[A]. Describe the past year’s accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Describe concrete achievements: meetings, data gathered and analyzed, plans made or implemented, changes in processes, and measured results. If you haven’t made much progress, explain why you think things are moving slower than planned.

The Degree Audit Team has met regularly since a decision was made to re-examine the purchase of Conclusive Systems software. To date, the Team has:

- Reconciled differences over software systems preferences and “turf” issues between departments
- Used quality tools to define current DA systems and analyze the current workflow
- Systematically reviewed Conclusive Systems and Datatel Degree Audit with live demonstrations by vendors and consultation with users at other institutions
- Recommended Datatel Degree Audit software to Executive Cabinet (approved)
- Solicited proposal from Enertron (as opposed to Datatel) for development and training; selected Enertron as the programming vendor
- Met with representatives from Enertron to discuss programming of MCC degree requirements into Degree Audit
- Integrated new team members from Information Systems for implementation stage
- Designed a look and feel compatible with MCC’s online style and WebAdvisor
- Designation of point person to work with Enertron (Registrar)
- Designation of point person for communication & training plan (faculty Counselor)

Review (09-27-07):
From this reviewer’s own experience, when students take the wrong course it has a profound negative effect on their persistence and feelings of connection to the college. I congratulate you, therefore, on your selection of a very significant project that should impact your students’ persistence and success. Besides helping students learn, your project also involves category #3, understanding students’ needs. Additionally, your reconciling of turf differences involves category #5 (leading and communicating) and should help improve the operation of your college beyond this project. If accurate course selection is your goal, you may need to consider the interface of career/major decision making with course selection. Your efforts to improve the technical processes are significant, but to achieve true success in course selection this reviewer believes you will have to understand your students career undecided ness and or major changing and how you can impact these factors influencing student course selection.

[B]. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

AQIP wants Information about motivation and communication: how you kept this Project on the institution’s priority list, how you maintained general awareness of the
importance and progress of the Project, and how you kept those working on it directly active and motivated.

Unlike the other two current Action Projects, the Degree Audit Team has primarily involved employees who work with the registration, advising, and curriculum processes at the college, as well as the technical information systems staff/department. After the completion of programming and migration, a larger and more representative group of stakeholders—including students—will be engaged. To date, those involved have:

- Strengthened relationships between Registrar, Academic Affairs, Counseling and Student Development, and Information Systems.
- Utilized a letter from President encouraging all employees to be responsive to the time-sensitive questions and needs from the AP Team as it worked with Enertron to build the degree audit programming.
- Developed a rich body of web-based resources on the team’s work processes, including meeting minutes, agendas, resources from other institutions, etc. on the central AQIP website; demonstrations of these web-based resources to internal college groups including supervisors, managers, etc.

Review (09-27-07):
I certainly applaud your efforts to improve communication (category 5). To be successful, your project has to involve all stakeholders particularly the registrar and advising staff as well as the academic affairs people who develop your curriculum.

[C]. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

Be specific about the next critical steps you are planning to move the Action Project ahead. If your planning is vague or there is no planning at this point, explain why.

All MCC Action Projects periodically rate their progress along the seven CQI steps. The Degree Audit Team is currently at Step 5, Implement Best Strategies. Upcoming planned steps include:

- Programming has progressed and is nearly completed as of July, 2007
- Meeting will be held mid-August with Enertron reps present to provide a demo on the work completed.
- Complete the build of our 2004 paper college catalog in the Datatel Degree Audit software
- Build subsequent catalog years based upon CPSC (MCC’s academic governance body which approves program and curriculum requirements) changes
- MCC degree requirements as programmed to be tested, running student records against the Degree Audit requirements.
- Internal rollout of preliminary Degree Audit system to advisors, counselors, and registrars staff in late Fall 2007
- Develop training materials and job aids for faculty, staff and students
- Schedule of training/open lab sessions
- Programming has progressed and is nearly completed as of July, 2007
• Meeting will be held mid-August with Enertron reps present to provide a demo on the work completed.
• MCC degree requirements as programmed to be tested, running student records against the Degree Audit requirements.
• Develop plan for ongoing evaluation and updating of Degree Audit system
• The team is certain to remain at Step 5 through the end of the Fall semester.

Review (09-27-07):
This reviewer is very impressed with your delineating of needed steps to completion. It is an example of very good planning. If your institution is like mine, your student service people have busy times. Hopefully your college has budgeted for extra help to enable your staff to devote adequate time to this very worthwhile project. If your people are getting around to this project “when they can” it may stall and you can not let this happen.

[D]. Describe any “effective practice(s)” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Share practices (or processes, policies, procedures, or initiatives) that could be adopted or adapted at other institutions. AQIP is most interested in practices that would give value (better educational services, cost-savings, improved morale, more satisfied stakeholders, etc.) to another institution if they copied your innovation. If you believe that your work on this Project has little or no value for other institutions, explain why.

While the Degree Audit Team is not completed with “results,” two effective practices have emerged which may be of interest to institutions considering a migration to Datatel’s Degree Audit.
• Specifically related to Datatel’s Colleague Degree Audit, we determined that an external vendor was preferable to engaging Datatel for the conversion as well as attempting to do it ourselves
• Effectively used the President’s Office to communicate the urgency of responding to inquires by Degree Audit Team to build the new system

Review (09-27-07):
Regarding your first listed effective practice, it coincides with this reviewer’s experience. External vendors are often more helpful. Secondly, utilizing the president’s office to communicate can be effective but guard against over utilizing this resource for fear of irritating people who might think you were going around them. It requires considerable political savvy to know when to employ the president’s office.

[E]. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it.
Creation of MCC Programs and Requirements in the new degree audit system will take considerable coordination of effort. Remaining challenges include:

- Continued coordination of communication efforts between Enertron, MCC-MIS and the Academic and Student Services as programming work progresses
- Accurate information about curriculum details must be quickly found and interpreted for Enertron; questions must be answered promptly
- Job aids and employee training must be developed
- A final “rollout” and training plan must be developed (employees and students)
- Criteria for evaluation of results need to be determined
- Sponsor, who was also a member of the EC, left the college to accept another position in the Summer of 2007, and a new sponsor was identified who will need to be briefed on this team’s progress thus far.
- The Team must work to maintain a standing schedule of meetings, tasks, and deadlines with attendance by all team members

Review (09-27-07):
Your assessment of the significant challenges is dead-on. The success of your very beneficial project will depend on your quick response to Enertron questions. I would suggest having this duty shared between staff. In doing so, if one person was absent, the other person could respond and not delay your response to Enertron. Carefully pick people who have exhibited the inclination to work in teams and can communicate effectively interpersonally.