



Kankakee Community College

QUALITY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

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**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**
The Higher Learning Commission



**Higher
Learning
Commission**
A commission of the
North Central Association

INTRODUCTION

Since receiving the Systems Appraisal Feedback in February of 2014, stakeholders from every department and division at Kankakee Community College, in their firm commitment to continuous quality improvement, have worked to strengthen our institution in alignment with our new Strategic Plan. This Quality Highlights report will not only address key improvement initiatives, action projects, and major achievements since our last Systems Portfolio submission in 2013, but it will also provide evidence regarding how we have responded to the strategic challenges and outstanding opportunities offered in feedback from HLC peer reviewers. The report contains links to many published documents on the KCC website, and it also references documents provided in our Comprehensive Quality Review materials dropbox.

AQIP ACTION PROJECT SUMMARY

Over the past two years, KCC has completed two AQIP projects and initiated three new projects in direct response to the Systems Appraisal feedback and in connection with our Strategic Plan.

Current AQIP Projects

1. Developmental Education Redesign

Project Start: 2013

To improve structure, curriculum, and pedagogy within developmental education, KCC researched best practices, streamlined curricula, created an effective scheduling framework, and developed assessment metrics. During the 2015-2016 academic year, three departments will launch redesigned developmental programs. They will then assess the redesign and make changes based on assessment data. The following outcome indicators will be compared between the two program iterations:

- Developmental students spending less time in developmental sequences
- Developmental students achieving more successful grade point averages
- Developmental students completing degrees or certificates at a higher rate

2. Strengthening and Sustaining Community Partnerships

Project Start: 2014

Community Partnerships are integral to the success of a community college, and in an effort to strengthen these partnerships, KCC initiated four coordinated projects:

- Create an employer database shared across KCC departments: Complete
- Create an employer survey to determine industry needs: In Progress
- Enhance advisory committees to strengthen programs and industry: Fall 2015 Roll Out
- Create an internship procedure: In Progress

3. Enhancing institutional results through informed decision-making

Project Start: 2015

This two-year project was developed to focus our institutional efforts towards consolidating the current data-based and strategic initiatives related to institutional effectiveness, expand it collectively, provide resulting data in user-friendly methods, and create effective action plans to address concerns and build on

strengths. This improvement in measuring effectiveness has started in earnest, and within the first four months of the AQIP Project, we have developed:

- A [glossary of key definitions](#) for postsecondary-related terms used in the collection and dissemination of research data.
- An [institutional effectiveness website](#) that consolidates our initiatives into one user-friendly site
- A [user-friendly data-request form](#) for addressing information requests
- A [College-wide scorecard](#), along with scorecards for the two divisions most directly related to students: instruction and student success, and student services and student development

Completed AQIP Projects since 2012

Two AQIP Projects have been completed since the last Systems Appraisal:

- Improving Processes Across Campus to Support Student Success
- Improving and Institutionalizing KCC's College Leadership Development Program

Full descriptions for both projects are available in the [AQIP Project Directory](#).

RESPONSE TO SYSTEM APPRAISAL

In the 2014 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, HLC Peer Reviewers offered Kankakee Community College both Strategic Challenges and Outstanding Opportunities for Improvement. KCC strives to address each challenge and OO as quickly and effectively as possible.

Strategic Challenges

Strategic Challenge 1: Use of Data in the decision-making process

Response: To address this challenge, KCC implemented the Enhancing Institutional Results Through Informed Decision-Making Action Project which is detailed earlier in this report.

Strategic Challenge 2: Shared Governance through Committee Structure and Membership

Response 1: College-Wide Committee Structure Redesign

Part of our goal in this Strategic Challenge was to ensure “greater balance of key stakeholder representation”, so each committee now has [representation of all key stakeholders](#). As demonstrated by [the committee membership list](#), faculty members are taking leadership roles as committee chairs where appropriate.

Response 2: Committee Process Articulation

Prior to the 2015-2016 year, [the process for facilitating and maintaining](#) a collaborative shared governance model at KCC was communicated to all stakeholders. This process ensures involvement of all stakeholders through cross-functional and cross-departmental teams.

Strategic Challenge 3: Knowledge Transfer through Documentation of Processes

Response: Process Mapping Strategies and the [Leadership Development Program](#)

KCC is at the beginning stages of how we think about, identify, and apply key processes. One of our first steps was to train leaders through the Leadership Development Program (LDP), an on-going effort. Utilizing the program as a professional development opportunity, emerging leaders at the College participate in training related to process mapping, and each participant in the LDP program

participates on at least one process mapping team before their graduation in the second year of the cohort program. KCC knows that a strong focus on professional development of emerging leaders will impact long-range approaches to process mapping and documenting of procedures. KCC is also responding to immediate concerns. As an ongoing project, the President's Cabinet is identifying key institutional processes and ensuring that they are documented with formal and detailed process maps; for example, the class scheduling process (located in the dropbox) was fully mapped during Spring 2015.

Outstanding Opportunities for Improvement

In the Systems Appraisal Feedback in February of 2014, HLC Peer Reviewers suggested Outstanding Opportunities for Improvement (OO), and KCC is dedicated to addressing each one. Below we address each opportunity.

OO 2R3, 7R2, and 7R3: Improved Utilization and Assessment of Data Collection and Application

Three of KCC's Outstanding Opportunities for Improvement are directly linked by a call for an increased focus on institutional data and its informed application throughout the college. To address these opportunities, KCC initiated the Enhancing Institutional Results Through Informed Decision Making AQIP Project which is detailed earlier in this report. Additionally, resources were allocated to provide training in national benchmarking practices through Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Ruffalo Noel Levitz, and National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) workshops in May 2015.

The evidence that our system for measuring effectiveness meets our College's needs in accomplishing our mission and goals is demonstrated by an increase in requests for data using the new request form, requests for training on use of key performance indicators (KPIs), scorecards, and dashboards, employee feedback, and our satisfaction score in the [2015 Employee Satisfaction Survey](#).

KCC processes for measuring effectiveness are evaluated by use of comparative data to benchmark trends, identify high performing peer institutions including those with best practices, and determine opportunities for improvement. Comparative data related to enrollment, graduation rates, and employee satisfaction are provided by IPEDS and Ruffalo Noel Levitz. Comparative data related to student satisfaction is provided through regular administration of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) (SSI). Comparative data related to employee satisfaction is provided through participation in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#).

Action plans are increasingly being created to improve progress on KPIs, as appropriate, and have been done effectively in the past two years specifically to address the results of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Surveys. In particular:

- To improve employee satisfaction scores on Ruffalo Noel Levitz national survey, a College-wide committee was formed to create action plans. Consequently, our employee satisfaction score showed statistically significant gain from 2013 to 2015.

- To address students' desire to see increased security and safety protocols (concerns shared on the Ruffalo Noel Levitz student survey in 2013) an on-campus police force was formed and additional lighting installed in student parking lot.

All surveys that show scores for both employees and students can be accessed through [KCC's Data Book](#).

OO 3P6: Improvements to the Complaints Process

In Fall 2014, KCC revised its methods for facilitating student complaints and analyzing the resulting feedback. Currently, KCC uses four processes to understand and respond to student complaints. First, instructional complaints involve a process of progress through the instructor, the appropriate instructional administrator, and the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Success. Second, students may express concerns via the Office of Student Development. Third, students are encouraged to submit feedback through Candid Comments, where students comment on paper or online and the resulting feedback is sent directly to the President. Finally, students can report potential problems directly to campus security or the Behavioral Intervention Team by phone or through email. Details regarding [student complaints and other stakeholder feedback](#) are available online and in the dropbox.

OO 8P6: Linking Strategy and Action Plans

This opportunity is being addressed by two of KCC's current AQIP Projects: Developmental Education Redesign and Strengthening and Sustaining Community Partnerships, both of which are detailed earlier in this report. Also, since Fall 2013, the Kankakee Community College Foundation has been awarding [Innovation Grants](#) (Awards for Excellence) to faculty and staff who align their action plans with the College's Strategic Goal of "Promote an Environment of Excellence and Innovation".

After extensive research into best practices, the KCC Foundation moved to Raiser's Edge Fundraising Software, a product that is more affordable and sustainable as well as more efficient. In Fall 2015, the Office of Institutional Advancement asked the President's Cabinet for input regarding items that should be fundraising priorities for the KCC Foundation. The President's Cabinet determined a deadline of November for finalizing the priorities for the calendar year 2016. Aligning fundraising goals with the College's Strategic Plan will allow opportunity to create an action plan that demonstrates evidence of excellence and innovation. The priorities determined will assist in creating a culture of completion.

OO 8P7: Addressing risk in the Strategic Planning Process

The [2014-2018 Strategic Plan](#) worked with [Reclaiming the American Dream](#) as its foundational research piece. The main point of the report is that "community colleges need to reimagine their roles and the ways they do their work: The American Dream is at risk. Because a highly educated population is fundamental to economic growth and a vibrant democracy, community colleges can help reclaim that dream. But stepping up to this challenge will require dramatic redesign of these institutions, their mission, and, most critically, their students' educational experiences".

KCC's [planning process](#) included a risk-planning phase and identified the following areas in need of attention:

- The high number of students entering college unprepared for rigorous college-level work and the low number of students who complete developmental educational programs and progress to successful completion of related freshmen-level courses. The AQIP Project Developmental Education Redesign and the Strategic Goal Create a Culture of Completion address these risks.
- The need for KCC to be more nimble, flexible, and responsive to evolving student characteristics and needs, industry and employer needs, and changes in the regional economy. The plan includes strategies for the continuous collection and analysis of quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal data that can help KCC better understand its environment “in real time” and thus respond more nimbly and proactively. The AQIP Project Strengthening and Sustaining Community Partnerships addresses this risk.
- The need for KCC, with its partners in the community, to refocus the community college mission, redefine institutional roles to meet 21st century education and employment needs, and to bring partnerships with community, business, and K–12 leaders to a new level. The AQIP Project Strengthening and Sustaining Community Partnerships addresses this risk.
- The need for KCC to position itself not only to react when needed, but also to anticipate and initiate. The Strategic Goal Promote an Environment of Excellence and Innovation addresses this risk.
- The need for KCC to close the skills gaps by sharply focusing career and technical education on preparing students with the knowledge and skills required for existing and future jobs in regional and global economies. The Strategic Goal Develop Career Pathways in Targeted Industries addresses this risk.
- KCC faces an environment in which funding levels and other resources are either stagnated or shrinking. This trend will continue to force the college to make tough decisions about where to invest, and where it should decrease or stop investing. In the Strategic Plan, KCC examined strategies to use existing resources in new ways that support plan goals, as well as to leverage new and/or external resources, including the alignment of resources and investments toward targets that are shared with external community partners.

OO 8P8: Develop and Nurture Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Capabilities

KCC is dedicated to promoting professional development in all areas of the college. To that end, we have specific programs and activities in effect. Although we neglected to provide a response in the 2013 Systems Portfolio, the Systems Appraisal Feedback report identified one such program as a strength: our Leadership Development Program. This program is still in effect at the college. KCC also encourages employee growth through the following:

- Innovation Grants ([Awards for Excellence](#))
- Biannual [In-Service for faculty](#)
- [Days of Learning](#) for staff
- Professional Development reimbursement for faculty
- Annual In-Service for Student Services personnel

OTHER QUALITY INITIATIVES

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, KCC has implemented other quality initiatives since the last Systems Appraisal.

Teaching and Learning Initiatives

General Education Assessment: A [General Education Plan](#) was developed in the Fall of 2014 to help close the loop on general education assessment using the 6 Gen Ed goals developed in 2012-2013. As part of the plan, Quantitative Reasoning data was gathered from 2013 through Spring 2015 and will be analyzed in Fall 2015 using LiveText. Any changes suggested by the data will be implemented in Spring 2016. Finally, Inquiry and Analysis data will be gathered in Fall 2015 and analyzed in Spring 2016 with subsequent instructional adjustments to increase student success.

Faculty conducted a General Education Assessment in Quantitative Reasoning (one of our Gen Ed Outcomes) in Spring 2015 in all General Education courses that have quantitative reasoning as a general education outcome. A committee was formed to look at the data results and determined that differences of scores between males and females is significant. This committee will create an action plan to deal with this potential gender achievement gap. This action plan may include changes made in the classroom, changes in student services, changes in our College and Career Readiness program, or changes in other areas that affect student success. We hope to start implementing revisions during Spring 2015. Data will then be recollected over time to see if improvements have been made.

Course Assessment: Over the past year, KCC Divisions have been developing Course Assessment Plans which were implemented through a small group of faculty, campus-wide, in Fall 2015. As part of the program, rubrics will be created which represent course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Through LiveText, faculty will assess student work based on rubrics specific to the SLOs for their classes. Resulting data will be analyzed by the pilot team to close the loop. Campus-wide integration is expected by 2017.

New Assessment Webpage: During Spring and Summer 2015, KCC developed a new assessment website. Based on the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) framework, the new website contains six pages representing the different parts of the assessment loop. The philosophy of the new website is to create a transparency of our assessment strategies so that staff, students, and community stakeholders can view what KCC is doing in the area of assessment. The website is undergoing constant change as assessment plans continue to move forward.

Dual Credit Initiatives: Since the last Systems Appraisal, KCC has implemented 17 new dual-credit courses at five area high schools, initiated plans to implement two more for 2015-2016, increased access through the purchasing of textbooks with grant money, and implemented a dual credit dashboard, found in the dropbox. We also held a “Dual Credit Instructors Day,” hosting 18 dual credit instructors for training and collaboration.

Ask a Librarian program: Initiated in Fall 2014, the Ask a Librarian program allows faculty to include a discussion board within their course shell which allows students to post questions to an embedded librarian. The librarian dedicated to the course regularly checks the board to answer questions regarding research, documentation, and other information literacy issues. Since early piloting in Fall 2014, more than 100 courses have included embedded librarian support, and we have seen a significant increase both

in the numbers of individual courses, sections, and instructors providing a board for their course. Student use doubled from the Fall to the Spring Semester.

College and Career Readiness Program: The English department has continued working to align curricula with both high school and middle school instructors in three different capacities. First, KCC and area high school and middle school teachers meet 6-8 times a year to align curricula. Second, KCC and dual credit high school English faculty also meet to align curricula, assignments, and expectations. Third, KCC's English Department participates in the South Metropolitan Higher Education Writing Consortium which is a group of college and university faculty who work on horizontal alignment. Specifically, they are working to align the equivalent of English 101, so that student experience, regardless of college, will be similar and adequately prepare them for English 102 and other college writing. KCC's Math faculty are also continuing to work with area high school math teachers to align curricula, develop common assessments, create a test bank for various standards from multiple mathematical levels/subjects, and to collaborate across districts to improve teaching and learning strategies through continuous face-to-face meetings. The Science Department faculty recently began meeting with their counterparts as well to discuss the implementation of Next Generation Science Standards.

New Library Resources: In Fall 2014, the Miner Memorial Library acquired CINAHL Complete, Medline Complete, Nursing Reference Center and Rehabilitation Reference Center to support the nursing and allied health programs at KCC. In addition the library acquired video streamed content of training videos needed by students in the CNA program. The library also acquired JSTOR and Lexis Nexis. Finally, the library has made available numerous [resources guides](#) and tutorials to aid in both face to face and online instruction. For example, after substantial course redesign in the English II curriculum, the library created a [multi-page website](#) to aid students in identifying and analyzing peer-reviewed professional journals for a Writing in the Disciplines unit.

Online Tutoring Services: The Writing Lab developed a Canvas course which has extended tutoring access for all students, especially those who only take courses online. Students can submit their writing through Canvas, and tutors use the same platform to mark-up the submissions and provide feedback. Faculty and students are also collaborating on a Psych Help online course which will provide resources, discussion boards, and access to psychology tutors. Both the Writing and the Math & Science tutor labs are developing online tutor training courses through Canvas.

Dropout Detective: Directly integrated in KCC's learning management system, Canvas, Dropout Detective identifies struggling students through the collection of critical data including student assignment submissions and student logins. This straightforward identification allows KCC advisors and faculty to support individual student learning and success by quickly and easily identifying those online and hybrid students who are most at-risk.

Student Services

Master Academic Planning: Advising implemented mandatory Master Academic Planning for all new students pursuing a degree and/or certificate starting in Fall 2014. The mandatory master academic plan

(MAP) was implemented to support KCC's Strategic Goal Creating a Culture of Completion. Research strongly suggests students with a determined plan are more likely to complete their academic goals than students without a plan. The initial examination of data from Fall 2014 suggests participating students benefit from an increased GPA, increased retention, and increased credits completed.

Student Success Coach Program: The KCC Student Success Coach program pairs first-time, full-time and part-time students with faculty, staff, and administrators who will work directly with students, one-on-one, to help them achieve their educational goals. In the program's inaugural year, Fall 2015, 223 students were paired with 111 coaches. The program's goals include successful progress towards students' academic goals, increased retention rates, and increased completion rates.

Improved Online Registration: To help make the registration process as seamless as possible, Student Services now allows students to self-register online for developmental education courses and for courses within competitive entry programs, previously prohibited actions. The Master Academic Plan (MAP) from advising (detailed above) helps inform students of courses required for their curriculum, and a new Self-Service Station located outside the advising office has increased student online registrations by 180%.

New Student Orientation: In May 2014, KCC began requiring students to complete an online orientation prior to enrollment. Compared to participation in the prior face-to-face orientation, student completion has increased by 28% for Summer/Fall and increased by 113% for Spring. A correlation has been found between GPA and successful completion of the New Student Orientation/orientation quizzes: students who complete the online New Student Orientation have an average GPA of 2.37; whereas, students who do not complete the New Student Orientation have an average GPA of 1.61.

Scholarship Orientation: This program debuted in July 2014, asking scholarship recipients to attend a mandatory orientation to help students understand their responsibilities as a scholarship recipient through meeting the criteria of their scholarship, performing community service, exemplifying student leadership, and being an advocate for KCC. The students are also directed to demonstrate gratitude by writing thank you letters to donor(s) and also video-taping their thank you message. Orientation hosts present on the importance of philanthropy and also provide recipients with a message from College leadership regarding academic excellence and persistence.

Institutional Operations (Safety and Sustainability)

Campus Police Force: Over the past three years KCC has fully instituted a campus police force. Recently, four additional sworn police officers have been hired with experience in Federal, State, County and local law enforcement agencies ranging from special investigations, targeted task force, patrol, and administrative responsibilities. The police force is currently in the process of adding 2 or 3 more officers to the roster for 2015 or early 2016.

Campus Safety: KCC has addressed on-campus safety by adding five additional emergency call stations, upgrading exterior lighting at all three campuses, increasing the number of cameras, upgrading

surveillance computer software, and increasing file storage for the surveillance system. To enhance physical security, all classroom entrance doors have been equipped with impact resistant locks. Additionally, panic buttons have been placed in some classrooms for faculty use.

Mutual Aid Agreements: Mutual Aid agreements have been put in place with Federal, State, County, and local law enforcement agencies, local emergency response agencies, and 11 other colleges and universities to ensure comprehensive, rapid, and integrated support.

Community Policing Programs: Community policing programs are being developed and presented to students, staff, faculty, and the community related to drug and alcohol awareness, new student orientation, personal safety, emergency response, dating violence, and law enforcement partnerships.

Sustainability Initiatives: The results of KCC's [sustainability initiatives](#) include collaboration with politicians and area schools, honorable mentions from President Obama, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, numerous recognition awards, special events for area students, grants and funding from federal and state sources, eight Solar Power Hours events, and hosting the Solar Instructor Summit. [The entire Sustainability Report from 2015](#) is accessible through our website.

CONCLUSION: KCC'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Kankakee Community College's commitment to continuous quality improvement is unwavering; in fact, even as this very report was finalized and submitted to the commission in preparation for our Comprehensive Quality Review, KCC is already hard at work planning our next Systems Portfolio. In our firm resolve to remain an AQIP institution, we look forward to the consultative feedback we will receive from peer reviewers after the CQR is complete, and we are eager to design improvement projects which will help the College meet its Strategic Goals as we work to enhance the quality of life through education.

INFORMATIONAL LINKS:

- Full-time Faculty Handbook (located in dropbox)
- [Adjunct Faculty Handbook](#)
- Personnel Handbook (located in dropbox)
- Student Handbook (part of [Academic \(Institutional\) Catalog](#))
- [Institutional Catalog](#)