Higher Learning Commission
Academic Quality Improvement Program
Systems Portfolio Overview for Teams and Chapter Champions

The Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) is one of several pathways leading to accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. Others include the Open and Standard Pathways. AQIP differs from the other pathways in that it is premised on principles of continuous quality improvement, and its various processes and requirements are designed to assist institutions in achieving quality improvement, along with reaffirming the institution's accredited status with the Commission once every AQIP cycle. Many institutions have reported transforming their quality cultures since embarking on the AQIP Pathway.

One of the Academic Quality Improvement Program's (AQIP) core processes, the Systems Portfolio "describes key systems and processes the organization uses to achieve its goals and the performance results it obtains from them. During the first four years of participation, an organization assembles a Systems Portfolio with broad faculty and staff involvement. This document is essential for the Systems Appraisal that AQIP conducts three years after the organization is accepted to participate in AQIP. The Systems Portfolio consists of an *Organizational Overview* and explicates each of the major systems employed to accomplish an organization's mission and objectives. The organization answers specific questions for each of the nine AQIP Categories. For each system, the questions deal with context for analysis, processes, results, and improvement. The *Organizational Overview* presents a capsule picture that helps readers understand the organization's key strengths and ambitions, as well as the challenges and conflicts it faces."

The Systems Portfolio is a record of NWACC's activities with regard to the nine key processes of AQIP and acts as a

- high-quality, actionable feedback on NWACC's strengths & opportunities from a team of quality improvement experts and educators,
- body of evidence to show the Higher Learning Commission that NWACC is meeting its Criteria for Accreditation,
- common reference point that lets everyone at NWACC share an understanding of how we are organized, what are our key processes, what kind of performance those processes produce, and how we improve,
- planning tool that helps us share the institution's future agenda and concentrates everyone's attention on those areas that should be the focus for scrutiny for improvement, and
- body of evidence, over time, that AQIP is working to NWACC's advantage, and that our continued participation in the program makes sense, public information and relations tool that lets all of our stakeholders understand clearly and persuasively what we are accomplishing with our resources.

AQIP Categories

(1) Helping Students Learn

Identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This criterion focuses on the teaching-learning processes within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how the entire organization contributes to student learning and overall student development.

(2) Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of the mission.

(3) Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

Examines how the organization works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs.

(4) Valuing People

Explores commitment to the development of faculty, staff, and administrators, since the efforts of all are required for success.

(5) Leading and Communicating

Addresses how the leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide the organization in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment.

(6) Supporting Institutional Operations

Addresses the support processes that help provide an environment in which learning can thrive.

(7) Measuring Effectiveness

Examines how the organization collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement.

(8) Planning Continuous Improvement

Examines the planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping achieve the mission and vision.

(9) Building Collaborative Relationships

Examines the institution's relationships, current and potential, to ascertain how they contribute to the organization's ability to accomplish its mission.

Job Descriptions

Editors: Four key individuals will be responsible for editing and producing the final Systems Portfolio document.

Shauna Sterling, Executive Director of Grants and Institutional Effectiveness
Ricky Tompkins, Co-Chair of the Quality Council
Tim McGinn, Co-Chair of the Quality Council
Laura Cates, AQIP Reviewer

Chapter Champions: Lead the team in addressing an assigned category. Schedule meetings and provide progress and writing drafts to the Executive Director of Grants and Institutional Effectiveness. At the first meeting, assign a recorder. Purpose an agenda for each meeting using input from the team membership. Ensure that the meeting agenda and any relevant materials are distributed to all members of the team at least two working days prior to the meeting. Ensure that the team members have an equal opportunity to be heard regarding all issues. Maintain the focus on meeting topics and the team mission. **Be in constant communication with your Cabinet representative.** After each draft is reviewed Chapter Champions should indicate progress to date, how other staff have been involved, planned next steps, demonstrated results, and challenges for the future. After all drafts have been updated provide the final document.

General Responsibilities of the Systems Portfolio Teams: Team members will be asked to review previous AQIP documents (e.g. Action Projects, Systems Portfolio, Systems Appraisal, HLC Site Visit). Team members will be asked to understand and interpret the purpose of the nine AQIP categories, the five criteria for accreditation and the Systems Portfolio process. Conduct the gathering of all data needed to provide a thorough examination and evaluation according to the AQIP category. Assist with writing the respective sections of the Systems Portfolio document. Systems Portfolio teams are encouraged to consult with others to enhance their knowledge base for responding to questions.

Team Members: This process surveys every aspect of the College for its contribution to the core institutional goal of integrating the principles of continuous improvement into the culture of NWACC.

Each Systems Portfolio Team will write in-depth responses for context (C), processes (P), results (R), and improvement (I) questions for their assigned AQIP categories. Teams can decide how the questions will be answered—by assigning groups of questions to individuals or answering each question as a team. Documents related to previous Action Projects, Systems Portfolio, Systems Appraisal, HLC Site visit are located on the Institutional Effectiveness website.

Other responsibilities: Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive or controversial topics. Attend planned meetings. Members should contact the Chapter Champion

prior to the meeting if attendance is not possible. Contribute to the achievement of responding to the questions. Don't agree just to be agreeable. Ask for clarification.

Recorder: Provide a list of action items. For each item identify the description, who is responsible and the estimated completion date. Maintain minutes of all meetings in hard copy and in an appropriate electronic format. Distribute the minutes and action items for all meetings within five business days following the meeting. Provide a copy to the Executive Director of Grants and Institutional Effectiveness.

Category	Suggested # of Pages	Chapter Champions
(1) Helping Students Learn	**25**	Tim McGinn/LeAnn Caudle (Ricky Tompkins, Cabinet)
(2) Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	**10**	Amy Benincosa/Jean Anderson (Steven Hinds, Cabinet)
(3) Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	**15**	Brooke Holt (Todd Kitchen, Cabinet)
(4) Valuing People	**10**	Wendi Cadle/Beverly Hill (Debi Buckly, Cabinet)
(5) Leading and Communicating	**10**	Ethan Beckham/Debbie Miller (Steven Hines, Cabinet)
(6) Supporting Institutional Operations	**10**	Marcus Williams (Ricky Tompkins, Cabinet)
(7) Measuring Effectiveness	**10**	Rachel Parks (Ricky Tompkins, Cabinet)
(8) Planning Continuous Improvement	**10**	Aimee Barker/Lynda Lloyd (Debi Buckley, Cabinet)
(9) Building Collaborative Relationships	**10**	Jim Hall (Steve Gates, Cabinet)

2014 Systems Portfolio Timeline

Northwest Arkansas Community College
Adopted June 15, 2013
Revised October 22, 2013

Date	Item	Participant (s)
2012-2013	Determine Measures of Effectiveness for the Institution (MIE)	Quality Council
6.15.13	Determine Chapter Champions	S. Sterling, R. Tompkins
6.15.13/11.12.13	Determine process related to reporting MIE and key focus of each chapter (if warranted)	S. Sterling/ Dr. J./ Cabinet
11.12.13	Update data related to MIE and tables in 2013 Systems Portfolio	IR
11.18.13	Chapter Champions submit names of writing team members to Executive Director of Grants and Institutional Effectiveness	Chapter Champions
12.10.13	Teams meet to develop action items and delegate writing and research responsibilities	Chapter Champions/ Team Members/ Recorder
1.15.14	First chapter drafts due	Chapter Champions/ Team Members
1.17.14	Initial review of content	Editors/Quality Council
1.22.14	Editors' meeting	Editors
1.27.14	Editors' review of draft competed	Editors
1.28.14	Return to Chapter Champions and Team members for revisions	S. Sterling
2.15.14	Revisions made by teams and returned to Exec. Director	Chapter Champions
2.14	Continual review of (OO, O items) Requests from teams - clarification/additional information needed	Editors
2.15.14	Distribute draft to Cabinet	S. Sterling, R. Tompkins
2.27.14	Draft revisions/feedback due from Cabinet	Cabinet
2.28.14	Revisions added and submitted to Quality Council	S. Sterling, R. Tompkins, Quality Council
3.28.14	Continual review of content final draft due from Editors	Chapter Champions/ Team Members
4.1.14	Final draft forwarded for review	Dr. Jorgenson/Cabinet
4.15.14	Final draft feedback due	Dr. Jorgenson/Cabinet
4.17.14	Editors' meeting for final review	Editors
5.1.14	Systems Portfolio copied to e-folio	S. Sterling
5.5.14	Available via e-folio for NWACC community feedback	NWACC Community
5.15.14	Final copy adjustments	S. Sterling, R. Tompkins
5.17.14	Editors' meeting	Editors
5.20.14	Prepare Systems Portfolio for submission	S. Sterling
6.1.14	Deadline to submit the Systems Portfolio	S. Sterling