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December 13, 2011

Dr. M. Richard Shaink  
President  
Charles Stewart Mott Community College  
1401 E. Court Street  
Flint, MI 48503-2089

Dear President Shaink:

Attached is the report of the team that conducted Charles Stewart Mott Community College's Quality Checkup site visit. In addition to communicating the team's evaluation of your compliance with the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and the Commission's Federal Compliance Program, the report captures the team's assessment of your use of the feedback from your last Systems Appraisal and your overall commitment to continuous improvement.

I hope you will read and study the report carefully, because the team invested heavily in preparing for and conducting this visit, and its perceptions and advice are valuable to your institution. Please consider distributing it widely throughout your institution, since its positive feedback can be helpful in strengthening and broadening involvement in your quality improvement efforts.

A copy of the report will be read and analyzed by the AQIP Panel that reviews institutions for Reaffirmation of Accreditation at the time your review is scheduled. Prior to that review, we will send you a listing of the materials the Panel will consider, and give you an opportunity to update or supplement them if you so desire.

To comply with federal requirements, we need you, as CEO of your institution, to formally acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Your response will become a part of the institution's permanent record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen D. Spanghel".

Stephen D. Spanghel  
Vice President for Accreditation Relations

# QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

# Mott Community College

Flint, MI  
November 16-17, 2011

## Quality Checkup team members:

**Christina Frazier, PhD**  
Associate to the Provost  
Southeast Missouri State

**George H. Johnston, PhD**  
Professor Emeritus  
Parkland College

### Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained, experienced AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's online Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification);
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewer(s) trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluator(s). Copies of the Quality Checkup report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. A copy is retained by the Commission for the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio*

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The team reviewed the System's Portfolio prior to the visit to remind themselves of what Mott Community College (MCC) had previously prepared. Both members of the team had been part of the Portfolio Analysis and so were familiar with that portfolio. In addition the team reviewed materials presented by MCC in preparation for the visit and spent some time exploring the College's website. The team found the college's website was exemplary, transparent, and provided visible evidence of the college's commitment to AQIP and quality improvement. During the visit the team met with a dozen different groups, each focused on separate aspects of the portfolio such as Partnerships, Benchmarking, Student Services, Professional Development, as well as members of current and retired Action Teams. The team also talked with students at formal and informal meetings.

Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. There were no specific accreditation issues identified in the System's Appraisals nor did any issue become apparent during the Checkup visit.

The visit was specifically organized to meet with groups responsible for each area of opportunity for improvement in the previous portfolio. There was clear evidence that MCC took the comments in the last Systems Appraisal seriously and has begun making substantive improvements particularly in the areas of development and use of benchmarking data and in the new AQIP Action Projects. The team met formally with over seventy faculty and staff and a dozen students. All made highly positive comments about MCC. The only major student concern had to do with the lack of convenient parking. The team noted that the two issues involving individual students were quickly addressed after the meeting.

Review of the institution's approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the *Strategic Issues Analysis*.

Three strategic issues were identified in the Systems Appraisal. During the Team's discussions on campus, administrators and others referred to the Portfolio feedback as a driving force to

continue to strengthen MCC's quality improvement processes. It is obvious that MCC is attempting to become more proactive, particularly in areas of student retention.

MCC has created two new Action projects, one focused on developmental education, the other on college readiness. Effective communication between those involved in the two foci has resulted in an awareness of the potential synergy of the two.

The Action Project on Development Education was revised in December 2010 for the purpose of making recommendations in two specific areas: the creation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and cross-disciplinary developmental education program and exploring the potential for mandatory placement into developmental courses based upon the academic preparedness of the incoming students. Three cohorts of data have been collected and analyzed. MCC also is studying Fall-to-Fall retention data along with Credit Attainment. One of the changes that have been proposed is that orientation be recommended prior to Accuplacer assessment based on the input that students were not taking initial assessment seriously. Some of the recommendations for improvement include the formation of an MCC Developmental Education Steering Committee and the creation of a Developmental Education Coordinator position. Other recommendations include the establishment of pre-requisite reading grade-level for all college-level courses, a regular review of grade-level comprehension required for success in each program and the possibility of the establishment of a minimum skill level required for the possibility of success. Due to involvement in the process some faculty have informally sought input from Mathematics and Reading faculty on level of skill needed to effectively use potential textbooks.

A second AQIP Action Project has begun to examine issues of Behavioral Readiness.

Behavioral concerns in the classroom include inappropriate use of technology, disruptive behavior, inappropriate language and inappropriate dress/attire. Recommendations to come from this project so far include the formation of a committee to create a formal list of "cultural values" for MCC and to communicate those values to the campus community, enhancing New Student Orientation, additional efforts to help prepare faculty regarding management of behavioral concerns in and around the classroom, the creation of a Judicial Affairs Officer, creation of "incivility" reports, and more follow-up on Civility Surveys of students, faculty and staff.

#### Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the

Quality Checkup. The use of quality improvement tools appears to have become institutionalized and the language of quality improvement seems to have become part of the normal dialogue.

In discussions with AQIP Action Projects teams, both retired and current, it became evident that many of the participants recognize the benefits of the Action Project approach that go beyond the goals of the specific projects such as the breaking down of silos and dealing with issues from multiple perspectives across campus. The people who have been involved in Action Projects appear to be able to apply the action processes to other areas of their campus life.

Perhaps the most significant indication of MCC's commitment to ongoing quality improvement is its involvement with Achieving the Dream (ATD). ATD is a national no-profit organization dedicated to helping community college students succeed. To date over 160 community colleges in 30 states have joined ATD. ATD provides access to a national longitudinal database for tracking first-time, full-time degree or certificate seeking students. ATD also provides regular advisors or coaches to help colleges succeed. In the team's judgment, committing to ATD was strong evidence of MCC's continuing systematic quality improvement.

The team commends MCC for its participation in the Achieving the Dream project.

## WORKSHEET ON Federal Compliance Requirements

### INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED BY THE TEAM:

MCC College Catalog (online) [www.mcc.edu/course\\_catalog](http://www.mcc.edu/course_catalog)  
MCC Federal Compliance Packet which included the following in hardcopy along with the links listed below:

[http://www.mcc.edu/cashier/cashier\\_tuition.shtml](http://www.mcc.edu/cashier/cashier_tuition.shtml)  
<http://www.mcc.edu/pdf/academics/preadmisinf.pdf>  
[http://www.mcc.edu/18\\_policies/student\\_st\\_discipline.shtml](http://www.mcc.edu/18_policies/student_st_discipline.shtml)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/hr/pdf/procedure\\_reporting\\_harassment.pdf](http://www.mcc.edu/hr/pdf/procedure_reporting_harassment.pdf)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/course\\_cat/pdf\\_catalog/2011-2013-Trans\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.mcc.edu/course_cat/pdf_catalog/2011-2013-Trans_Guide.pdf)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/articulation/coll\\_index.shtml](http://www.mcc.edu/articulation/coll_index.shtml)  
<http://e-learning.mcc.edu/eLearningHandbook.pdf>  
[http://www.mcc.edu/16\\_pubsafety/ps\\_dailycrimelogs.shtml](http://www.mcc.edu/16_pubsafety/ps_dailycrimelogs.shtml)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/16\\_pubsafety/reports/annual\\_security\\_report.pdf](http://www.mcc.edu/16_pubsafety/reports/annual_security_report.pdf)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/gainful\\_employ\\_disclosure/index.php](http://www.mcc.edu/gainful_employ_disclosure/index.php)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/financial\\_aid/fa\\_academic.shtml](http://www.mcc.edu/financial_aid/fa_academic.shtml)  
[http://www.mcc.edu/pdf/faculty/Federal\\_Absence\\_Reporting\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.mcc.edu/pdf/faculty/Federal_Absence_Reporting_Summary.pdf)  
<http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-the-Public/third-party-comment.html>

### EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

***The team verifies that it has reviewed each component of the Federal Compliance Program by reviewing each item below.***

#### **1. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition:**

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC has documented that it has degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education with AA, AS, AGS degrees requiring a minimum of 62 credit hours. AAS degrees vary from 62 to 84 credit hours. The exception was the documentation of definition of credit hours. MCC's documentation of credit hour is as follows:

***“ A credit hour is defined as ‘credit given for a course completion toward graduation.’”***

*When the circular nature of this definition was pointed out, MCC officials provided evidence that MCC followed Michigan state guideline for the awarding of college credit. According to the Policies and Procedures on the Establishment and Approval of Nonpublic Colleges and Universities I Michigan (July 1979),” a Semester credit is defined as a minimum of 800 minutes of classroom contact instruction for one semester hour’s credit in a lecture or discussion class (p. 5).”*

The team reviewed samples from the Course Catalog and verified that the credit hours awarded for the courses sampled were clearly indicated, appropriate and that the course descriptions indicated appropriate levels of difficulty for college-level work. Formal processes exist for changing curriculum. These processes include appropriate involvement of faculty and staff and are designed to ensure that MCC is in compliance with state statutes, NCA standards, AQIP,

and other “best practices.” Programs are regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet criteria identified in key indicators for the College, state of Michigan Performance Indicators, and Federal Perkins Core Indicators.

Tuition is consistent across degree programs with different rates for In-District, Out-of-District, and Out-of-State. There are stated Student Activity fees and a Technology fee. Any specific program costs are clearly identified on the College’s website.

**2. Student Complaints:** *The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC emphasizes informal complaint resolution. However, if this fails, it would then rely on the documented formal process. The formal process is a five-step process. There are formal processes for handling academic, non-academic, and human resources complaints. Since 2008 there have been nine academic complaints. All appear to have been successfully resolved. There is a separate method for handling non-academic complaints. Since 2008 there have been a total of thirteen formal, non-academic complaints. These all appear to have been successfully resolved. Since 2008-9 there have been only seven formal human resource complaints. It would appear that all of these complaints have been successfully resolved.

**3. Transfer Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution used to make transfer decisions.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC has clearly defined transfer policies both to and from MCC. These policies are publically available via the College’s website. In their compliance packet, MCC provided a clear documentation of policies related to transfer and that their website provides further specific information on transfer.

**4. Verification of Student Identity:** *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identify of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. Password protection provides some insurance of student identity protection in online courses. MCC further requires that all examinations for online courses be completed on campus and in person.

**5. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities:** *The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.*

- **General Program Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and recommends the ongoing approval of such contracts.

- **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC has provided extensive documentation of its compliance efforts including regular internal and external audits, particularly the State Audit Findings for FFEL (October 9, 2009).

- **Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:** *The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC expressed concerns over Cohort Default Rate (FY 2009 of 16%) and are continuously monitoring this area.

Year	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Rate	11.9%	12.6%	16.0%

MCC is located in one of the more economically depressed areas of the state which will likely exacerbate the issue of default rate in the future. MCC is in the process of developing a proactive response before threshold warning levels are reached. Daily Crime Logs as well as Annual Security Reports are available online.

Satisfactory Academic Progress reports are maintained and available online. Attendance is taken in all classes. MCC is in the process of developing an early warning system to help identify students in need of additional student support services to help avoid students dropping out.

- **Contractual Relationships:** *The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50% of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.*

The team has reviewed these components of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance. MCC has no third-party non-accredited providers.

**6. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials:**

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and found the college to be in compliance.

**.7. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards:**

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and found the College to be in compliance. MCC is accredited by ten other accrediting agencies and state regulatory boards. One other program is the application process. There is no evidence that MCC is under any sanction or other adverse action by these agencies.

**8. Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment:**

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and found the College to be in compliance. MCC appears to have done due diligence regarding solicitation of external comments. No third party responses were received.