

## **Northern Wyoming Community College District Quality Highlights August 15, 2011**

Our Quality Checkup Visit took place in November 2010, and we refer readers to the [State of the Quality Effort](#) document prepared at that time, which discusses similar topics at greater length.

[NWCCD Systems Portfolio 2007](#) is available on our website, but all references and links in this report will be to [NWCCD Systems Portfolio 2011](#), which documents very substantial gains over the past four years in terms of implementing CQI and establishing measures for significant systems and projects. Portfolio 2011 also includes our current *Index to the Location of Evidence Relating to the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation*. We expect to receive a new Systems Appraisal Feedback Report in Spring Semester 2012.

### **Major Accomplishments Since Fall 2007**

We have accomplished significant growth, particularly in the two areas we identified as priorities at the time of the 2008 Strategy Forum: (a) assessment of student learning and (b) planning and measuring continuous improvement. The *State of Quality* document discusses these two areas in detail and lists 23 Milestones reached. The lists below integrate and update that information.

#### **Support for Student Learning and Success**

1. We have developed a new assessment process for student learning of three institution-wide Core Abilities and have two semesters worth of data (Table 1R2.3). Work continues to improve implementation procedures and sensitivity of our measure.
2. A 2010-2011 Action Project produced a new assessment system for student learning of specific Program Outcomes. All academic programs have identified outcomes and mapped how courses in their curricula contribute to these outcomes. Over the coming year each program will create a measurement process best suited to the nature of its outcomes.
3. We have adopted the *Designing and Assessing Learning (DAL)* model and the *Worldwide Instructional Design Systems (WIDS)* software support and management tool. We have a cadre of in-house trainers, and faculty members have received on- and off-campus training in assessment and in student-centered teaching.
4. We developed new protocols for New Program Development. This process is well-established and has been implemented for four new programs, with two more in process. We developed a new protocol for Program Self-Study and Review and piloted it for two years. A team is currently working on improvements to the process, and in addition a protocol for Program Closure and Contracture will be developed. All are designed to take into account community needs, make use of best practices in the field, and incorporate concrete data.
5. We have reorganized the Academic Division in order to encourage: (a) unity of effort across campuses; and (b) greater collegiality and intellectual discussion on the part of faculty, particularly on the topic of improving student engagement and learning.

We also have improved the New Faculty Orientation process and over the coming academic year we will complete revision of the Faculty Performance Review process to ensure more effective emphasis on teaching and intellectual discovery.

6. We created a Deans Council that provides cross-Division and cross-Campus integration of Academic leadership, and included on the Council is a representative of Student Services. The goal is to better integrate all forms of support for student learning and success.
7. In Fall 2010 we launched a three-year Developmental Studies Initiative (DSI). The first year we analyzed institutional records and reviewed best practices; an action plan will be implemented in Fall Semester 2011 and integrated into a new Action Project to replace the one described above in item 2.

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

1. We have launched a total of eight new Action Projects (see Table 8R5.1), half of them directly related to Opportunities identified in the 2008 Feedback Report. Of the eight, five are completed, and three are on track to complete by the end of September 2011.
2. A new Action Project for 2011-2012 will focus on better understanding the needs and interests of part-time students; it will respond to feedback from our Quality Checkup Visit and carry forward issues raised by CCSSE data and prior work already done by a Senior Staff team (see 1R4, 3P1).
3. Evidence of our growing maturity as a CQI institution is the fact that we are now moving leadership of Action Projects out of Senior Staff level. Two of our three current Action Projects involve only Directors and staff. We expect all Projects in 2011-2012 to be similarly led and staffed.
4. The 2010 Quality Checkup Visit provided a valuable opportunity to engage employees at all levels in thinking and talking about our quality effort, and many participated in the open events with the Visit Team, helping them to understand better our commitment to AQIP and CQI.
5. We have carried out two employee surveys to measure overall organizational climate; results are discussed in Categories 4, 5 and 8 of the Portfolio. One item measures attitude toward CQI, and the mean response on a five-point scale rose from 3.54 in 2009 to 3.72 in 2011; we see that as evidence that CQI is steadily progressing from being just a Senior Staff initiative to something that more and more employees at all levels are seeing as useful.
6. We completed one internal update to *Systems Portfolio 2007* and placed online a full update to support the 2010 Quality Checkup Visit. *Systems Portfolio 2011* is also online in preparation for our 2011 Systems Appraisal.
7. The 2010 Update and the [2011](#) Portfolio have substantive Results sections for every Category, and nearly all Categories include not only internal but also comparative data. The Portfolio is becoming a central source of information about our processes and measures and how they improve.

8. We hold Strategic Planning Retreats annually and our ability to use information and zero in on truly strategic issues has improved greatly. Our 2011 Retreat provided a total review and a new Strategic Plan will be discussed with employees throughout Fall Semester 2011; it will focus tightly on our Mission and improve unity of effort. Some related measures are already in use under organizational health and effectiveness (see 8R1); they will be improved and additional measures developed over the coming academic year.
9. We ensure regular reporting on projects and measures and overall institutional health by use of a formal Planning Calendar (see Table 8P4.1)
10. All of our formal processes and chain of command assume that operating information flows up and down through the organization structure in a continuous feedback loop. Feedback on our Climate Survey and directly from employees to the President makes it clear that this is an area of improvement for us. In response, the President has instituted a personal Leadership/Communication initiative, designed to emphasize and role-model face-to-face interactions with employees at all levels. It involves a variety of interaction opportunities and formats, which are described fully in 5P7. Feedback to date shows very high approval on the part of participants, and results will be measured by the 2013 Climate Survey.
11. We now have in place an Institutional Effectiveness team led by a President who is well-informed about CQI and committed to continuously developing more sophisticated management skills across all levels. Our budget for the fiscal year ending June 2012 includes a full-time Institutional Effectiveness Director. We expect to fill the position before the end of Fall Semester, which will provide long-needed support to all our measurement and CQI efforts.

## **Conclusion**

The [2010 State of Quality](#) includes a list of eight priorities for the next five years. We have made good progress on those priorities over the past year, and with the addition of a full-time Institutional Effectiveness Director we expect to move forward strongly toward our goal of integrating CQI as a way of thinking about our institution and how we fulfill our Mission.