PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PROJECT TEAM
2009 ANNUAL UPDATE [w/ AQIP REVIEWER COMMENTS—09/22/09]

[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.

Professional Development is the first of MCC’s AQIP Action Projects to reach CQI Step 7: Adjust, Standardize and Plan Further. The Team’s recommendation was made in January 2008. Since that time:

- 137 workshops have been conducted in the CTL since the last annual update; workshops included reading circles, workplace and management topics, as well as personal enrichment sessions.
- Attendance records are regularly kept and analyzed.
- Session evaluation forms have been revised and expanded and results are tracked in a central database.
- To address the Team’s recommendation to include all college faculty, staff and administrators, the former advisory council (CTLAC) has been renamed and doubled in size; the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) meets to advise the Executive Dean, Director of the CTL, and faculty consultants.
- Workshops have been expanded to include all employees.

A new Interim Executive Dean with experience and background in training, program development and experiential learning was hired. A new mission statement was adopted: “The office of Professional Development through its CTL is dedicated to creating a culture of continuous learning for all faculty, staff and administrators at Mott Community College.”

Professional Development will be officially retired during the Fall 2009 Semester.

Review (09-21-09):
A. Charles Stewart Mott Community College (MCC) concluded year three of an Action Project originally declared in August 2006. After acknowledging major hurdles in 2006-07, MCC was challenged in completing planned objectives. Progress accelerated on initiatives in 2007-08 and the impetus continued this past year. The vision and dedicated efforts of Action Project team members should be commended. The scope and magnitude of the original project declaration impacted all divisions and personnel. Consequently crafting a systematic professional development for all classifications of employees presented significant challenges. By embracing and completing the seven steps of the Continuous Improvement (Hubbard) Cycle, the institution employed and integrated process improvement modalities into its operational philosophy. The Team progressed systematically through the seven sequential steps and now realizes the benefits of implementing a continuous improvement model. Team members can serve as a valuable resource for other College teams embarking upon quality improvement initiatives. Predicated upon the Team’s recommendations in January 2008, MCC
conducted numerous workshops in workplace and management topics as well as personal enrichment sessions. While tracking attendance can be one measure of success for this project, monitoring evaluation results will enable in-depth analysis of the strengths and areas of improvement pertinent to specific professional development topics. Development and use of appropriate tracking and measurement tools is an original objective of this project. The hiring of an Executive Dean with experience in program development and training is evidence that MCC is committing personnel resources to ensure the continued evolution and structure for professional development. Providing other fiscal resources ensures that this project has the institutional support for sustainability and long-term success. Developing a systematic professional development process demonstrates MCC’s commitment to AQIP Category Four (Valuing People). Improving knowledge and skill sets to enhance employee productivity and job performance also directly supports all other AQIP Categories, as human resources are the heart and soul of systems improvement. The College applied several AQIP principles throughout the tenure of this project. It retained a focus on the mission and vision of the project, while collaborating with various departments with vested interest in its success. Employee learning is critical to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional departments.

[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 CTL Director sends regular e-mail announcements to all MCC faculty and staff about upcoming professional development activities. In addition to e-mail, the following communication activities have taken place:

- Value statements have been written to support the mission statement
- A newly-revised Course Guide was published listing events and workshops throughout the Fall 2009 semester.
- The Course Guide includes a “submission form” for the suggestion of future activities including Mott Scholar, Brown Bag Professional Development Sessions, Reading Circles, Personal Enrichment, and Webinars.
- The Professional Development web page is still a rich source of information for faculty, however many change orders are in process to create a consistent message for MCC Professional Development and to describe the full scope of offerings and resources available to all employees of MCC.
- Through the Fulbright Foundation, the CTL is hosting a visiting scholar on campus for several weeks. The scholar will participate in numerous interdisciplinary professional development activities.
- A special presentation has been scheduled for the September Board of Trustee meeting to share the progress being made in the area of professional development.
- Announcements regarding professional development opportunities are made regularly at meetings of college faculty and staff.
**Review (09-21-09):**

**B.** The institution addressed communication and marketing channels to expand awareness and encourage participation in professional development activities. The Course Guide offers a menu of learning opportunities to employees. Planning and scheduling of such activities can complement staff convocation days and promote opportunities for employees to participate in diverse professional development and personal interest topics. The Professional Development webpage is an excellent resource. Links to idea submission forms, evaluation instruments, session handouts, and FAQ's regarding MCC policies for participation in activities can enhance the efficiency and informational role of professional development activities. The College notes that several change orders are in process. Possibly involving an information technology staff member on the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) could assist this effort. Hosting a visiting scholar supported by funding through the Fulbright Foundation is an excellent strategy to stretch fiscal resources while offering interdisciplinary professional development activities. MCC is to be commended for this initiative. The redesign of the PDAC can provide ongoing support and continued energy for professional development efforts. The PDAC has increased in size and is composed of a cross-section of faculty, staff, and administrators. A PDAC governance charter might outline membership criteria such as lengths of tenure at the College, membership representation and term rotation.

**[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.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is scheduled to move into newly-renovated space in the MCC Library during the coming academic year. This location is more central to campus faculty and staff and will better accommodate the professional development and training activities of the CTL. In addition to the expansion and move, the following action steps are planned:

- Continue to build on the success of New Faculty Orientation, which places new faculty in cohorts which meet monthly throughout the semester.
- The administrative assistant position, currently shared between Professional Development and Planning, Research & Quality, will become fully-dedicated to Professional Development and Experiential Learning and will move to the new space in the Library.
- Faculty-reassigned position(s) will be created specifically for continued technology training, such as last year’s rollout of Gmail to the college community.
- Specific hours have been identified for drop-in technical support as well as scheduled training and other training as needed.
- Meetings have been scheduled with individual Deans and Directors to encourage input from all areas of the campus for professional development offerings.

**Review (09-21-09):**

**C.** MCC recognizes the need to provide dedicated space for professional development activities. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to be located in a newly-renovated area within the MCC Library will compliment prior year’s initiatives. The CTL can benefit from multi-media, technology, and learning...
resources. This endeavor demonstrates another example of an AQIP principle (collaboration) integral to continuously improving institutions. New Faculty Orientation is a responsibility within the scope of professional development and training activities of the CTL. The College might also consider developing a parallel model for non-faculty new hires in support of the Valuing People AQIP Category. MCC plans to expand activities within the parameters of enhanced professional development. Reassigning faculty position(s) allows for continued technology training and the ability to offer drop-in technical support and just-in-time training. Such efforts build upon the framework of on-going professional development as institutional technology, skills, and job expectations change in a dynamic work environment. The Team also intends to meet with various departments to encourage input across all divisions and departments. This two-way communication strategy can generate new ideas for future programs and promote continued professional development activities.

[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.

One effective practice that evolved from this Team’s work was MCC’s first experience in transitioning from an AQIP Action Project to a permanent department and initiative on our campus. Through the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Team’s recommendation was taken from Step 5 (Implement Best Strategies) through Steps 6 & 7 which requires the monitoring of results and adjustments for further improvements. In addition, the following effective practices have resulted from our work on this project:

- Full-time faculty reassigned time was created to support the CTL.
- Part-time faculty reassigned time was created to support specific areas of professional development i.e. technology and experiential learning.
- The Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning obtained certification with NCSPOD; the certification is a year-long mentoring process that includes the construction of a portfolio.

Review (09-21-09):

D. Key to the effective practices noted by MCC is the role of institutional leadership in transitioning this AQIP Action Project to a sustainable and valid systematic process. While the Action Project team was responsible for achieving the goals of this project, the Vice President for Academic Affairs provided support for implementation of recommendations and initiatives. This underscores the concept that improvement efforts must be endorsed at all organizational levels. Reassigning faculty to support programs in the CTL demonstrates internal stakeholder collaboration and a commitment to improving the teaching and learning pedagogy for students. This can directly benefit AQIP Category One Helping Students Learn. Experienced instructors can also serve to direct the new faculty orientation program. Considering the common institutional parameters of faculty teaching load and possible bargaining unit implications, MCC might share this practice with its peers.
[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.

A primary challenge facing professional development as it ceases to be an AQIP Action Project will be engagement of all MCC employees, including staff and administration. For many years, professional development at MCC has been focused primarily on faculty development. A long-term culture shift to all-employee development will take time. In addition, the following challenges remain:

- Moving to the new space in the MCC Library and building awareness about activities in the new CTL
- Identifying the appropriate organizational placement of other established professional development initiatives. A collaborative structure is in place now. Training vs. professional development has also been a clarifying point as well as legal responsibility for campus-wide information disbursement i.e. sexual harassment training and emergency response systems.

Review (09-21-09):
E. MCC recognizes the challenge of sustaining the professional development momentum resulting from this project. After the CTL has established itself in its new location, an open house can effectively showcase the cornerstone of this Action Project. Offering small group development activities in the Center can also expand its functionality and use. Depending upon the size and scope of the CTL, collaboration with the library and other divisions of the college can expand availability of online resources, journals, and institutional references and offer a centralized source for information.

Review (09-21-09):
F. Charles Stewart Mott Community College noted in an earlier response that it plans to retire this project during fall 2009 semester. MCC dedicated three years to achieve Action Project objectives and has established the framework for systematic employee professional development.