

The AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report (April 11, 2006):
A Summary of the AQIP Response to the Systems Portfolio
of Indiana University Northwest

Note: AQIP recommends that the institution should not focus solely on the two “opportunity” categories; instead, they suggest that we should also note areas designated as “strengths” and capitalize on those as well. As the “opportunities” can often be linked to “strengths” in related categories, we might take the “opportunity” while capitalizing or building on the related “strength” simultaneously.

General Summative Comments: The “opportunities” and “outstanding opportunities” can be grouped into three categories: assessment (including benchmarking), processes, and leadership.

Issues Affecting Compliance with Criteria for Accreditation:

- learning outcomes assessment (page 6)
- leadership—succession planning (page 7)

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies:

- stakeholder analysis (data collection and analysis)—assessment (page 7)
- learning assessment model (centralized data collection and analysis)—assessment (page 7)
- strategic alignment (centralized)—processes (pages 7-8)
- process documentation (data collection, data-driven decision-making, and process-driven improvements)—assessment and processes (page 8)
- results (continuous improvement campus-wide and benchmarking)—assessment and processes (page 8)

AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn

While IU Northwest has noted strengths in this category in specific units, the opportunities relate to the need for common (shared or centralized) assessment of student learning outcomes and needs (including the process, evidence, and repeatability results for helping students learn and benchmarking with peer institutions). The focus here is on utilizing evidence-based results and developing process-driven improvements with learning improvement as the target. These centralized points are reiterated in the “outstanding opportunities”: a need for a system that documents common outcomes across units, provides results for common and program-specific learning outcomes, and gathers evidence of student acquisition of knowledge and skills.

AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

The opportunities for IU Northwest include: clarifying the SPT process for determining distinct objectives and for determining stakeholders’ needs relative to the objectives of the SPT and clarifying and developing the measures for those objectives. Improvement priorities also need to be provided, and the results need to be benchmarked with peer institutions.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs

Processes for meeting stakeholders’ requirements and expectations need clarification, and the processes and methods for identifying stakeholders’ needs must be identified. In addition, student and employee complaint processes need to be described, and certain areas need further explanation, including the process using technology to identify student needs, the process for identifying new academic and support programs, and the process, measures, and use of data collected in general satisfaction surveys. The campus also needs to provide benchmarking with peer institutions, and data related to building relationships with students, increased orientation numbers, increased utilization of Career Services, and stakeholder satisfaction needs to be included. The opportunity for collecting data and addressing how results/improvement are communicated is the key here.

AQIP Category 4: Valuing People

While the AQIP reviewers noted key strengths in the area of valuing people including recruitment and retention activities, they asserted that recruitment, retention, training, and development are faculty-centered and that there is a focus on rules and regulations rather than on high performance. Also noted were opportunities to improve faculty and non-faculty evaluation systems, to use information shared among constituents, to identify issues related to faculty and staff motivation, and to clarify the processes related to health and safety. Again, the need for benchmarking was asserted in this area as was the need for systemic measures, collected data, and analysis connected to improving the way IU Northwest values people.

AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating

The reviewers asked for clarification of how student preparation for lifelong learning and academic excellence occurs and noted the need for systemic processes that sustain a learning environment and articulate the data-driven decision-making processes. They also note problems in communicating across units and a lack of process related to campus communication. At the same time, the campus needs a process for teaching leadership skills to faculty and staff and for measuring leading and communicating. The outstanding opportunities in this area relate to succession planning, systemic measures for leading and communicating processes, benchmarking with other institutions, and setting and communicating targets for improvement.

AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations

Opportunities include clarifying the connection between support services and the manner in which they work together, identifying student support service needs, gathering process measures, and collecting data.

AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness

The opportunities here primarily relate to data collection and analysis across the campus, including the need for information accessibility and a foundation for selecting, managing, and using information and data by establishing an Office of Institutional Research. The campus needs to meet the data needs of various units beyond the limited data related to budget, learning outcomes, and student experience currently available. There is a need to benchmark with other institutions, and the campus needs to examine measures of institutional effectiveness beyond enrollment and retention reports. General education outcome data needs to be shared beyond the departmental level. The process for sharing data needs to be described, and data backup needs to exist. The report repeats the idea that general education outcome data must be shared across units, the process for sharing data in general must be designed, and measures for effectiveness in accomplishing mission and goals need to be identified and articulated.

AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

The SPT needs to address how long-term goals are adjusted and short-term goals are set, define the process linking strategic outcomes and unit goals, address how deliverables are translated into outcome measures and performance projections, design a process to develop personnel capabilities, and clarify how measures assess the effectiveness of planning and continuous improvement processes. In addition, the campus needs to describe the review of current systems and processes, action plan results need to be clearly identified, performance projections need to demonstrate clear results, and benchmark comparisons to other institutions need to be

provided. The planning of continuous improvement needs to extend beyond the SPT and to embed improvement techniques and processes into programs and processes beyond AQIP.

AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

The campus needs to indicate a process for prioritizing and building relationships and to identify opportunities for collaborative efforts with the community beyond those with high schools and develop a process to use current surveys, market research, and focus groups. The campus also needs to benchmark in the area of collaborative relationships and quantify its results in a way that can be used for comparison with other institutions and from year to year within our own institution. The reviewers repeat two general points: process measures of improvement need to be identified, and the campus needs to benchmark with other institutions.