AQIP Systems Portfolio

Category Six - Quality Overview

Category Six Overview

Midstate College completed a systems portfolio in 2007 and a second in 2011. Each time the College moves through the accreditation cycle, we increase our systems maturity. As we embark upon completing our 2016 Systems Portfolio, we found our processes to be more aligned and our results have moved toward being systematic.

The College's quality improvement program drives our commitment to continuous improvement, a healthy maturation of our institutional processes, and data-driven results for providing a culture for quality.

Midstate College's quality improvement program is managed by the AQIP Core Team and is directed by the President with assistance from the College's Higher Learning Accreditation Liaison Officer (Dean of Academics). The organization has embraced continuous quality improvement as paramount to the improvement and success of the institution. The AQIP Core Team is comprised of leaders from all major departmental areas. This cross-functional team meets regularly to facilitate progress in the quality improvement program and provides a forum for on-going communication.

The College uses action projects, in conjunction with our Strategic Initiatives, to promote continuous quality improvement. Our processes and results for declaring and retiring action projects are deeply intertwined throughout our culture, and, because of this, employees are motivated to create positive change.

We have many strategies and processes in place to ensure that continuous quality improvement is widely understood and is impacting our internal operations. The College continues to learn from our continuous quality improvement initiatives.

We are proud to share our results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey, which display that our focus on continuous quality improvement is well understood and valued within our institution. Further, our results show that employees feel that our Mission and Institutional Objectives are aligned and that their suggestions help to make improvements to the College. This information supports our aligned maturity level for quality improvement processes.

Our Strategic Plan, action projects, budget, Academic and Administrative Program Review, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Academic Performance Indicators (APIs), and accrediting bodies are all aligned through our continuous improvement program to promote a culture of quality.

While our processes for the aforementioned entities are at the aligned maturity level, as we grow as an Institution, our results are systematic. Data in regard to our quality culture is collected and archived, and the results are beginning to break down silos in our Institution.

Subcategory One: Quality Improvement Initiatives

6P1: Processes

Selecting, deploying, and evaluating quality improvement initiatives:

Action projects serve as the foundational vehicle for our system of continuous improvement. Midstate selects quality improvement initiatives related to action projects in the following ways: strategic planning, budgeting processes, reviewing accreditation recommendations, garnering feedback from stakeholders, and using Academic and Administrative Program Review data. The Midstate action project development

process is also driven by feedback via the accreditation process as well as internal formal and informal communication processes, while the AQIP Core Team manages project implementation and progress. Quality improvement initiatives are deployed as part of the formal strategic plan and through the declaration of action projects. Departmental goals encompass more targeted quality improvement initiatives.

In Figure 6P1.1, we demonstrate the alignment of our planning process with an on-going cycle of assessment and feedback. Using the collaborative processes referred to in the Strategic Planning Cycle in Figure 4P2.1, as well as the Strategic Planning Framework in Figure 4P2.2, we are able to coordinate and align planning processes and strategies with our Mission and Institutional Objectives. The continual work of the AQIP Core is vital to keeping each of these components connected and in facilitating improvement throughout the Institution. [See Figure 6P1.1]

Figure 6P1.1: Alignment of Planning Processes
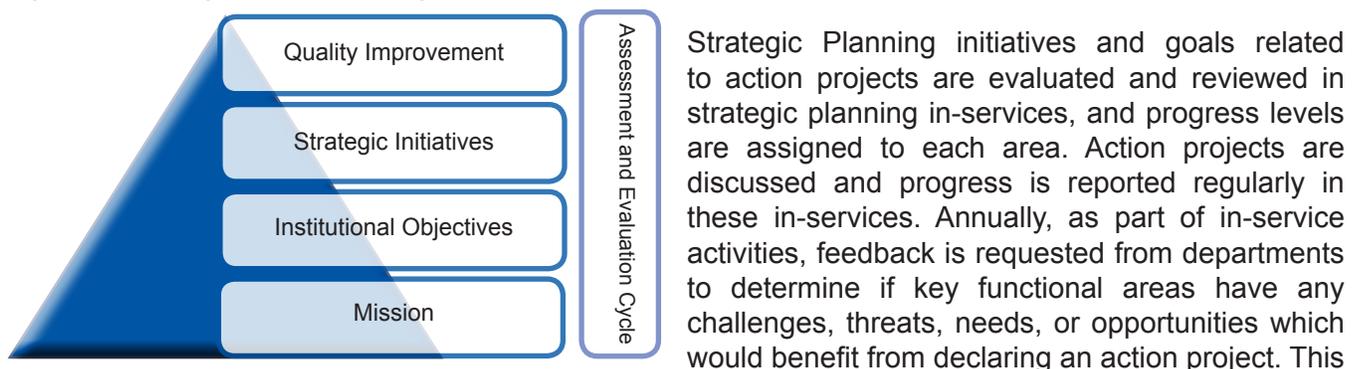
Strategic Planning initiatives and goals related to action projects are evaluated and reviewed in strategic planning in-services, and progress levels are assigned to each area. Action projects are discussed and progress is reported regularly in these in-services. Annually, as part of in-service activities, feedback is requested from departments to determine if key functional areas have any challenges, threats, needs, or opportunities which would benefit from declaring an action project. This information is reviewed and processed by the AQIP Core team before new action projects are declared or recommendations are made for new strategic planning initiatives. Action project updates are reported to internal constituencies through e-newsletters and at in-services. (5.D)

6R1: Results

Action project retirement and declaration occurs on an ongoing basis in synchronicity with strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts. As a part of our process through 2013, the Category Improvement Teams convened to work on processing the feedback from the 2012 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. As part of this work, the following action projects were declared: Faculty Growth and Development, Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Student Retention, and Meeting Stakeholder Needs.

As of 2014, we engage all faculty and staff and request their recommendations for future action projects as part of annual strategic planning; this information is processed and becomes part of selecting and creating action projects. We've aligned action projects with our strategic initiatives to communicate the role of quality improvement in our Institution. To date, Midstate has initiated 19 action projects, 16 of which have been successfully completed and three are currently active. [See Figure 6R1.1] Action projects serve as the key continuous improvement activities for the College; thus, the effort put into planning, supporting, and maintaining the best practices that come out of the projects is critical to the Institutions planning processes. We are a lean Institution, with AQIP incorporated deeply in our culture.

Figure 6R1.1: Current and Retired Action Projects

New AQIP Category	Old AQIP Category	Action Project	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Develop a Master Course Schedule That Supports Sequential Learning	D	A	A	A	R								
4 - Planning and Leading	5 - Leading and Communicating	Leading and Improving Communication Processes Throughout the Organization	D	A	A	R									
6 - Quality Overview	8 - Measuring Effectiveness	Comprehensive Evaluation and Improvement of Assessment Processes	D	A	A	A	R								
2 - Meeting Stakeholder Needs	9 - Building Collaborative Relationships	Fostering Relationships with Area Businesses and Organizations	D	A	A	R									
2 - Meeting Stakeholder Needs	9 - Building Collaborative Relationships	Developing Educational Initiatives in Collaboration with Other Institutions				D	A	R							
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Faculty Orientation Program that Supports Good Teaching						D	A	A	R				
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Implementing a Revised Assessment Evaluation, Reporting and Feedback Cycle						D	A	R					
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Define and Initiate an Academic Support System Promoting Student Success							D	A	R				
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Aligning Course Objectives							D	A	R				
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Developing a Prior Learning Assessment Program								D	R				
3 - Valuing Employees	4 - Valuing People	Faculty Growth and Development									D	R			
5 - Knowledge Management	6 - Supporting Institutional Operations	Revising and Implementing Electronic Data-Entry Standards for Academic Records									D	R			
6 - Quality Overview	7 - Measuring Effectiveness	Evaluating Data Systems and Defining Needs for Measuring Effectiveness									D	A	R		
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Improvement of Academic Program Review Cycle										D	R		
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Refining General Education										D	A	R	
2 - Meeting Stakeholder Needs	3 - Understanding Stakeholder's Needs	Defining Key Community Partners' Needs and Strategies for Action											D	A	R
2 - Meeting Stakeholder Needs	1 - Helping Students Learn	The Growth and Diversification of the Student Population through the Enrollment of International Students												D	A
2 - Meeting Stakeholder Needs	1 - Helping Students Learn	Defining and Improving Retention Strategies												D	A
1 - Helping Students Learn	1 - Helping Students Learn	Improving Academic Assessment													D

D = Declared　　A = Active　　R = Retired

6I1: Improvements

We have made many improvements to our culture of quality improvement over the last five years. Quite significantly, we have seen an increase in employee awareness of AQIP and the importance of quality improvement in our Institution. Midstate continues to facilitate planning activities to purposefully engage our staff, faculty, students, Board of Directors, and stakeholders, both internal and external, in continuous improvement.

Through ongoing continuous quality improvement efforts of the AQIP Core committee, retired action projects continue to drive process improvements. [See Figure 6I1.1]

Figure 6I1.1: Examples of Retired Action Projects: Improvements

Action Projects	Examples of Improvements
Develop a Master Course Schedule That Supports Sequential Learning	Revamped process in 2014 and setup another three year scheduling by department; scheduled for another process revision and setup of another three year schedule by department starting in 2017.
Leading and Improving Communication Processes Throughout the Organization	Completed annual employee communication surveys. Surveys were completed annually for several years; after seeing duplicative results the process and results were analyzed and the decision was made to change the survey cycle to every three years; the last survey was completed in 2016.
Fostering Relationships with Area Businesses and Organizations	In 2016 revised business outreach plan and set targets.
Developing Educational Initiatives in Collaboration with Other Institutions	Processes in place to meet up to four times annually to review and update educational relationships and articulation agreements.
Faculty Orientation Program that Supports Good Teaching	On-going training annually in faculty meetings.
Define and Initiate an Academic Support System Promoting Student Success	Setup processes for the Student Success department; continues to expand impact, measure success, and expand services.
Aligning Course Objectives	Process put in place to ensure that all course and program changes received approval through the curriculum and assessment committees after submitting Course and Program change forms; in 2015 the College updated Course and Program change forms.
Developing a Prior Learning Assessment Program	Prior Learning Assessment Program implemented and revised several times since program instituted in 2012; program has been updated annually within the Catalog update cycle.
Faculty Growth and Development	Revised several times since the 2013 pilot was initiated; the following faculty ranks have been bestowed: Professor (1), Adjunct Professor (1), Associate Professor (3), Adjunct Senior Instructor (1).
Revising and Implementing Electronic Data-Entry Standards for Academic Records	Created a process and set standards which created a foundation which allows for easy creation of other electronic modes in the Gateway; processes continue to improve and new data sets are created quarterly.
Improvement of Academic Program Review Cycle	Increase in curriculum updates and improvements since pilot was started in 2014.

Subcategory Two: Culture of Quality

6P2: Processes

Developing an infrastructure and providing resources to support a culture of quality:

The College's process for supporting a culture of quality begins with showing how we promote continuous improvement for institutional effectiveness. Figure 6P2.1 demonstrates how the College uses the Strategic Plan, action projects, budget, Academic and Administrative Program Reviews, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Academic Performance Indicators (APIs), and accrediting bodies' metric targets and requirements to promote a culture of quality. (5.D, 5.D.1)

Figure 6P2.1: Continuous Improvement for Institutional Effectiveness

A large portion of the infrastructure that supports our quality improvement culture is the annual strategic planning process and cycle, as outlined in 4P2; our budgeting process, as outlined in 5P3; action projects, as outlined in 6P1; and KPIs, as outlined in Figure 5I1.3. Additionally, functional areas that tend to be more ancillary to our process for continuous improvement for institutional effectiveness include program review, accrediting bodies, and APIs, as further described in Category 1. (5.D.1)

As noted in 5I1, the College formalized the Institutional Research (IR) department when we determined that we had a need for a central location in the area of data analysis and reporting. 5P1 outlines many of the reports and processes currently used by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, administration, and individual departments within the College to make data-driven decisions. It also describes how individuals and departments are able to request additional data as the need arises. 5P2 and 5P3 explain the processes the College uses to allocate available resources in order to support the College's Mission and Strategic Plan. 6P1 outlines the importance and use of action projects in the College's system of continuous improvement. We recognize that not all improvements need to be accomplished as a formal action project, and we encourage individual departments to set goals and achieve them in the manner that is best suited to the goal and department.

Ensuring continuous quality improvement is widely understood, making an impact on culture operations, and learning from continuous quality improvement initiatives:

The College implements the following strategies and tactics to integrate quality improvement into everyday operations (5.D.1):

• Encouraging employees in areas where processes were improved or created from action projects to continue that growth and improvement;

- Categorizing Strategic Planning Initiatives to show the areas of focus for all strategic goals. Culture supports regular discussion of strategic goal progress. Our process promotes improvements through regular reporting to internal stakeholders of process levels;

- Promoting quality review and updates annually for the Catalog and Student Handbook;

- Convening academic and administrative program review;

- Conducting AQIP/Strategic Planning In-services combined to keep focus on the alignment of the two and work toward ensuring facutly and staff understand AQIP and our continuous improvement program;

- Promoting a culture of data driven decisions through the leadership of the President, Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and Executive Finance Committee;

- Encouraging a quality culture through the effective process of "Plan-Do-Review".

Reviewing, reaffirming and understanding the role and vitality of the AQIP pathway:

Due to our strong culture of quality improvement, all in-services and employee newsletters feature information about AQIP. As displayed in our in-service survey results, 71 percent of our staff and faculty feel they have a better understanding of AQIP, which shows that continuous quality improvement is widely understood throughout our Institution. Further, our action project cycle, as outlined in Figure 6I1.1, reflects that continuous improvements occur through the format and structure of retired action projects. (5.D.2)

6R2: Results

We use the Employee Satisfaction Survey to determine our quality improvement endeavors are understood by our employees and whether they feel their suggestions are used to improve our Institution. When benchmarked against comparison groups, Midstate College employees are significantly more satisfied with their understanding and alignment of Institutional goals with the Mission. Additionally, employees at our Institution feel that their involvement in quality improvement is making more of a difference when compared to employees at our peer institutions. [See Figures 4R1.2, 6R2.1]

Figure 6R2.1: Employee Satisfaction Survey Results as Related to Quality

	Midstate College	Comparison Group	
Campus Culture and Policies	**SAT Mean**	**SAT Mean**	**Differential**
Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution	4.08	3.31	+0.77
Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution	3.85	2.93	+0.92

6I2: Improvements

Due to the nature of our continuous improvement program, the improvements in the context of our culture for quality improvement are reflected throughout this document. Our quality culture and operations improvements in regard to our annual strategic planning process and cycle are outlined in the improvements section in Category 4; our budgeting process in the improvements section of Category 5; our action projects are outlined in Category 6; and our KPIs are outlined in Figure 5I1.1. Additionally, as shown in Category 1, improvements have been made through academic program review and academic assessment, use of Academic Performance Indicators by program, and increased program accreditation approvals. (5.D.1, 5.D.2)

While the College tends to be systematic for our processes in reviewing, reaffirming, and understanding the role and vitality of AQIP at Midstate, we are interested in improving in order to make our results aligned. As we grow as an AQIP institution, we learn the importance of repeatable processes with measurable, explicit goals. As such, this is an area of growth and improvement.