specialist will provide timely, readily accessible data acquisition, information and analysis for College staff that can be used in decision-making. In addition s/he will create customized reports from existing data to meet staff needs using business intelligence tools. The institutional effectiveness specialist will assist all staff in learning to mine data and perform basic information analysis.
- The All-Staff College In-Service Day that kicks off the 2010-11 academic year is focused on using external economic and labor market data to make decisions for future programming and certificate creation. The College has contracted with a Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development expert to provide this information. His remarks will be followed with a practical table exercise allowing all College staff to brainstorm about how his data will affect their particular work. Deans and associate deans, in particular, will be able to use this information in future program planning.

IV. Leading and Communicating (Category Five) - Employees (WCTC Strategic Goal)
Common to many organizations, another improvement suggested by our Check-Up review team was that WCTC develop a communication plan. One of our first AQIP Action Project Teams focused on Communication and Collaboration. This evolved into a second-generation team, Employee Engagement (Action Project), still currently active.

- This cross-representational/cross-functional team has had a sub-team working with the President’s Executive Council and Human Resource Services to develop an official administrative procedure devoted to communication processes at the College. It will be designed around a specific “Communication Matrix,” a pilot model designed to provide a framework for selected individual, departmental and College-wide communication that:
  - Improves communication;
  - Integrates decision-making and communication;
  - Provides guidance on what, how, and when to communicate;
  - Positively affects results on College Climate Survey; and
  - Makes communication part of our organizational culture.
For College-wide and significant department communications, guidelines include the decision category, communication event, audience, information needs, approvals needed, designated staff assigned to communicate, method and timing of communication, and a specific performance measure indicating the success of the communication. This procedure will become official during 2010-11.
- Reading for the CQIN Summer Institute team this year includes, The Invisible Employee: Realizing the Hidden Potential in Everyone. This book will also be the subject of discussion and analysis among members of the Employee Engagement Action Project Team during 2010-11.
Additional improvements to communication include:

- During June, 2010 the deans and vice-presidents participated in a 3-day retreat focused on aligning plans and processes with Strategic Goals. They created a comprehensive College-wide timeline to develop projects within a systems-approach making sure that goals, objectives, and identified benchmarks are used to close the loop verifying that projects are performing as designed and emerging data can be used for continuous quality improvement. A Communication Plan for rolling out this timeline is currently in discussion for 2010-11 implementation.

- In the Fall of 2006, WCTC began offering a one-credit course in Crucial Conversations for all employees. This course helps individuals to hold difficult conversations – when emotions are strong, opinions differ, or the stakes are high – get ideas and feelings out in the open safely, and maintain high levels of respect to achieve results. In Spring 2009, a one-credit Crucial Confrontations course was added to help employees identify and resolve performance gaps, strengthen accountability, and reduce resentment.

- Each employee at WCTC completes an annual individual improvement and development plan. An improved process for managers - the Leadership Development and Assessment Process (LDAP) – was implemented in 2009-10. Within the LDAP, leaders are expected to demonstrate not only results, but model behaviors based on the College Values of Commitment, Integrity, Relationships, Communication, Learning and Excellence to improve communication and trust at the institution. These behavioral expectations are common to leaders at the College, whether they are managers, union leaders or individual contributors from a department, committee, or team. Also part of the LDAP this year, managers will document division and department meetings as well as some cross-division/department initiatives focused on improving communication between and across the College.

- In 2009-10, the College began holding monthly communication and training meetings for managers. These meetings have provided training on a variety of human resource and leadership topics including compliance issues, contract provisions, coaching, and strategic thinking.

- During June and July, 2010, eleven current instructors and other staff went through 45.5 (3 credits) hours of Facilitator Training further expanding WCTC’s commitment to having professionally-trained facilitators for each of our action project and other process improvement teams. It is expected that at least two of these facilitators will soon be assigned to a process improvement team.

**Specific Systems Portfolio Feedback and Systems Appraisal Follow-Up**

Upon receipt of the Systems Appraisal during spring of 2008, the President’s Executive Council, the AQIP Coordinator and the Quality Advisory Team initially read and reviewed the feedback in detail. College-wide open sessions were held to inform colleagues and district school board members of the results of the Appraisal. In addition, an Executive Summary was developed and distributed College-wide explaining the Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies and the major strengths and opportunities for improvement indicated in each category.

The Quality Check-Up Team (with members from the Quality Advisory Team) analyzed the Appraisal and responded to feedback with clarification and improvement suggestions. The Check-Up Team conducted a phone conference with one of the Appraisal writers to clarify some of our questions about the feedback. This information is being used to work with the Category Leads as the College updates its current Systems Portfolio.

The AQIP Coordinator and the Vice President of Strategic Effectiveness and Advancement held nine two-hour meetings with each of the Category teams to review the feedback in detail and respond to the feedback for each specific process, result, and improvement question. An update to the Systems Portfolio has now been developed in a matrix format outlining the current state and action taken on each Opportunity for Improvement. Please refer to [https://www.wctc.edu/general_info/accreditation_quality_improvement/200910matrix.pdf](https://www.wctc.edu/general_info/accreditation_quality_improvement/200910matrix.pdf) to review this document currently being used as Category teams update the Portfolio in preparation for the 2011 AQIP submission.

**Summary of Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

Continuous quality improvement is how WCTC does business – it is ingrained in all aspects of our culture and has been for well over 25 years. WCTC’s commitment to quality was reaffirmed when it created the Center for Quality and Innovation in the mid-1990’s staffed with full and part-time instructional and support staff. The Center provides professional facilitation services to AQIP Action Project teams and other process improvement teams. There has always been a clear understanding among staff at the college that we work together to continuously improve the services we provide thereby laying the foundation for innovation and a student-learning centered environment. The quality journey continues.