Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP):
Information, Processes, Projects, Feedback, and Checkups
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On the Indiana University Northwest's AQIP web page (www.iun.edu/~aqip), you will find the following: AQIP Overview/Update, Systems Portfolio, 2006 Action Projects, Retired 2002 Action Projects, and a timeline that we will update as changes occur. In addition, the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report will soon be posted there.

AQIP Timeline

February 2006	Draft the 3 new Action Projects, producing a project statement by February 15th for the Strategic Planning meeting
February/March 2006	Project Leaders Develop Action Projects Project Leaders Take Action Project Drafts to Respective VC for feedback Project Leaders Take Action Project Drafts to Constituents for feedback Project Leaders Revise Action Projects Project Leaders and Their Respective VCs present Action Projects to Cabinet
March/April 2006	Team attends the Colloquium held at the Strategy Forum
March 2006	Receive Feedback on Systems Portfolio from appraisal team, and begin review of feedback, gathering input from the necessary constituents
April 1st	Update Action Projects [Update or retire old ones, and add new ones] **must have 3 at all times**
April-May 2006 (and Fall if nec.)	Delunas and Hass Birky Meet with Divisions and/or Departments to Communicate AQIP components and encourage involvement
May 2006	Finish team review of feedback from systems portfolio Update Systems Portfolio
September 14, 2006	Deadline for submitting Action Projects Updates
October/November 2006	Update Systems Portfolio
January 2007	Team attends our second Strategy Forum
Aug 2007-Aug 2008	Quality Check Up
2009	Formal Reaffirmation of Accreditation

AQIP General Process: The general process involved in AQIP is one of continuous assessment and reporting to improve in focused areas. The concrete components of that process are a systems portfolio (revised every four years) with related feedback and Action Plans that receive updates biannually. The AQIP Team attends Strategy Forums, collects data from campus, reports on it, and leads in the area of achieving

the Action Plans. The system is one that specifically involves Action Projects, Strategy Forums, Systems Portfolios and Appraisals, Checkup Visits, and Reaffirmation of Accreditation. The cycles and process are clearly defined on the AQIP website (www.aqip.org) as follows:

Action — This *one-year cycle* drives continuous improvement by having every AQIP college or university tackle three or four **Action Projects** that it has chosen, committed to completing in a few months or years, and published in AQIP's on-line **Action Project Directory**. Organizations can complete Action Projects and begin new ones at any time. Each fall, they provide **Action Project Updates** to AQIP on the progress of current projects, and AQIP provides written feedback on these reports. Improvements in the processes an institution employs or the performance results it achieves are incorporated into its published **Systems Portfolio**.

Strategy — This *four year cycle* drives improvement by having every AQIP organization create and maintain an up-to-date **Systems Portfolio** describing key systems and processes the organization uses to achieve its goals and the performance results it obtains from them. A **System Appraisal** of the Systems Portfolio provides institutions with written, actionable feedback they can use to create strategies and actions that will move them quickly toward achievement of their goals. Participation in a **Strategy Forum** drives organizations to use this feedback in shaping new strategies, aligning systems, and creating specific Action Projects.

Accreditation — This *seven-year cycle* reviews evidence from both the action cycles and strategy cycles, evidence that demonstrates that an AQIP organization continues to comply with the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation – and that continuing its participation in AQIP will result in measurable performance improvement. A **Check-Up Visit** to the institution a year or two before its **Reaffirmation of Accreditation** review confirms the improvements it is making as well as the accuracy of the evidence it has provided to AQIP while providing helpful feedback and consultation on specific issues of its choosing.

New AQIP institutions concentrate their first Strategy Forum on selecting initial Action Projects that will launch their quality initiative with energy. In the three years following this first Strategy Forum, they create their Systems Portfolio. Subsequent Strategy Forums concentrate on using the feedback from the Systems Appraisal to identify broader institutional improvement strategies, while continuing to use Action Projects to implement these strategies.
("How AQIP Works," n. pag.)

The AQIP web site, likewise, explicates the specific processes related to the various components delineated above as follows:

Improving Quality: Strategy Forum, Action Projects, and Annual Updates

• Prior to each Strategy Forum, an institution proposes 3 - 4 specific Action Projects. Participation in a Strategy Forum allows the institution to receive analysis and counsel from peers before initiating planned Action Projects and formulate implementation steps.

• Action Projects are shared through the AQIP website to promote collaboration and communicate self-improvement efforts of higher education to the public. Every institution updates AQIP each September on its progress or completion of Action Projects.

Taking Stock: Systems Portfolio and Systems Appraisal

• Crafted during the first three years of AQIP involvement, the *Systems Portfolio* is a concise public description of participating institutions' major systems. Each institution's Portfolio addresses the *Commission's Five Criteria for Accreditation*, and the nine AQIP Categories, describing context, processes, results, and improvement in each system.

• Reviewers provide formal evaluation through a *Systems Appraisal*. Analysis is presented in a *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

Re-affirmation of Accredited Status through AQIP

• When AQIP admits an institution, the formal date of its next *Reaffirmation of Accreditation* is scheduled in seven years, but interactions with AQIP begin immediately and continue regularly.

• The Higher Learning Commission formally reaffirms its decision to continue accreditation every seven years based on

evidence that the participating institution is meeting the *Commission's Five Criteria for Accreditation*, and a pattern of commitment to continuous improvement.

   • A *Checkup Visit* is required as part of the evidentiary pattern leading to re-affirmation of accreditation.

   • If indications surface that an institution is no longer committed to a process of continuous improvement or has ceased making reasonable progress in improving its performance, AQIP will review the institution's participation and recommend it return to the standard accreditation process. ("AQIP Processes," n. pag.)

Quality Checkups: A Quality Checkup is a condensed site visit that occurs a year or two before each AQIP institution's Reaffirmation of Accreditation. The Quality Checkup is conducted by AQIP Reviewers, who visit the campus for two or more days. The goals of these Checkups include system portfolio clarification and verification, systems appraisal follow-up, accreditation issues follow-up, federal compliance review, organizational quality commitment, and institutionally unique goals.

As IUN submitted the Systems Portfolio in November (2005) and received our Systems Appraisal Feedback Report in April (2006) , IU Northwest is at the appraisal stage of the AQIP process. We now need to analyze and use the feedback from this report and attend a Strategy Forum in the Fall of 2006. Our analysis of the feedback we receive on our Systems Portfolio should involve a continuous improvement plan.

2006 Action Projects

A Commitment to Diversity: Campus Climate, Students, Faculty and Administration
IU Northwest will increase its efforts to recruit, hire and retain a more ethnically and racially diverse faculty, staff and administrative workforce focusing primarily this year on African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos. This outcome's success will be measured against the campus's ability to increase the representation of African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos within our faculty, staff and administrative ranks.   IUN will facilitate difficult conversations on race and ethnicity, professional rank and status and gender (and others as discovered in the exploration phase.) Increase the representation of African-Americans and Hispanic/Latinos within our faculty, staff and administrative ranks to be more reflective of our student body.

General Education Reform: Enhancing Student Learning Outcomes
The purpose of this project is to revise Indiana University Northwest's General Education program to provide a coherent educational experience leading to the following student learning outcomes: preparation for lifelong learning, preparation for ethical practices, preparation for successful careers, and preparation for effective citizenship.   The General Education/Assessment Committee will complete its revision of the General Education Goals (Spring 2006); develop learning experiences, delivery formats, and assessment strategies for each new goals/principle (first goal/principle Fall 2006, second and third goal—2007; and third and fourth goal-2008); and seek the appropriate constituency approval at each stage in this revision process.

Student-Centered Decision Making: Implementing a Service Philosophy
The primary purpose of this project is to craft IU Northwest's decision-making processes to follow and support applicable IUN student-centered principles. The first goal is to collect unit service philosophies as they relate to IU Northwest's student-centered principles. The next goal is to determine which student-centered principles are relevant to each unit's decision making and identify the key decisions made by each unit that are applicable to the student-centered principles and unit service philosophies. The final goal is to develop and implement administrative policies and practices at all levels consistent with relevant student-centered principles and unit service.

AQIP's Systems Appraisal Feedback Report
in response to the Systems Portfolio
of Indiana University Northwest (April 11, 2006)

Initial Notes:
- The "opportunities" and "outstanding opportunities" can be grouped into three categories: assessment (including benchmarking), processes, and leadership.
- AQIP asserts that we should not focus solely on the two categories; instead, they suggest that we also note areas designated as strengths and capitalize on those, too.
- AQIP offers questions that the campus can use in analyzing the date (pages 8-9).

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)

Category Feedback (Categories = the nine AQIP Categories)—feedback designates areas and aspects as an outstanding strength (SS), a strength (s), an opportunity (O), or an outstanding opportunity (OO).
1. Helping Students Learn
2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives
3. Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
4. Valuing People
5. Leading and Communicating
6. Supporting Institutional Operations
7. Measuring Effectiveness
8. Planning Continuous Improvement
9. Building Collaborative Relationships