

Quality Checkup Site Visit: April 25 to 27, 2007

Dear Colleagues:

I write to you with reference to the accreditation procedure that C.O.D. follows under AQIP. We have been active with quality improvement initiatives for six years and are now leading into the formal reaffirmation of our accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

Over these years, our preparation has included identifying, preparing and implementing AQIP action projects, which we now term Quality Improvement Projects (QIPs), preparing and submitting our Systems Portfolio that describes our essential systems and their effectiveness, receiving from the Higher Learning Commission's AQIP office their Systems Appraisal Feedback Report on our Portfolio, and responding with actions directed to opportunities identified therein for improvement. These activities have been led by joint councils of all our constituencies and have been implemented by teams involving many dozens of us. The documents are available at our weblink for AQIP.

We are now preparing for the next steps.

During the seven-year cycle leading up to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, AQIP requires a site visit conducted by trained evaluators who will spend at least two days on campus. The Quality Checkup Site Visit is a formative, supportive process that is designed to help the institution accelerate its continuous improvement journey. If the Site Visit goes well, the College will be in position to have its accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission extended for another seven years. This extension, formally known as Reaffirmation of Accreditation, would occur in 2007-2008. (Note: The traditional accreditation process resulted in a 10-year accreditation period, but AQIP only grants accredited status for seven years.)

The visiting team will be here this April 25 to 27 to help the College discover where and how to invest its energies in the future for maximum payback. To support the College in continuing and deepening its commitment to quality improvement, the Quality Checkup team will probe, test and challenge:

- whether the way the institution has organized its quality initiative is working effectively;
- whether the Quality Improvement Projects (QIPs) the institution has selected as improvement targets are making the difference they could;
- whether the institution is involving its various constituencies (particularly faculty and staff) in its improvement efforts as fully as possible; and
- whether measured performance is providing evidence of institutional progress in quality improvement.

Accordingly, the Quality Checkup Site Visit will:

- review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last *Systems Appraisal* (feedback report from the Systems Portfolio);
- assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings or sessions that clarify AQIP and Higher Learning Commission accreditation work and what is expected;
- affirm the accuracy of the organization's online Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needed clarification or verification;
- alert the organization to areas that continue to need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately;
- review federal compliance information on such areas as default rates, complaints, US Department of Education interactions and program reviews etc. and review third party comment.

The visiting team will be Dr. Susan Kahn, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and Dr. Barbara Read, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Inver Hills Community College. We will schedule meetings for them with College personnel, including the

Quality Improvement Council, the Board of Trustees, the President and Cabinet, current and past Action Project (QIP) team leaders and members, and students. We are also planning an open forum. The agenda for the site visit is attached.

Prior to the visit, the College will hold three open forums in order to 1) present basic information about AQIP and Higher Learning Commission expectations, 2) allow employees to learn about institutional activities and progress of our quality initiative, and 3) answer questions about AQIP and the College's quality initiative. The forums will be held on March 13 at 10 a.m. in SRC 2052, March 26 at 1 p.m. in OCC 128, and April 2 at 3 p.m. in SRC 2052. They will be webcast and I encourage you to participate.

After March 9, we will have information about the Quality Checkup posted on our AQIP website.

If you have any questions about the Quality Checkup Site Visit, please contact a member of the site visit planning team: Brenda Alberico, Sunil Chand, Joseph Collins, Glenn Hansen, Annise Hawkinson, Daniel Lloyd, Susan Martin, Joe Miragliotta, or Ingrid Peternel.

On behalf of the site visit planning team, thank you for your attention to and preparation for this visit.

Sunil Chand
President