[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 has:

- Held regularly scheduled meetings
- Archived team’s work on MCC’s AQIP web page
- Developed an implementation rollout/training plan
- Tested, analyzed, and repaired the programming completed to date

A number of factors have slowed the group’s progress and prolonged the implementation timeline:

- Personnel changes, including the departure of the Team’s sponsor, the Executive Director of Information Systems, and the primary IS programmer assigned to the project.
- The discovery of significant data integrity issues within the Curriculum module; specifically, course master records had been overwritten, resulting in loss of historical database references
- A major system conversion and competing programming projects, including an additional project being performed by the same vendor (Enertron).
- The discovery of a problem with the recognition of transfer credits in the new release of Datatel

In response to the challenges above, the President assigned a Vice President as sponsor; one of the Team members has assumed the role of Chief Technology Officer; Academic Affairs staff have worked with others to correct the Curriculum module errors; a sub-group of this team was assigned to work with the vendor to expedite and complete the remaining programming.

Review (09-13-08):
Even though there have been setbacks with your project, the team and institution appears committed to continuing the project. Actually the errors in the curriculum module findings may be frustrating but are a blessing in disguise as you pursue your project and correct the challenges. Your ability to adapt to these temporary setbacks will help as you proceed with implementation. It is obvious you are working for the best of your students (helping students learn #1) but are also concerned about your employees at the college (valuing people # 4).

[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 selected a diverse group of college employees to attend training in the Degree Audit and Curriculum modules. Participants will include employees from Academic Affairs and Student Services; representatives from non-credit functions will also be included. In addition to training, the Team has a detailed training and rollout plan to engage the stakeholders of the new Degree Audit system once it is developed. The plan first engages Student Services employees, Program Coordinators, and Advisors; the second phase of training will engage a more comprehensive group of college employees; finally, students will be systematically engaged with the most effective training methods, as they are the primary stakeholders of the system. Training materials will be archived in an online format (e.g. printable guides, short tutorial videos, etc.). Presentations on the Team’s progress were made at the 2007-2008 Welcome Back meeting, the MCC Leadership Group, Executive Cabinet meetings, and the regular Board of Trustees meetings; in addition, presentations were made at the annual Student Services and Academic Advisors retreats. To avoid becoming discouraged by the setbacks, the Team has focused on the opportunity to improve the data housed in the Curriculum module as an added benefit of this quality process.

Review (09-13-08):
B. The team has been adaptable in its planning and has included a diverse group of employees to continue with the training. Having the Student Service personnel, Program Coordinators, and advisors trained first will allow a wide variety of individuals to disperse and teach others. One thought to consider is to develop modules online for future use as you progress through the training. That way those who learn best visually may have the opportunity to attend to the material more than once if necessary. If your institution has a course management system that may be the mechanism for future training not only for employees but also in assisting students when they are using the Degree Audit. Or even Podcasts may be used for training purposes. The sharing of your progress throughout the college community is beneficial. Have students been made aware of this worthwhile project which will be beneficial to them?

[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 rate their progress along the seven CQI steps. For the reasons mentioned in [A] above, this Team remains at Step 5, Implement Best Strategies. The list of upcoming planned steps includes many items from the 2007 Annual Update, including:
- Completion of programming for Degree Audit module
- Move completed Degree Audit system from the Datatel TEST to LIVE
- Complete the build of all relevant paper college catalogs in Datatel Degree Audit module
- Complete the build of subsequent catalog years based on CPSC changes
• Implement the internal rollout plan for the preliminary Degree Audit system to advisors, counselors, registrar staff
• Implement the rollout plan for student users
• Develop training materials and job aids for faculty, staff, and students
• Schedule of training/open lab sessions
• Finalize testing of MCC degree program requirements as programmed
• Develop a plan for ongoing evaluation and updating of Degree Audit system

While the implementation of Degree Audit is behind schedule, the Team does not feel that this is due to lack of planning or vagueness; in fact, the discovery of unexpected problems has provided the Team with an opportunity to improve the process.

Review (09-13-08):
C. Your planned steps to continue with this project appear to be very specific and thought out. Implementing the plan in a manner that provides for the least frustration for all stakeholders will be beneficial. The training provided is crucial and it appears this has been thought out. Even though there may be setbacks (and there usually are unexpected challenges) your institution appears to be ready to meet these challenges and make them opportunities for learning. This needs to be conveyed to students so they know they will be supported when there are these difficulties. Telephone numbers and persons to e-mail or an “Ask a Question” on your website when there are challenges will benefit students. By involving a diverse team in your efforts this appears to be handled.

[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.

Since last year’s update, the Team has adopted three effective practices that would be of great value to other institutions working on similar projects. The first practice was a standardized system of testing for accuracy/completion of degree audits from a previous academic year.

- 394 MCC graduates from Fall 2006
- 218 applicable to Degree Audit
- Round one yielded 59% successful completion
- Round two yielded 73% successful completion

The Team will continue to test this cohort as programming changes are finalized and errors are fixed in the Curriculum module. A target of 95% has been set for testing outcome before the system is moved into LIVE; it is understood that a small portion of degree audits always need to be performed manually. The second effective practice is contracting with Datatel for on-site training on the Degree Audit and Curriculum modules. In addition to travel and lodging savings, the on-site training will enable the Team to avoid potential problems and ensure that the
modules are being used to their full potential. A third effective practice has been to leverage professional organization networks and conferences, especially the Datatel Users Group and listserv, for information/advice about Degree Audit implementation.

Review (09-13-08):

D. The testing that has occurred with your programs and the benchmark set for the 95% as you further test the Degree Audit shows your willingness to plan and test before implementing the project LIVE. This can only benefit your students learning (AQIP Criteria 1) and their persistence with taking the correct courses needed for graduation. Sharing information with your students will demonstrate AQIP Criterion three of valuing the needs of your students.

[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.

In addition to the challenges faced and overcome by the Team during the past year, the following remain as problems to be solved:

- The web interface is an important component of the DA system’s usefulness to students. One sticking point has been who will perform the work to convert Datatel output into a web report that matches the look and feel of the MCC web style.
- The testing mentioned in [D] above needs to be finalized before the DA system can be loaded into Datatel LIVE; remaining programming and error correction must be completed before testing can cease.
- MCC recently reorganized the computing/technology functions by combining two previously unconnected units
- Job aids/training materials have yet to be developed because the final processes, screens, and procedures must be in place prior to documentation.
- Once the Degree Audit system is up and running in LIVE, the training/rollout plan must be translated into a specific schedule with dates, locations, and a strategy for archiving training materials for faculty, staff, and students.

Review (09-13-08):

E. Datatel may have some ideas about the web interface and the amount of work to accomplish this. This may be outsourced or personnel assigned or a new employee hired to accomplish this task. If a new employee is needed then the planning in the budget will become necessary for this step to be accomplished. It does sound like your institution is ready to move with the training such as the set-up of dates and locations once your challenges are conquered. The project is indeed worthy and beneficial to your students to proceed in your course of action.

Review (09-13-08):

F. Good luck with your project as you proceed through your challenges and successes.