

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PROJECT TEAM
2008 ANNUAL UPDATE [w/ AQIP REVIEWER COMMENTS – 10/1/08]**

[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.

Since the last annual update, the Team overcame a significant hurdle and moved from struggling to define the current situation to implementing best strategies. Visits to other institutions to gather best practices were completed; an analysis of all campus collective bargaining agreements for language on professional development was performed; and an inventory of currently-offered professional development activities was completed. The Team completed its analysis of the current situation and developed an improvement theory in the form of a proposed solution.

In January of 2008, The Team presented its proposed solution to the President and Executive Cabinet (EC). The primary components of the Team's recommendation were:

- Create a centralized professional development program
- Hire a director and provide administrative support
- Assign appropriate budget
- Assign appropriate space and provide appropriate furnishings
- Assemble an advisory council

The Team's presentation to the Executive Cabinet is archived here:

http://www.mcc.edu/aqip/aqip_actproj_profdev.shtml

The President and EC accepted the Team's recommendation and the Vice President for Academic Affairs has begun the process of implementing the solution. A physical space for the center has been established; a faculty "coordinator" has been assigned; an interim Executive Dean of Professional Development has been appointed.

Review (09-28-08):

The MCC Action Project Team has made significant progress toward meeting its goals for Valuing People through this project. Through its visits to other institutions, review of campus collective bargaining agreements and inventory for available professional development opportunities the team has gathered information critical to developing sound recommendations. The team has made successful presentations to key campus decision-makers resulting in implementation of several of their proposed solutions and more to come. Congratulations on securing a space for the Center and resources for a position devoted to professional development. Your visits to other campuses built some bridges that will contribute to your efforts at Building Collaborative Relationships.

[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.

The Team has continued to involve college employees from academic areas, as well as other non-academic areas such as facilities, in its work and processes. During every phase, the Team has revisited its charge to “implement a system that supports and encourages professional development and provides opportunities to improve the knowledge, skill, and abilities of *all employees.*” As reported in the 2007 annual update, activity and motivation were a challenge for this Team as it struggled to make progress in the early stages of the CQI process. Team leaders worked directly with their sponsor to address these complications. The all-day retreats and facilitator relationship described in [D] below did much to address and alleviate those struggles. In addition, the Team continues to maintain a rich body of web-based resources on its work processes, including meeting minutes, agendas, resources from other institutions, etc. on the central AQIP web site. Presentations on the Team’s progress were made at the 2007-2008 Faculty Welcome Back Meeting and All Employee Kickoff, the MCC Leadership Group, Executive Cabinet meetings, and the regular Board of Trustees meetings.

Review (09-28-08):

All-day retreats with the outside facilitator have served to generate and maintain energy for the project; development of web-based resources for documenting the project’s progress and presentations to a number of campus employee groups and decision-makers have kept the project visible to the campus community and provided opportunities for input from a variety of campus constituents. By providing these opportunities for participation and establishing multiple ways all College employees can stay informed about the project, MCC has demonstrated that it understands employees needs as stakeholders. Furthermore, these events contribute to Leading and Communicating as they have provided opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership skills.

[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.

While a great deal of the Team’s recommendation has been implemented, a few steps remain. One step is the formation of an “advisory council” for the professional development function. In its presentation, the Team specified that this body should be comprised of cross-functional, cross-campus employees to provide support and input to the center and director. Further, the Team specified that the council might have a rotating membership and left the time of service to be determined.

A second step is the selection of measurements/indicators to indicate growth, change, and improvement in professional development activities across campus. The Team did not wish to “micromanage” or specify these in advance, but rather left them to be determined by the leadership of the new center and advisory council.

In addition to these two elements, the Team also specified the following future steps related to the implantation of its proposed solution:

- Linkage to the MCC Strategic Plan
- A published list of terms/definitions related to professional development
- A communications plan to introduce the center to the college community
- A web presence for the center
- A guarantee of confidentiality for participants
- Training for supervisors in the use of the center [200 words]

Review (09-28-08):

While the Team’s plans for next steps are well-defined and sequenced, it may be useful to develop a rationale for its choices about which decisions and actions are to be left to the new leadership of the Center and its Advisory Council. As responsibilities for leading are transferred from the Team to the Executive Dean of Professional Development and the Council, it will be important to clarify roles and expectations.

[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.

The most effective practice developed by the Team was the development of a significant relationship with an external facilitator under the direction of its sponsor. The Team’s external facilitator, Dr. Helen Burnstad, is the Director Emeritus of Staff and Organizational Development at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS. Her many years of work at JCCC, as well as national organizations such as the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NCSPOD), and the Professional Organizational Development Network (POD), constituted a wealth of information for the Team. In addition to providing an outsider’s objectivity to group facilitation, Dr. Burnstad was able to provide an overview of current best practices in the area of institution-wide professional and organizational development efforts in higher education. The two all-day retreats facilitated by Dr. Burnstad, in addition to her ongoing consultation with Team leaders, was the primary reason the Team was able to regain its momentum and complete the tasks involved Step 2 (Define the current situation), Step 3 (Analyze the current situation), and Step 4 (Develop an improvement theory).

The use of an external facilitator, especially one with subject matter expertise on the project at hand, is highly recommended by the Team.

Review (09-28-08):

Working with an external facilitator has proven to be a very wise move for the successful development of the project. The facilitator has ignited and directed the Team's energies without usurping the Team's decision-making responsibilities or undermining the collaborative nature of successful CQI processes.

[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.

Because this is MCC's first Action Project Team to implement a Step 5 solution, the primary challenge is to effectively manage Step 6 (Monitor results) and Step 7 (Adjust, standardize, plan further) of the CQI process. To a large extent, these tasks will be transferred from the Team to the leadership of the newly-created center and the yet-to-be-formed advisory council.

In particular, the selection and tracking of professional development indicators will be crucial for monitoring the success of the new center and its activities. The center will need to be able to answer questions similar to those raised in the "process" and "results" section of the AQIP Systems Portfolio, such as:

- How do you determine key issues related to professional development for employees in instructional and non-instructional programs?
- What measures of professional development do you collect and analyze regularly?
- What is the evidence that your professional development opportunities meet the organization's needs?
- How do you coordinate and align your professional development opportunities across your organization's various levels?

As a relatively new AQIP institution, MCC will need to pay close attention to the two final steps of the CQI process, as these steps are often overlooked .

Review (09-28-08):

As mentioned in "C" above, it is critically important that the Team clarify which responsibilities for monitoring results and long-range planning will be assigned to the full-time staff of the Center, which will belong to the Advisory Committee, and which must be carried out by the Team itself before the project can be said to be completed. This clarification will be critical to success in Measuring Effectiveness.