

AQIP Category 8 – Planning Continuous Improvement

Processes (P)

[8P3]. How do you develop key action plans to support your organizational strategies?

CFO/Accounting

- Ensure A/F is represented on strategic teams. Reps bring back info to Dir/CFO or Staff depending on the level of action required. Staff are experienced and empowered to manage position-specific actions.
- “Natural” functional teams e.g. payroll & accountant.
- Monthly full- staff meetings.
- Ad hoc task team reviews.
- Timelines can be formal e.g. Datatel Budget Module.
- Team – bring back action plan to department.
- Staff empowered within area of responsibility.

[8P4]. How do you coordinate and align your planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across your organization’s various levels?

CFO/Accounting

- CFO/Director act at EC level, ad hoc teams are formed to address specific initiatives. Cross-trained collaborative staff behaviors are deliberately fostered.
- First? How does this affect within our department?
- Second? How does this affect others in institution?
- Overarching plans work thru department teams.
- Staff pairings – backups.
- Cross-functional training.
- Monthly meetings – official and ad hoc.
- Tools used: formal and informal timelines.

[8P5]. How do you define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for your organizational strategies and action plans?

CFO/Accounting

- Providing information is only ½ the work - customers don’t use the information provided e.g. improving service is very hard to measure, develop measurement methods.
- Annual Strategic Goals contain these – this formal process is limited in its usefulness - formal, static processes are not easy to do, should be limited to one or two/year.
- Actual actions are more fluid and need to be re-visited.
- Recognize, anticipate and respond to the needs of the college.
- Higher education environment – hard to measure effectiveness.
- Annual Strategic Initiatives (forced.)
 - “official” per EC requirement.
 - “un-official” as needed.
- Difficulty in selecting measurement systems.

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Processes (P)

[8P6]. How do you link strategy selection and action plans, taking into account levels of current resources and future needs?

CFO/Accounting

- Identify areas to improve, e.g. grant reports and quarterly grant meetings.
- Quantify time on task, must be aware of other institutional process and the inter-dependencies.
- Reacting to other's actions drives a lot of work.
- Monthly tasks & additional work & "would like to..."
 - Driven by resources.
 - Shifting duties.
 - Adjusting deliverables.

[8P7]. How do you assess and address risk in your planning processes?

CFO/Accounting

- Quantify/Identify who has the area of expertise.
- Let staff have input and make immediate decision as needed.
- Look at shifting duties to accommodate ad hoc.
- Internally defined work needs.
- \$, Audits, Internal controls, conflict of interest are examined.
- Use deadlines to "reverse engineer" the work that is needed.
- What can happen if...is inherent in the A/F work.
- Assess whose area is responsible?
- Discussion with team.
- Risk: handling money.
 - Audit irregularities.
 - Conflict of interest.
 - Internal control.
- Assessing risk is natural part of the planning process.
- Awareness of other college functions, schedules.

[8P8]. How do you ensure that you will develop and nurture faculty, staff and administrator capabilities to address changing requirements demanded by your organizational strategies and action plans?

CFO/Accounting

- Improve communication techniques.
- Foster culture of support and service to the college.

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Results (R)

[8R1]. What measures of the effectiveness of your planning processes and systems do you collect and analyze regularly?

CFO/Accounting

- Outcomes of projects successful or unsuccessful.
- Deadlines met – or not met.
- Balanced accounts, capital outlay & investment schedules – daily, weekly, monthly and annual reviews.
- Executive leadership review of 7 year forecast.
- Cash flow review 2 – 3 times weekly.
- Quarterly x/yearly review of 7 year forecast.
- Treasurer's report.
- Investment schedule.
- Capital outlay reports.

[8R2]. What are your performance results for accomplishing your organizational strategies and action plans?

CFO/Accounting

- Paychecks produced.
- Audits clean.
- Fund balances maintained.
- Compliance w/ regulations/laws.
- Everyone gets paid.
- Vendors get paid.
- Regulation compliance.

[8R3]. What are your projections or targets for performance of your strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years?

CFO/Accounting

- Monitor property tax and state revenue levels, changes.
- Improved communication from A/F to organization regarding processes, staff quality and commitment, need for actions that are taken.
- Maintain balances budget with decreasing revenues.

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Results (R)

[8R4]. How do your results of the performance of your processes for Planning Continuous Improvement compare with the performance results of other higher education organizations and, if appropriate, or organization outside of higher education?

CFO/Accounting

- ACS Databook (other MI Community Colleges.)
- GASB entities, e.g. governmentally funded.
- Specific budgeting and/or bargaining needs drive the acquisition of comparative data.
- May do research/benchmarking as part of a specific project/task.
- MCC could/should be the benchmark.

[8R5]. What is the evidence that your system for Planning Continuous Improvement is effective? How do you measure and evaluate your planning processes and activities?

CFO/Accounting

- Annual department objectives matched up against College's Strategic Plan and the results of.
- No formal method for planning continuous improvement.

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Improvement (I)

[8I1]. What recent improvements have you made in this category? How systematic and comprehensive are your processes and performance results for Planning Continuous Improvement?

CFO/Accounting

- Quarterly and annual reviews of annual objectives including adjusting timelines.
- Quarterly review of improvement plans.
- Assessment prior to annual planning process.

[8I2]. How do your culture and infrastructure help you to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in Planning Continuous Improvement?

CFO/Accounting

- Normal data review is built into the culture.
- All staff routinely scan for areas to improve e.g. DVP & BPO process improvement.
- Department culture of trust and shared responsibility lets all staff make modifications and improvement "on the fly."
- Data assessment.
- Inherently looking for ways to improve processes.
- Flat organizational structure encourages improvement thinking.