

# **NORTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE**

## **QUALITY PROGRAM SUMMARY MARCH 2007**

### **Historical Background**

NDSCS was introduced to the techniques of continuous improvement through the North Dakota University System Chancellor in 1992, who saw it as a means to unify the newly created eleven-member university system. With the help of a Kellogg Foundation Grant, NDSCS purchased training materials from Fox Valley Technical College in 1993 as a means to foster a change in the organizational culture of NDSCS. A lead coordinator was identified and six employees trained to facilitate the training. Nearly all employees took advantage of the training that was offered over the next six years. NDSCS became a Regional Quality Academy in 1995 and delivered training to numerous institutions of higher education, business, and industry. A Quality Council was established that included representatives from the campus to guide the continuous improvement efforts, reward employees for superior service, and integrate the concepts of continuous improvement into the processes on campus. Numerous strides were made in improving processes, such as registration and developing new processes. For instance, a formative employee performance appraisal process was developed that included peer feedback and a growth plan, reinforcing the concept of performance for improvement rather than evaluation. The assessment of student learning initiative was accepted by faculty largely because of its alliance with the principles of continuous improvement. NDSCS Employee Quality Standards were developed in March 1995 to guide expectations for employee performance. They were revised in February 2004.

In July, 2000, a new President took office, and in October, 2000, NDSCS successfully received a ten-year re-accreditation. The visiting team made a recommendation that NDSCS consider applying for the new accreditation process, AQIP, based on our background in continuous improvement. In January 2002, NDSCS became an AQIP institution.

### **Quality Program /Infrastructure**

NDSCS piloted the AQIP Constellation Index, now known as “Vital Focus,” an instrument used to determine an institution’s strengths and areas of opportunity in continuous improvement. The results of that instrument and an extensive strategic planning project involving the entire campus and members of the local community resulted in the first AQIP Action Projects.

The first AQIP Action Projects were too ambitious, and even though we were warned by AQIP staff, after the extensive planning process the campus and community had undertaken, no one was willing to let go of any of the “seventeen” items that were ultimately included in the first three AQIP Action Projects. It is the main reason these Action Projects stayed very much the same for five years, moving from planning to implementation phases.

Under the new President, quality training was not offered, the Quality Council and Institutional Effectiveness Committee were eliminated. When NDSCS became an AQIP institution, the AQIP Strategy Team was developed to prepare for the first Strategy Forum and coordinate the AQIP Action Projects. The ten-member team consists of upper administration and representatives from faculty and support staff.

- President
- Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
- Vice President for Administrative Affairs
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Governmental Relations
- Dean of Technologies and Services Division
- Dean of Student Services
- Two Faculty appointed by Faculty Senate
- Support Staff member appointed by Support Staff Senate
- Associate Vice President for Strategic Effectiveness, HLC Liaison, AQIP Liaison

The AQIP Strategy Team remains in effect today, with a broader spectrum of responsibilities beginning in the fall of 2006, under the leadership of an interim President, who became President of NDSCS in February 2007. In the list of NDSCS committees, the charge of the AQIP Strategy Team reads as follows:

**AQIP Strategy Team** - AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) is NDSCS's method of accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. AQIP focuses on assisting institutions to excel in their distinctive higher education mission by improving key systems, enabling higher performance. The team is responsible for coordinating strategic planning, action planning, including development of targets, and identifying areas for improvement. The team is also responsible for the leadership of the quality infrastructure for the college.

The first AQIP Systems Portfolio was developed by the AQIP Strategy Team over a period of three years, developing three categories each year. Each category was headed by strategy team members and included members of the campus (including students) and community, membership depending upon the content of the category. Information was gathered in bullet format and compiled and written by a single editor. This method worked well, except that the information on the first categories developed had to be updated by the time the portfolio went to press.

Issues that were identified in the portfolio feedback have been reviewed by the AQIP Strategy Team. Action has been taken on many of the issues, with the remaining issues assigned responsibility to a person(s) or committee with a timeline for completion. Action on Strategic Planning was begun immediately this fall, resulting in a strategic planning process and a strategic plan that will guide NDSCS for the next three years. The plan illustrates the alignment of the NDUS Roundtable Cornerstone, NDSCS Strategic Goals, and AQIP Categories.

<b>NDUS Roundtable Six Cornerstones</b>	<b>NDSCS Strategic Goals 2007-09/AQIP Action Projects 2006-07</b>	<b>AQIP Categories</b>
Economic Development Connection	<p><i>-Identify existing and new academic programs with potential for enrollment growth</i></p> <p><i>-Identify and procure new funding sources</i></p>	<p>2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</p> <p>3. Understanding Students' &amp; Other Stakeholders' Needs</p> <p>9. Building Collaborative Relationships</p> <p>7. Measuring Effectiveness</p>
Educational Excellence	<p><i>-Expand and improve student support services</i></p> <p><i>-Identify existing and new academic programs with potential for enrollment growth</i></p> <p><i>- Develop a college-wide technology plan</i></p> <p>-AQIP Action Project #2: Retention Strategies Designed for Impact</p>	<p>1. Helping Students Learn</p> <p>6. Supporting Institutional Operations</p> <p>4. Valuing People</p> <p>7. Measuring Effectiveness</p>
Flexible and Responsive System	<p><i>-Identify existing and new academic programs with potential for enrollment growth</i></p> <p><i>- Develop a college-wide technology plan</i></p> <p>-AQIP Action Project #3: Credit Enrollment: Are We Accessible?</p>	<p>3. Understanding Students' &amp; Other Stakeholders' Needs</p> <p>6. Supporting Institutional Operations</p> <p>7. Measuring Effectiveness</p>
Accessible System	<p><i>- Identify existing and new academic programs with potential for enrollment growth</i></p> <p><i>-Develop a college-wide technology plan</i></p> <p>-AQIP Action Project #3: Credit Enrollment: Are We</p>	<p>1. Helping Students Learn</p> <p>3. Understanding Students' &amp; Other Stakeholders' Needs</p> <p>6. Supporting Institutional</p>

	Accessible?	Operations 7. Measuring Effectiveness
Funding and Rewards	- <i>Increase salary, benefits, rewards, and recognition for all employees.</i> - <i>Identify and procure new funding sources</i>	2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives 7. Measuring Effectiveness
Sustaining the Vision	-AQIP Action Project #1: Strategic Planning	5. Leading and Communicating Planning Continuous Improvement

The current NDSCS Systems Portfolio, Feedback and NDSCS response can be found at the NDSCS website: <http://www.ndscs.nodak.edu/about/research/aqip.html>. NDSCS is working with MnQIP (Minnesota Quality Improvement Program) on the electronic portfolio process they developed to determine if a North Dakota institution could use their software process. A complete update of the NDSCS Systems Portfolio has been delayed, pending that decision. The institutional overview has been completely updated.

Following, the second Strategy Forum NDSCS attended in May 2006, the college participants recognized that the quality infrastructure/program needed to be re-energized. Using the chart provided during the strategy forum, “Quality Program/Infrastructure Questions,” the NDSCS Leadership Team (composed of 25 administrators and 33 department chairs) identified areas of strength and areas of greatest opportunity.

**Strengths:**

1. Communication of current AQIP Action Projects and other significant organizational projects.
2. Connection of these activities to our mission, values, and strategic priorities.
3. Management of our continuous quality improvement processes.
4. Communication of accomplishments to faculty and staff.
5. Systems established to encourage, collect, analyze, and take action on ideas for improvement.

**Opportunities for improvement:**

1. Selection and training of faculty and staff to contribute to quality improvement.

2. Motivation of employees to contribute to quality initiatives and recognition of their involvement.
3. Learning from failures so that we do not repeat mistakes.
4. Assigning adequate resources (people, space, money, etc.) to the quality initiative.
5. Creating or enhancing a culture of collaboration, learning, fact-based thinking.

Through the AQIP planning and reporting cycles in place, the campus was made aware of the progress we were making on the AQIP Action Projects, the feedback we received from the AQIP reviewers, and how that feedback impacted the future targets for the Action Projects.

In March, the Leadership team discussed what the NDSCS Quality Infrastructure should look like and how we go about getting from where we are to where we want to go; what activities and professional development opportunities need to be offered to assist in this journey. Using small groups and an affinity process, the participants identified the components of a quality program/infrastructure. This information will be summarized, reviewed by the AQIP Strategy Team, and brought back to the Leadership Team for further discussion and planning. This is a plan in progress.

### **Retired Action Projects**

#### **1. Focus the entire institution on student learning and development. AQIP Category #1: Helping students learn. 2002-03 to 2004-2005.**

##### **1a. Changed to a focus on general education learning outcomes specifically in 2006. “Focus the institution on student learning by concentrating on general education learning outcomes.”**

In order to focus the entire institution on student learning and development, processes needed to be developed to effectively utilize the data collected on student learning and the campus environment. Assessment data should be used to impact budgeting and strategic planning, recognition/reward processes developed for innovative contributions to student learning and development. Faculty and staff apply technologies to improve teaching and learning. This required a strengthened support network and increase in the amount of resources for staff development in order to improve teaching and learning.

#### **Process/Outcome Measures:**

1. Student satisfaction survey data analyzed and improvements planned.
2. Workshops and information on assessment are provided to faculty.
3. Rewards and recognitions are developed.
4. Student learning data impacts decision-making.
5. Faculty and staff participation in professional development activities.

6. Participation increases in student activities.
7. Customer Service Plans are developed by departments.
8. Analysis of data from college-wide outcomes.

Quantitative and qualitative measures were developed over a three-year time span.

### **Results:**

The intent of this goal was that every employee in every department on campus knows and understands their role in student learning and development and assist in developing appropriate action plans that address this goal. Results of action plans revealed the following types of accomplishments that demonstrated campus commitment to student learning and development:

- 34 academic assessment reports filed documenting student learning achievement, 13 of which were tied to budgeting
- A First Year Experience course was developed as a pilot course
- A task force was developed to increase use of technology in the classroom, including e-portfolios
- Cross-training of personnel in Enrollment Services to better serve students
- Expanded meal plan rotation and offerings resulted in 5% meal plan increase
- Wireless access established to all residence halls
- 26% of student activity fees dedicated to enhanced programming resulting in 27% increase in student participation
- Retention of students increased 5%.
- Action plans filed from nearly every department on campus demonstrated the centrality of student learning to their goals

Specifically addressing general education:

- Increased linkage between general education learning outcomes, student activities, and intervention strategies to improve student learning and development.
- Several curriculums added writing components to their programs to increase student abilities in written communication.

The intent of this goal, to raise campus awareness and become accountable to the concept of the “big picture” role everyone plays in student learning and development, was achieved. We do not want to lose sight of that concept in future planning, but use it as a foundation or perspective in continuous strategic planning activities.

Project Leader, Gloria Dohman, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Strategic Effectiveness

## **2. Improve processes for increasing enrollment and enhancing marketing.**

### **AQIP Category #3: Understanding Students and Other Stakeholder’s Needs**

A campus-wide enrollment plan is critical to the future success of the college. It needs to cover all aspects of enrollment—from initial contact with prospective students through graduation and continuing with lifelong learning. The plan took into account areas such as customer service, student life, campus environment and student success.

A college-wide marketing plan increases awareness of the institution among all lifelong learners, both inside and outside of the region. Marketing becomes an integrated college process impacting and involving all levels of the organization in reaching targeted audiences.

**Process/Outcome Measures:**

1. Retention of students is increased
2. New programs are developed which focus upon needs of the state/students; programs no longer meeting needs of state/students are deleted
3. College courses/programs are offered/delivered based on identified needs of students
4. Comprehensive enrollment plan is in place
5. A marketing/public relations office is developed; and, a comprehensive marketing plan is in place.

**Results:**

- A comprehensive enrollment plan was developed.
- Availability of online education increased 37% between 2002-04.
- Dual credit enrollments increased to 320 during this time.
- Enrollment Services streamlined processes so that students can visit campus, be admitted, and register for classes in one day
- Six academic departments developed action plans to increase enrollment
- NDSCS won four awards for student recruitment materials

This goal continued in 2005-06 with an implementation phase focus on distance education and online offerings and expanded public relations. **“State and regional residents have increased access to lifelong learning opportunities.”**

**Results:**

- Number of online courses increased from 8 to 107.
- Dual credit enrollments increased 16%, to 394.
- STTC enrollment increased from 396 to 417, 9.5% increase.
- Improved access to programming achieved through vide production for television commercials in targeted markets and complete re-vamp of the college website
- Needs of 25-44 year olds beginning to be addressed through expansion in online and distance delivery
- Campus summer facilities usage increased by 10%\

The project in reality has no end, as the campus will continue to find methods to improve student enrollment and retention. This goal helped us achieve milestones in terms of planning and establishing processes that can continue in the future to impact these areas.

Project Leader: John Richman, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

**3. Develop a revenue-generating process to address priority needs.**  
**AQIP Category #6: Supporting Institutional Operations**

In order for NDSCS' to achieve its first two major goals (One, focus the entire institution on student learning and development; and second, improve processes for increasing enrollment and enhancing marketing) new and existing funding was needed to meet both needs. With the college projecting a revenue shortfall over a ¾ of million dollars in the 2003-05 biennium, it became even more critical to develop a revenue-generating process. There are five keys areas this action project effects: tuition, continued development of partnerships with Business and Industry, increased use of the college campus in the summer time, distance education to enhance our evening and weekend offerings, and the Alumni Foundation.

**Process Outcome/Measures:**

- Enrollment increases
- College is keeping pace with market for employees' salaries and benefits
- Facilities usage from one summer to the next increases
- Faculty and staff receive rewards and or recognitions for entrepreneurial innovations
- Increase number of business/industry partnerships by three
- Faculty report satisfaction with support services and resources dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning in distance education
- Foundation raises \$200,000 a year
- Grant writing revenue increases 25% over previous year

**Results:**

- Revenue from grants increased by \$475,000, exceeding 25% goal
- Summer usage of buildings increased 10%
- NDSCS Foundation completed 2 million dollar capital campaign
- Several departments initiated entrepreneurial initiatives
- Office of Institutional Advancement and Government Relations established
- Partnerships with business/industry increased by 3

The value in this project was in establishing processes that can be replicated to support future funding needs. An office that is focused on acquiring external funding support also serves as a foundation for continuance of this project as part of day-to-day operations.

Project Leader: Mike Renk, Vice President for Administrative Affairs

**CURRENT NDSCS AQIP ACTION PROJECTS 2006-07**

**1. Strategic Planning Development and Integration**  
**AQIP Category #8: Planning Continuous Improvement**

Develop an on-going strategic planning process with timelines and responsibilities. Develop an NDSCS Strategic Plan.

**Process:**

- Task force created to develop a strategic planning process
- Strategic planning process is developed and approved by appropriate channels  
Environmental scanning and other key data is assembled for analysis
- Strategic planning sessions scheduled and appropriate representation invited to participate
- Strategic planning sessions held, plan developed, and communicated to campus
- Strategic plan is approved after input from campus

**Outcomes Measures:** A Strategic Planning process is developed that aligns with the budgeting process. A Strategic Plan is developed that guides NDSCS for the next three years.

Project Leader: Gloria Dohman, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Strategic Effectiveness  
Completion Date: July 1, 2007

**2. Retention Strategies Designed for Impact**

**AQIP Category #3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs**

This action project is a two-pronged approach to improving retention:

1). The FYE (First Year Experience) course developed as a pilot project will be embedded in the curriculum of first year students as an institutional requirement to help them to cultivate success: professionally, academically, and socially. The course will strengthen student to student relationships as well as student to faculty relationships and provide them with initial points of contact on campus, crucial to student retention.

2). The second strategy will create and implement an efficient and effective first year student advising process that better serves students, parents, faculty and staff of NDSCS. This is a phased project that will identify areas for improvement within our current advising process, investigate other advising models, ensure all advisors receive training and a regularly updated advising manual, define a transitioning plan from current to improved process.

**Process:**

Create two steering committees to develop a plan for implementation

- FYE – Steering Committee
  - Develop/implement plan
    - Budget
    - Models
    - Timelines
    - Teaching criteria
    - Responsibilities – infrastructure
  - Review process
- Intake advising – Steering Committee
  - Research models
  - Develop/adopt model/options

- Develop/implement plan
  - Budget
  - Infrastructure

**Outcome Measures:**

- The plan for FYE and intake advising is completed.
- Recommendations made.
- Approval goes through channels.
- Dates are set for implementation

Project Leader: Georgia Pullen, Dean, Student Services

Completion Date: July 1, 2007

**3. Credit Enrollment: Are We Accessible?**

**AQIP Category #1: Helping Students Learn**

This action project will increase access to our quality academic programs. One of NDSCS's strategic priorities is to produce a knowledgeable and well-skilled graduate at a level and rate that meets the needs of business and industry in North Dakota and our region. We accomplish this by offering a comprehensive, cost-effective mix of programs and services that reflect the dynamic education needs of the state and region.

**Process:**

This project focuses on understanding how we modify our current practices in course offerings, scheduling, and delivery methods to become more accessible to an ever-increasing diverse population. This project will create marketing strategies to target specific populations that will meet the employment needs of business and industry in North Dakota and our region.

**Outcome measures:**

- Dual credits increase 25% by 2007-2008  
     2005-2006 = 1,291 Actual  
     2007-2008 = 1,614 Target
- Headcount of 25-49 age group increase 50% by Fall 2009  
     Fall 2006 - 467 Actual  
     Fall 2009 – 701 Target
- Non-distance education credits increase 8% by Fall 2011  
     Fall 2005 = 29,648 credits/1,852 FTEs Actual  
     Fall 2011 = 32,000 credits/2,000 FTEs Target

Project Leader: John Richman, Ph.D., President

Completion Date: May 1, 2009