

Moraine Valley Community College

The logo features the letters 'AQIP' in a large, light-colored serif font. To the right of the letters, there are several overlapping circles of varying sizes, creating a sense of interconnectedness. The background of the top section is a solid dark brown color.

**AQIP**

Academic Quality Improvement Program

**Quality Checkup Visit**  
**AQIP Quality Program Summary**

**February 2010**



Moraine Valley  
Community College

Changing Lives for a Changing World

## Quality Program Summary

### Introduction/Overview

In spring 2003, the college investigated the AQIP reaccreditation option because it appeared to fit well with the college's existing focus on continuous improvement. The decision to apply for AQIP was made after a thorough, college wide review that included educating key stakeholder groups about AQIP and then obtaining their feedback on the appropriateness of the AQIP re-accreditation process for Moraine Valley. Based on the overwhelmingly favorable feedback from over 200 participants, the college applied for and was accepted into AQIP in spring 2004. The timeline of events leading up to and occurring since the college's acceptance into AQIP can be found on the AQIP web site: <http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/timeline.htm>.

### Moraine Valley's Strategic Plan

Development of a sound strategic planning process served to position Moraine Valley to participate in AQIP. The Strategic Planning Process, initiated in 2000, involved hundreds of stakeholders in discussions of the college's future directions. Over an 18-month period, six teams studied and analyzed issues, reviewed internal and external data, provided gap analyses and prepared recommendations. When the five-year strategic plan was finalized in 2002, Moraine Valley formed task groups to work on a number of projects focused on making improvements related to the following strategic priorities:

- Emphasize and promote student success
- Enhance community connections and partnerships
- Increase community awareness
- Embrace diversity
- Plan, achieve and manage growth
- Build organizational capability through continuous improvement

In the landmark 40th year of Moraine Valley Community College, an updated 2007-2012 Strategic Plan was developed that sets the framework for annual planning, goals and objectives, and ultimately, how the college fulfills its Mission and pursues its Vision and Core Values. This current Strategic Plan resulted from additional in-depth external and internal analysis involving broad community and college input.

The current Strategic Plan includes the five following broad priorities and within these priority areas, more specific strategic goals. The Strategic Plan was written in the spirit of continuous improvement; some of these goals incorporate work that is already underway while others will require new investments of time and effort.

- Emphasize and promote student success
- Enhance community awareness, connections and partnerships
- Embrace diversity
- Plan, achieve and manage growth
- Build organizational capability through continuous improvement

The 2007-2012 Strategic Priorities can be viewed at [http://www.morainevalley.edu/gen\\_info/strategic.html](http://www.morainevalley.edu/gen_info/strategic.html).

The college has intentionally connected its strategic plan and the AQIP action projects to ensure that continuous improvement is integrated into these major initiatives. For example, each of the 2005-2009 Action Projects fit within the following strategic priorities:

| <b>Strategic Priority</b>  | <b>Action Projects</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Emphasize and Promote Student Success</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a procedure to improve access to educational programs and services by maximizing utilization of on- and off-campus facilities and effective scheduling of programs, services, and courses in response to student and community needs</li> <li>• Examine factors that affect the progress and success of students enrolling in online and Web-assisted courses and identify and implement components for successful delivery of online courses, certificates, and/or degrees</li> <li>• Implement a plan to identify, assess, place, and establish support mechanisms for students in developmental education</li> </ul> |
| <b>Embrace Diversity</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a procedure to improve access to educational programs and services by maximizing utilization of on- and off-campus facilities and effective scheduling of programs, services, and courses in response to student and community needs</li> <li>• Examine factors that affect the progress and success of students enrolling in online and Web-assisted courses and identify and implement components for successful delivery of online courses, certificates, and/or degrees</li> <li>• Implement a plan to identify, assess, place, and establish support mechanisms for students in developmental education</li> </ul> |
| <b>Build Organizational Capability Through Continuous Improvements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve institutional effectiveness efforts by integrating the following major college processes at all levels of the organization—departmental and collegewide: assessment of student academic achievement, strategic and annual planning, budgeting, and performance evaluation</li> </ul>  |

### **Assessment of Student Academic Achievement**

As with all major initiatives at Moraine Valley, Assessment of Student Academic Achievement is also included in the college's strategic plan under the *Emphasize and Promote Student Success* strategic priority. The Assessment Plan first implemented by Moraine Valley Community College in 1995 is still in use today. The primary purpose of assessment at Moraine Valley is to generate rich and useful information about student achievement that leads to improved student learning. The college seeks to achieve this goal through continuous measurement of student learning in academic courses and programs throughout the college.

The college's assessment plan has three major components: the five-year assessment cycle, the annual assessment plan, and the annual assessment report. With input from faculty, academic

department chairpersons prepare the assessment plans and reports prior to the start of each academic year.

- The **five-year cycle** guides the department's ongoing sequence of assessment. During each year of the cycle, academic departments focus assessment on identified courses and programs.
- The **annual assessment plan** establishes for academic departments which of the assessment initiatives identified in the five year cycle will be pursued during the upcoming year.
- The **annual assessment report** documents each academic department's assessment activities conducted each academic year.

In 2003, the college revised its General Education Goals and Objectives that serve as learning outcomes for student learning at the college. The specific general education program objectives are focused on developing 11 traits and abilities in each student. These objectives are fully defined on page 21 of the current college catalog:

[http://www.morainevalley.edu/Academics/pdf\\_catalogs/2009\\_catalog/3-59.pdf](http://www.morainevalley.edu/Academics/pdf_catalogs/2009_catalog/3-59.pdf).

To assist academic departments with their assessment plans and reports, and to oversee implementation of the college assessment plan, the college created the Director of Academic Assessment position in 2002. The Director of Academic Assessment works closely with department chairs to develop new and review current course and program assessment initiatives, document the department's assessment work, and convey the results of the plans and reports to the college administration and faculty. The Director of Academic Assessment reports to the Dean of Academic Initiatives and Accountability, a subdivision of Academic Affairs.

While the Director of Academic Assessment is the primary caretaker of the college assessment plan, the position receives support from several other key participants throughout the college. The Center for Teaching Learning includes an Instructional Designer who provides classroom assessment support to faculty. Academic department chairpersons participate in monthly Department Chair Roundtable meetings, which serve as a discussion forum for academic matters including assessment. In addition to the department chair's assessment leadership, several departments also have faculty members who work closely with the Director of Academic Assessment to create new assessment initiatives, document the department's assessment work, and promote strong assessment practices.

The college's assessment plan is disseminated in a variety of ways. The Director of Academic Assessment's maintains a master report that contains each department's assessment cycle, plan, and report. This master report is shared with college administrators annually. The Assessment of Student Academic Achievement website, <http://www.morainevalley.edu/studentassessment> contains a detailed explanation of the college assessment plan, resources for faculty, and contact information. An example of a "Faculty Resource" is the brochure entitled *Assessment of Student Academic Achievement* which provides details about the college's assessment plan, assessment vocabulary, assessment-related questions and answers, and examples of assessment practices. This brochure can be found at: <http://www.morainevalley.edu/StudentAssessment/pdf/09-005%20assessment%20%20brochure%20revise%20Layout%201.pdf>.

Moraine Valley used feedback from the first round of Action Projects (2005-2009) and from the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report to define the second round of action projects. One of these projects is focused on establishing a comprehensive General Education assessment program for the college. Faculty representing departments across the college will serve on this team, and the Director of Academic Assessment and the Dean of Enrichment Programs and Services will serve as co-chairs, which has been charged with:

- **General Education Assessment Project Team Charge:** Consider all relevant questions, purposes and challenges surrounding the implementation of a permanent system of General Education assessment at the college. Recommend an assessment plan and a timeline for its implementation.

### **Action Projects 2005-2009**

In 2005, Moraine Valley identified three major action projects designed to move the college's improvement initiatives forward and demonstrate our commitment to quality. As mentioned earlier, these three action projects were all derived from the college's Strategic Priorities. Two of the projects listed below include three sub-groups working on specific topics within the overall action project's focus, which resulted in seven different teams working on these projects.

- Institutional Effectiveness – To improve our institutional effectiveness efforts by integrating the following major college processes at all levels of the organization, departmental and collegewide: assessment of student academic achievement, strategic and annual planning, budgeting and performance evaluation.
- Improving Student Learning, Student Development and Student Success – Separate teams were charged with working on each of the three following initiatives:
  - a. Maximizing student access to education – To improve access to educational programs and services by: 1) maximizing utilization of on- and off-campus facilities, and 2) effective scheduling of programs, services and courses in response to student and community needs.
  - b. Improving retention and success in online learning – To examine factors that affect the progress and success of students enrolling in online and Web-assisted courses, and identify components for successful delivery of online courses, certificates and/or degrees.
  - c. Improving student success in Developmental Education – To develop a plan to identify, assess, place and establish support mechanisms for students in developmental education.
- Diversity and Inclusion—Separate teams were charged with working on each of the three following initiatives:
  - a. Reviewing college practices and processes to better address and infuse diversity throughout the institution—To improve the college's responsiveness to our changing community by integrating diversity and inclusion into appropriate college processes.
  - b. Diversity recruitment and retention of faculty and staff—To improve the college's responsiveness to our changing community by implementing new faculty and staff recruitment strategies.

- c. Infusing diversity into the classroom and curriculum—To improve the college’s responsiveness to our changing community by integrating diversity into the curriculum and classroom.

When each action project was first initiated, the team was asked to develop a comprehensive plan to respond to the team’s charge. The completed plan was reviewed and approved by the college’s Executive Leadership Team (president, vice presidents and chief financial officer). Once each plan was approved, another team, often times including a different mix of team members, was then charged with implementing the plan.

Ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders was maintained throughout the entire four years of action project planning and implementation. In addition to the annual updates submitted to the Higher Learning Commission, regular progress reports were provided in writing and in presentations to a variety of college constituency groups. The recommendations made by all of the action project teams and ELT’s response to each recommendation were communicated collegewide via the *Valley View* all staff newsletter.

The annual update reports, submitted to the Higher Learning Commission and posted on the college’s AQIP web site, provide a summary of the outcomes achieved as a result of each action project. [http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/action\\_projects\\_2005\\_09.htm](http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/action_projects_2005_09.htm). Feedback received from the fall 2008 HLC’s action project reviewers provided the following feedback on the college’s progress after three years of action project planning and implementation:

| Strengths  | Opportunities  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cross college involvement</li> <li>▪ Reviewing proposed processes with users</li> <li>▪ Designating process ‘owners’</li> <li>▪ Piloting processes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain ongoing commitment</li> <li>▪ Communication</li> </ul> |

During the upcoming AQIP Quality Checkup Visit, co-team chairs will review each team’s process, challenges and outcomes.

### **Systems Portfolio and Systems Appraisal Feedback Report**

Systems Portfolio – Moraine Valley’s Systems Portfolio is a comprehensive snapshot of how effective Moraine Valley is in helping students succeed. Completing the Systems Portfolio required 47 appointed faculty and staff from all areas of the college to collaborate on teams that examined each of the nine categories. Teams, each with two co-chairs, included broad representation from across the college. In addition, two general co-chairs oversaw the work of the nine teams and edited the document with assistance from a retired English faculty member. Moraine Valley began working on the Systems Portfolio in fall 2006 and the final document was submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in May 2008. The full document can be accessed at: [http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/systems\\_portfolio.htm](http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/systems_portfolio.htm) .

Systems Appraisal Feedback Report – Upon receipt of this report in October 2008 the feedback was analyzed and communicated in a variety of ways to ensure the input was understood and utilized.

- A report that combines Moraine Valley’s Systems Portfolio responses immediately followed by the Systems Appraisal team’s feedback was developed and published on the college’s AQIP web site.
- A report that analyzes the opportunities and outstanding opportunities included in the Systems Appraisal Report was developed. This document includes all of Moraine Valley Community College’s O and OO feedback statements classified and color-coded as follows:
  - a. Owner- Divisions: Academic Affairs; Administrative Services; Finance; Institutional Advancement; Student Development
  - b. The page number for each item in the Systems Portfolio and Appraisal Feedback Report Excerpts
  - c. Three types of responses MVCC could make to each statement

**MV Response**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A | Miscommunication – either the appraisal team didn’t understand what we wrote, or they are providing feedback that’s unclear or unrelated to the question we were asked. |
| B | This feedback is related to initiatives that are already underway at MVCC.  |
| C | This feedback is not yet underway at MVCC, and will be further reviewed to determine whether we will pursue this opportunity.   |

This report was disseminated to multiple stakeholder groups including the Systems Portfolio category team co-chairs and other groups such as Student Development Supervisor’s Council and Academic Leadership Team. This report served as one of the inputs reviewed by a departments as 09-10 annual objectives were developed. As a result, review of these opportunity statements led to development of new annual objectives, and served as supporting rationale for existing, ongoing objectives that are already being pursued.

- In order to recognize the strengths and significant strengths identified in the portfolio, three articles were published in the *Valley View* newsletter. Each article included a summary of the strengths grouped into the following broad categories:
  - Processes related to Student Success
  - Processes related to Campus Support Systems
  - Processes related to Continuous Improvement

One of the major overriding themes of the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report identified Moraine Valley’s opportunity to strengthen its measurement and use of those measurement results for continuous improvement. In spring 2009, multiple presentations were made to communicate collegewide the following opportunities identified in the feedback report.

- Although there appears to be some data collected, that data does not appear to be aligned with measurable targets. There may be an opportunity to use data to establish baselines.
- The data collected seems more random than targeted to specific processes or improvement outcomes.
- Although single data points are identified as evidence, results are very limited and do not include trend or comparative information. Without this data it is difficult to determine whether the college is successful in deploying its current processes and programs.

## **Connecting the Institutional Effectiveness Action Project and the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report**

At the same time that Moraine Valley was analyzing the Systems Appraisal results, the Institutional Effectiveness Action Project implementation team completed its work to connect, and reduce paperwork/duplication for, the annual planning, budgeting, institutional effectiveness, assessment of student academic achievement, and performance evaluation processes.

As a result, the college initiated a new Continuous Improvement Objective/Results (CIOR) process. This process, piloted in spring 2009, combines the targeted processes and increases the focus on conducting and using measurement for improvement. The CIOR process and form, as well as a continuous improvement calendar that documents connections between targeted processes was presented at the January In-service and at the February Administrators Council meeting. The new CIOR process includes three sections:

1. Continuous Improvement Objective – used to define annual 09-10 objectives
2. Budget – used to define budgetary needs related to 09-10 objectives or other budgetary needs
3. Results – used to report on progress of annual 09-10 objectives and any other measurement conducted and/or used for improvement

All college departments used the new CIOR form for 09-10 annual planning and will use the results report section to report 09-10 activities/outcomes. Since this is the first year this process is being used, the Institutional Effectiveness Action Project implementation team will be brought together in spring and fall 10 to evaluate how well the process worked. Feedback on the pilot will be used to make improvements so that the CIOR process can be fully understood and utilized to meet the college's goals of connecting the targeted processes and conducting and utilizing measurement for improvement. Once the CIOR process is finalized, an online version of the process and form will be developed and implemented.

## **Action Projects 2009-2013**

Moraine Valley used feedback from the first round of Action Projects (2005-2009) and from the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report to define the second round of action projects. Teams have been charged with working on the following three action projects through 2013.

- Counseling and Advising Project Team Charge: To investigate cooperative student learning, development and success models that address early intrusive interventions that embrace and utilize developmental, psychological, sociological and systematic theories to influence student learning experiences and achievements. Using the investigation results, develop a holistic and cooperative college-wide student success model with intentional, effective, and early intrusive intervention learning experiences and services that take place in-class and out-of-class for at-risk students.
- Developmental Education Project Team Charge: To develop a plan that identifies the needs and barriers to success for our growing developmental education student population. The goal for years one and two will be to develop a plan of intentional/intrusive strategies to increase the success and retention of developmental education students. The third-year goal

will be to implement and pilot the strategies with developmental education students and to expand the strategies to serve the needs of all underprepared students.

- General Education Assessment Project Team Charge: Consider all relevant questions, purposes and challenges surrounding the implementation of a permanent system of General Education assessment at the college. Recommend an assessment plan and a timeline for its implementation.

As with the first round of action projects, each team has been asked to develop a comprehensive plan that responds to the team’s charge. The plans will again be reviewed and approved by the college’s Executive Leadership Team, and another team will be charged with implementing the plans.

Per the lessons learned (described below), the following steps were used to organize the second round of action project teams. The focus has been on creating buy-in and a clear understanding of these action project teams’ roles and responsibilities.

| <b>Date</b>                                  | <b>Steps involved in defining Action Projects</b>   | <b>Stakeholders Involved</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| February 2009                                | Strategy Forum  | Strategy Forum Team  |
| March 11, 2009                               | Review of process to develop 3 projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dev Ed</li> <li>• Couns/Adv</li> <li>• Gen Ed Assess</li> </ul> | Some of the Strategy Forum team members and other key deans/directors  |
| May 5, 2009<br>May 12, 2009<br>June 30, 2009 | Discussed Action Project Charter Questions (see below), drafted team charges and identified stakeholders  | Key deans/directors and faculty members  |
| July-Sept 2009                               | Finalize Draft charges and secure stakeholder input   | Each team charge was championed through these remaining steps by the dean/director most closely responsible for these processes. |
| October 12, 2009                             | Finalized DRAFT AQIP Action Project Team Charges with team members  |  |
| October 30, 2009                             | Margaret Lehner reviews/provides input  |  |
| Nov 10, 2009                                 | Present final drafts to ELT   |  |

Each of the action project teams has held its first meeting and received its team’s charge. These teams will begin the work of responding to their charge in spring 2010. During the upcoming AQIP Quality Checkup Visit, co-team chairs will review each team’s charge and planned processes.

### **Moraine Valley Community College – AQIP Lessons Learned**

Since Moraine Valley was first accepted into AQIP in 2004, the college has progressively improved upon how it approaches and implements AQIP activities. The following lessons learned, and how the college will improve upon these processes, were identified in preparation for the January 2009 AQIP Strategy Forum.

Number and scope of action projects – As mentioned earlier, three action projects were submitted to the Higher Learning Commission. However, two of these projects were split into three sub-projects internally. This resulted in seven action project teams, each with a fairly comprehensive and somewhat overwhelming team charge that was also somewhat challenging to communicate to the full college community. As a result of this experience, the next round of action projects are aligned with initiatives that the college has already identified as priorities and to which resources have already been committed.

Action Projects do not always move in a straight line – The college learned that action projects do not always progress as one might expect. For a number of action projects, challenges had to be overcome, resulting in helpful new techniques that will be used in future action project implementation. Some of these include:

- a. Buy-in takes time – Because the developmental education action project involved multiple units within academic affairs and student development, it took more time than anticipated to review and obtain approval of the team’s recommendations.
- b. Use Outside Resources – In order to clarify a direction for the diversity action project related to college policies, a consultant helped to the Diversifying Processes action project Team to clearly define their task.
- c. Build Sustainability into Project Implementation – A couple action projects have not been as clearly institutionalized as others. Action project recommendations will more likely be fully implemented when appropriate resources and support are identified and committed.

Make intentional connections between AQIP components (i.e., action projects, systems portfolio, systems appraisal, and college’s strategic plan) Communicating the different AQIP components consistently and holistically rather than as separate, segmented initiatives can help the college community better understand how all of the initiatives fit together and are aligned with the college’s strategic priorities to support and impact upon student success.

Selecting Action Project and Systems Portfolio Team Members – When the first action projects teams were formed, the college asked for volunteers to serve on teams. After responses were received, individuals were not always assigned to the team they had requested for a number of reasons. These reasons included the need to assign certain people to serve as co-chairs and ensuring each team had cross-divisional representation. For the Portfolio, team assignments were made by identifying individuals that had the skills needed collect the information needed. Some individuals were disappointed with their team assignment (or no assignment), and co-chairs questioned why certain individuals were or were not on their teams. In the future, the team member selection will be clearly defined and communicated.

Focus on Measurement – In the first round of Action projects, teams collected data that was not needed or was not used, and struggled with how to identify measurement that is conducted but not reported. In order to develop a culture of continuous improvement, all future Action project team charges, as well as any other teams charged with a specific task, will include explicitly stated measurement expectations to: 1) collect and analyze data, 2) use that data to make decisions/recommendations, and 3) include techniques to measure effectiveness of all recommendations.

## **Conclusion**

As Moraine Valley Community College prepares for its first AQIP Quality Checkup Visit, it has had the opportunity to take stock of where it's been and where it's going related to continuous improvement. The college looks forward to the opportunity to tell its full continuous improvement story and to learn how it can continue to strengthen its processes to fulfill the Mission, Vision and Core Values – all of which are focused on the ultimate goal of student success.