A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Seven staff and one Board of Trustees member attended the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) annual meeting in Chicago, April 11–15. Sessions focused on accreditation, assessment and accountability. The data collected in these sessions will assist the college teams in preparing for the June 2008 Academy for Assessment of Student Learning and the September 2008 Strategy Forum.

Incoming president, Dr. Bob Meyer, is very supportive of AQIP and with his knowledge and experience will provide the leadership that will continue the college on this journey of continuous improvement.

Thanks to everyone for their support as we move forward.

WITC AQIP JOURNEY
Steps Completed

May 2007    Collegewide Kickoff
June 2007    Subcommittee attended Vital Focus Workshop
August 2007  College Inservice/Vital Focus Constellation
             Survey
             Survey results supported moving forward with the AQIP application process
September 2007  College Inservice/Vital Focus Conversation Day
              Potential action projects identified
December 2007  AQIP application approved - WITC is now an official AQIP College
January 2008  Nine Action Projects ranked: Assessment, Communication, Programming and Technology came out on top
February 2008  Collegewide Inservice - Action Project activities

Mark Your Calendars

June 2008 – Watch your e-mail for an action plan committee request – Get Involved!

The Nine AQIP Categories

1. Helping Students Learn
2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives
3. Understanding Students’ & Other Stakeholders’ Needs
4. Valuing People
5. Leading & Communicating
6. Supporting Institutional Operations
7. Measuring Effectiveness
8. Planning Continuous Improvement
9. Building Collaborative Relationships

These nine categories are the key processes for measuring and analyzing our institution’s performance within AQIP.
The WITC Quality Improvement Steering Committee (QISC) Team Members

Co-Chairs:
Diane Vertin, Superior
Barb Williams, Superior
Alex Birkholz, New Richmond
Ann Charbonneau, Superior
Becka Cusick, Shell Lake
Bruce Davenport, Rice Lake
Wendy Dusek, New Richmond
Shane Evenson, Shell Lake
Craig Fowler, Rice Lake
Paul Haugen, Ashland
Joe Huftel, New Richmond
Mark Kearns, New Richmond
James Kiley, New Richmond
Jennifer Kunselman, Shell Lake
Barb Landstrom, Shell Lake
Chuck Levine, Shell Lake
Ted May, Ashland
Kim Olson, Shell Lake
Bambi Pattermann, Ashland
Mary Ann Pebler, Rice Lake
Chris Saxild, Ashland
Tim Schreiner, Shell Lake
Mary Stenberg, Ashland
Laura Sullivan, Ashland
Kelly Sylte, New Richmond
John Will, Shell Lake

Recorder:
Mary Peters, Shell Lake

Next Steps

April 2008  Annual Higher Learning Commission Meeting
AQIP Colloquium
May 2008  Academy for Assessment of Student Learning pre-workshop
June 2008  Academy for Assessment of Student Learning
June 5, 2008  QISC meeting
Action project committee selection process will be identified
September 2008  Strategy Forum
On-going  Action Projects
Annual Updates
2008-2012  Systems Portfolio compiled/completed
2014-2015  Reaffirmation of accreditation

Action Projects

A staff survey was completed in January prioritizing the action project topics from the Fall Inservice. The topics identified were:
Assessment, Communication, Programming and Technology. These topics were presented at the February Inservice along with information on “what is an action project” and “what makes a good action project.”

Criteria for a good action project (as listed in the February 2008 Inservice

PowerPoint Presentation

Importance  Is the problem important to the extent that solving it will make a significant difference?
Urgency  The problem must have a real time frame.
No Existing Solution  The problem should be real and unsolved.
Feasibility  The problem should be challenging but not overwhelming.
Familiarity  It is helpful to have some familiarity with the context of the problem and a fresh perspective.
Significance  The problem should be significant.
Learning Opportunity  The problem should offer an opportunity for the team to learn.

During the inservice, staff had the opportunity to draft an action project that will make a significant difference in communication, programming, technology or assessment at WITC, and to receive peer feedback on the proposed action project. Other institutions have identified similar topics for their action projects. In March 2008, Central Arizona College began working on an action project titled, “General Education Assessment.” The target completion date for this project is August 2008. The project details are available at
Enter in the Institution & Title fields and then Find Projects button. Once the project is found, click on the View Action button.
See example screen shot on the next page:

Reminder - QISC e-mail user
All information from the Quality Improvement Steering Committee (QISC) will come from the QISC e-mail sender.
In March 2007, Chippewa Valley Technical College began working on a project titled, “Improving Organizational Communications.” The target completion date for this project is September 2010. You can view the project details, beginning information and updates, at http://www.aqip.org/?option=com_actionsearch Again, enter in the Institution & Title fields and then Find Projects button. Once the project is found, click on the View Action button.

Other action projects, both current and completed, can be found at http://www.aqip.org/?option=com_actionsearch.

Stay tuned – teams will be formed for our action projects in the near future.

AQIP Terminology/Acronyms & Definitions

AQIP – Academic Quality Improvement Program
QISC – Quality Improvement Steering Committee

Accreditation – A seven-year quality cycle where evidence from both the action cycles and strategy cycles are reviewed to ensure that WITC continues to comply with the Higher Learning Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation

Action Project – A continuous series of projects that accumulate over time into a record of the institution’s quality improvement activities

Quality Check-up Visit – A visit to the College by two or more consultant evaluators to affirm the accuracy of our Systems Portfolio

Quick fixes – Items that can be fixed quickly, need more feedback, or are not feasible

RECOMMENDED READINGS
Want to learn more about the AQIP process and continuous improvement? Some good reads:

The Toyota Way by Jeffrey K. Liker

Academic Quality Work: A Handbook for Improvement by William F. Massy (Author), Steven W. Graham (Author), Paula Myrick Short (Author), Robert Zemsky (Foreword)

Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education by John Robert Dew (Author), Molly McGowan Nearing (Author)

Other college AQIP Action Plans

Click here to get to the action project search screen
Check out the *NEW* WITC AQIP Web site

**General Information** about the Journey:  
http://www.witc.edu/academics/accreditation/agip.htm

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):  
http://www.witc.edu/academics/accreditation/faqs.htm

**WITC Action Project** Information:  
http://www.witc.edu/academics/accreditation/projects.htm

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Q & As

If you have specific questions related to AQIP, please e-mail them to QISC@witc.edu.

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**Reaffirmation of Accreditation** – A review process that confirms the improvements WITC is making as well as the accuracy of the evidence provided to AQIP

**Strategy Action Workbook** – A document that describes what we are currently doing with quality improvement, what our plans are for the future, and our four proposed action projects

**Strategy Forum Workshop** – A team of representatives from WITC who work with consultants to examine our quality efforts and plan for future projects

**Systems Appraisal** – A review of our Systems Portfolio by a team of AQIP trained reviewers

**Systems Portfolio** – A document showing what we are doing, what works, how do we measure this, and where can we improve

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**WITC Collegewide Outcomes**

WITC’s new Assessment Team gathered for the first time last fall. The team’s first goal was to respond to HLC’s Focused Visit report and the concerns and confusion surrounding WITC’s Core Abilities and General Studies Outcomes. The Focused Visit report suggested that WITC develop a “true core of general competencies” to be applied across all degree programs. After much discussion, research of other institutions and hard work, the Assessment Team developed a “true core of general competencies” – the Collegewide Outcomes.

The team would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Collegewide Outcomes and ask for comments before they are finalized. The outcomes are inclusive of both previously identified Core Abilities and General Studies Outcomes.

They include:

- Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Mathematical Literacy
- Science/Technology Literacy
- Social Interaction
- Local/Global Perspectives

Please see the most recent draft of the Collegewide Outcomes and the indicators that define them at this Web site:  
http://www.witc.edu/academics/accreditation/assessment.htm

The Web site will also introduce you to the team members and other resources for assessment. We invite you to post your comments related to the Collegewide Outcomes and indicators through an e-mail to: qisc@witc.edu. Your thoughts about the Outcomes are important to us so please be sure to let us know what you think!
Blending continuous quality improvement with college and university accreditation.

The journey continues ... find out more!
http://www.witc.edu/academics/accreditation/aqip.htm