

The Continuous Improvement Process: AQIP, Assessment, and The New Leadership Alliance

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LRC 120, 4275

AQIP Accreditation: Academic Quality Improvement Program

A concentrated focus on an institution's essential systems and processes. This focus on these systems, processes, and their interrelationships aims to:

- Ensure quality
- Enable improvement

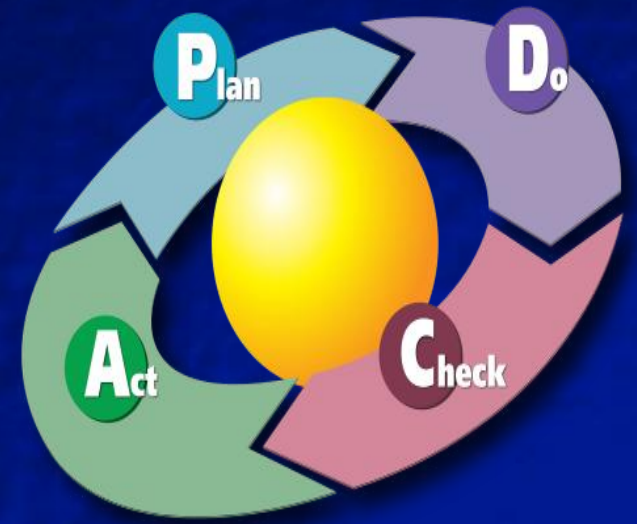


AQIP Accreditation: 2 Key Assumptions

. The AQIP Definition of “Quality”: a systematic approach to continuous quality improvement

“Quality” is not a static or fixed state or a mountain top to be achieved

“Quality” is the never-ending improvement of these systems and processes in support of an institution’s unique mission.”



Two Key Means of Achieving Continuous Improvement in AQIP

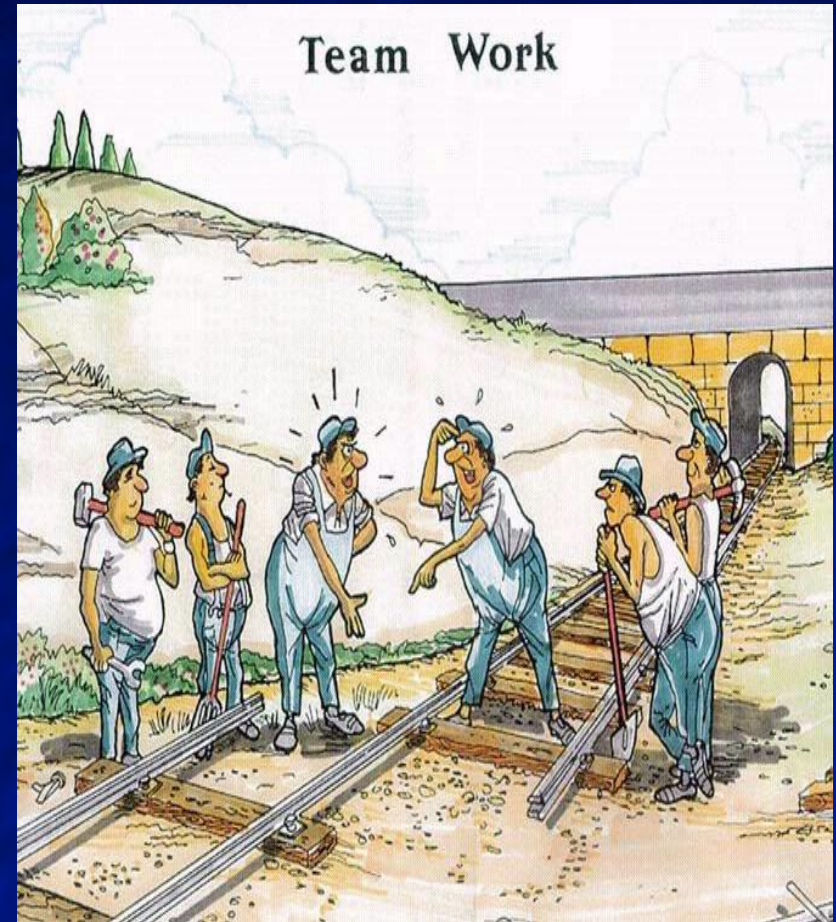


AQIP Accreditation expects “Effective Institutions” to practice continuous improvement efforts

- Action Projects—public in order to keep institutions on track and committed; also, shared so others might use
- Systems Portfolio—in-depth analysis of systems and processes

AQIP Accreditation: 2 Key Assumptions

2. Administration, faculty and staff take responsibility for on-going creation of the institution's key systems and processes; mission-driven
Employees identify ineffective processes using annual assessment process or portfolio review, and they improve systems by creating and implementing better processes and results



AQIP's 9 Categories of Systems and Related Processes



AQIP accreditation assumes every higher education institution's core processes derive from these nine systems or categories

1. Helping Students Learn
2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives
3. Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
4. Valuing People

AQIP's 9 Categories of Systems and Related Processes

5. Leading and Communicating
6. Supporting Institutional Operations
7. Measuring Effectiveness
8. Planning Continuous Improvement
9. Building Collaborative Relationships





Assessment: an Essential Continuous Improvement Process

“Fact-based information gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision-making give the quality-driven institution and its personnel the ability to assess current capacities and measure performance realistically.”

“Data-enriched thinking nurtures evaluation and a results-orientation that maximizes the benefits and value produced for students and other stakeholders.”

HLC “Principles and Categories” 2008



VU Assessment Prior to 2010 Strategic Plan

Focus: Program Effectiveness, less on Learning

Participation: Uneven to nonexistent for many instructional and non-instructional programs, although some pockets of quality assessment

Use of Results for Improvement: Not a focus; limited improvement efforts followed from assessment; little or no follow-up commentary on assessment; not part of the reward or recognition system; “black hole” report system

VU Assessment Prior to 2010 Strategic Plan

Excellent

Very good

Good

Average

Poor



2007 Portfolio: Few “Results”
questions answered,
especially in Category #1—
Helping Students Learn
Consequence: North Central
required special
assessment report and
required assessment
Action Project

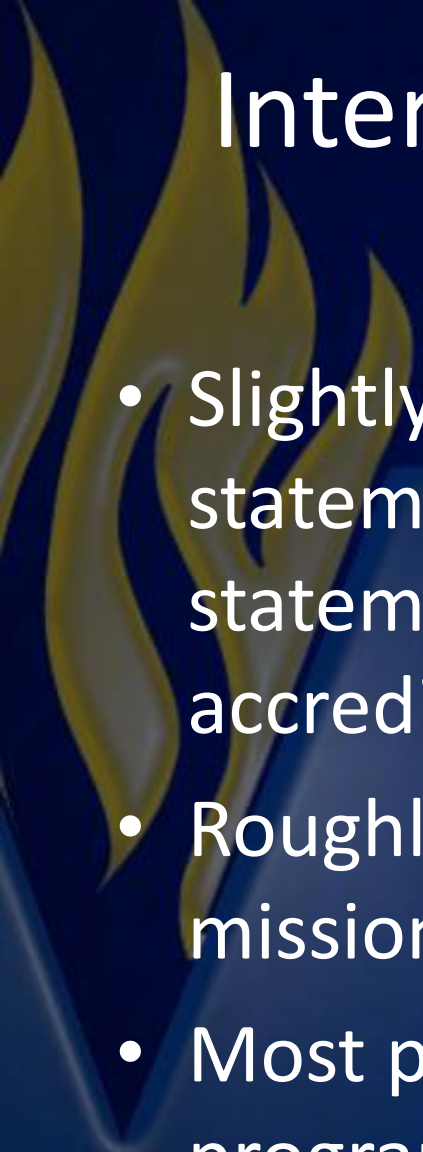
Internal Analysis of Attitudes About Assessment—SWOT

- Poorly defined process
- Constantly changing expectations
- Limited understanding of what is required
- Past efforts led to limited or no change
- No consequence for those who resisted participation
- Fear that bad results would cost jobs
- Limited belief in the value of assessment:
“takes time away from teaching”



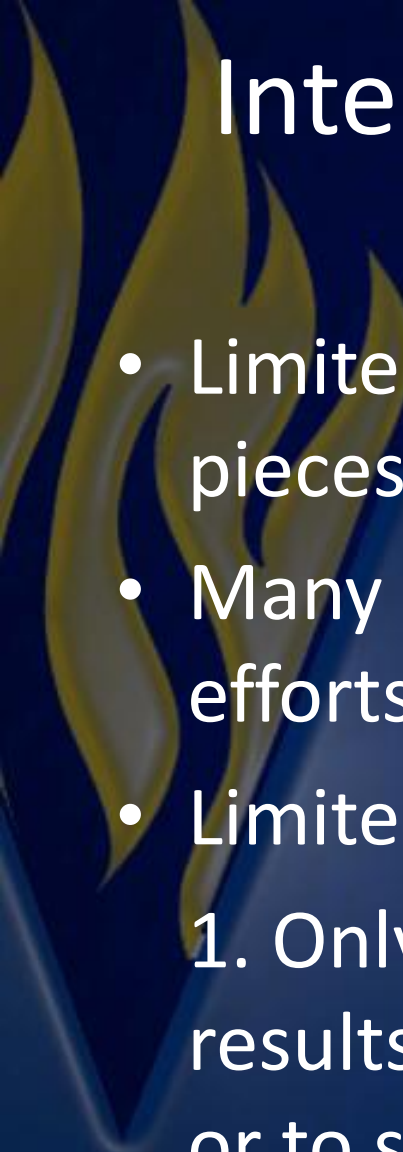
Internal Analysis of Attitudes About Assessment--SWOT

- Faculty and staff dedicated to quality instruction and service
- Recognition that assessment can help students and improve processes
- Greater awareness of the need for assessment
- Increased commitment by Pres. and Board
- New strategic plan was an opportunity to clarify processes and develop new focus
- Great opportunity to work across borders



Internal Analysis of Assessment Practice--Audits

- Slightly above 50% of programs had mission statements or assessable program outcomes statements—mostly due to specialized accreditation
- Roughly 75% of programs did not share the mission and outcomes with students
- Most programs doing assessment were doing program effectiveness assessment, not learner-centered, embedded assessment



Internal Analysis of Assessment Practice--Audits

- Limited effort to analyze data, make multiple pieces of data “talk to each other”
- Many small, individualized curricular change efforts, but limited programmatic change
- Limited use of results to “close the loop”:
 1. Only 58% of programs reported using results to make significant curricular changes or to support CAAC requests
 2. Only 33% used results to support Division budget requests

Assessment Since Development of 2010 Assessment Strategic Plan

Focus:

- Learning or “learner-centered,” consistent with national trend toward embedded assessment
- Five Workshops focused on new approach and learner-centered tools and analysis
- Plans for qualitative academic program review to combine with current quantitative review and programmatic strategic planning



Assessment Since Development of 2010 Assessment Strategic Plan

Participation:

- Clearly defined list of assessable academic programs—spread sheet of progress to date
- 100% of programs have mission and assessable program outcomes
- 180 attend Spring 2011 Prof. Dev. Workshop
- Over 100 faculty and deans attend Workshop on analyzing data and developing improvements
- Very active Assessment Committee and Liaisons

Assessment Since Development of 2010 Assessment Strategic Plan

Assessment Committee Members/Liaisons:

Karen Ball

Dan Miller

Sheila Collett

Freda Neal

Mary Hollars, Co-Chair

David Peter

Pat Jost

Michael Gress,

Rene LaMontagna

Co-Chair

Brian Lindsey

Kim Meeks

Assessment Since Development of 2010 Assessment Strategic Plan

Use of Results for Improvement:

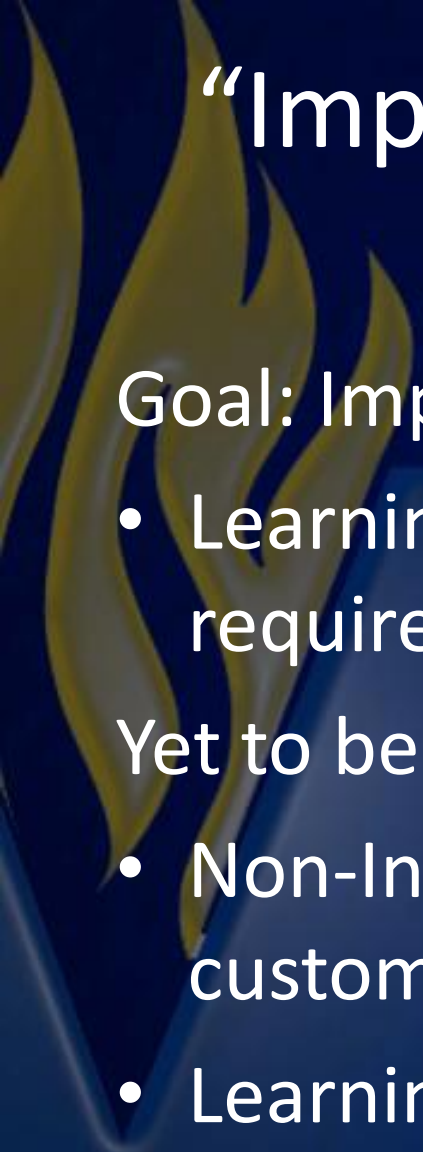
- Report form requires narrative of performance data, data analysis, and improvements
- Workshop to practice analysis; handouts to guide analysis and improvement
- Review sheet developed by Assessment Committee to give feedback and suggestions
- Peer Review process being planned

Assessment Since Development of 2010 Assessment Strategic Plan



2012 Portfolio: Will answer “Results” questions describing student learning and other process results

Consequence: North Central notes “excellent progress” in response to VU’s “Implementing Assessment Plans”
Action Project Update



“Implementation of Assessment Plans” Project

Goal: Implement the Assessment Strategic Plan

- Learning Assessment is first focus, with required update no later than April 30, 2012

Yet to be developed:

- Non-Instructional Assessment, focused on customer satisfaction outcomes
- Learning Assessment Enhancement:
Curriculum mapping, program review, and benchmarking results with outside results

New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability

Volunteer Organization
advocating for improved
assessment of student
learning

North Central has just endorsed
Alliance's latest publication :
"Committing to Quality:
Guidelines for Assessment
and Accountability"





Joining the Alliance—VU “Committing to Quality”

- VU will submit a New Alliance “Action Plan” describing specific assessment improvements it will work on for 2012-2013
- Action Plan mirrors and reinforces VU’s Assessment Strategic Plan activities
- Action plan will be submitted to CAAC
- President will commit to supporting quality assessment and improvement work and commit to sharing of VU results with other institutions

Additional Action Projects: “Learn in Order to Serve” Project

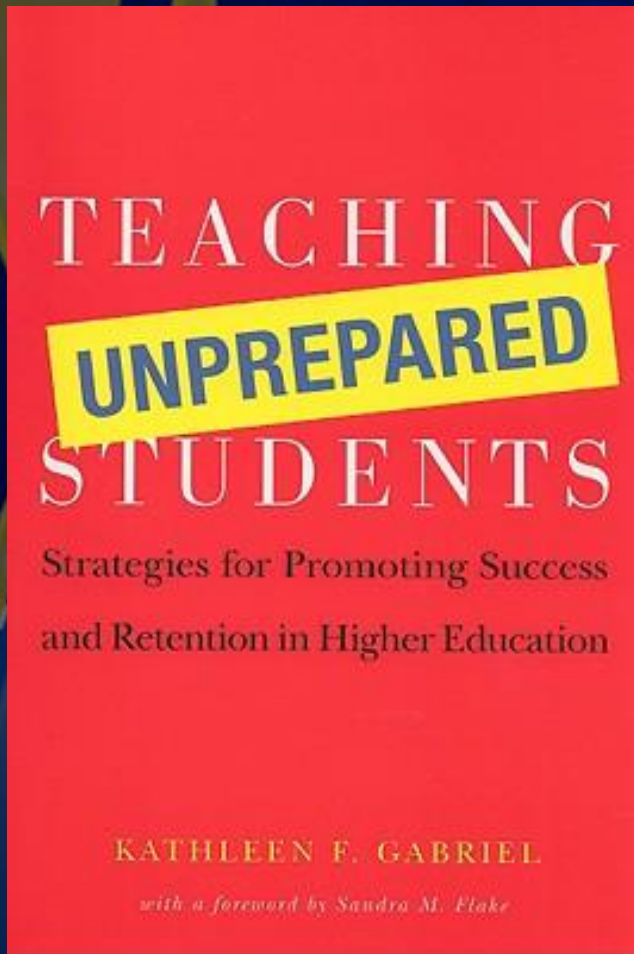
Goal: Learning about VU students, how to retain and help them succeed

Part 1:

- Build a student profile for use in assessment and decision making
- Build a data warehouse to store data for common institutional access and use



“Learn in Order to Serve” Project



Part 2:

- Developed “Kathleen Gabriel Committee”
- Distributed over 230 copies of Teaching Unprepared Students
- Brought Gabriel to campus 01.05.2012
- Promoting conversation
- Filming faculty and staff “best practices”

“Learn in Order to Serve” Project

Sample comments from 150
who attended:

“Clearly, one of the finest
professional development
offerings that has been
brought to campus.”

“My colleagues were
energized by the day...”

“...best professional
development activity that I
have attended in 30 years
that I have been here.”



“Learn in Order to Serve” Project

Part 3:

- Review of TAPS: “Tracking Attendance and Performance of Students” system
- Identify needs of at-risk students
- Recommend how to identify and assist at-risk students
- Recommend best TAPS practices for faculty, advisors, and staff



“Implementing VU’s Vision of a 21st Century Education

Goal: Develop in students the essential learning skills and identify general and liberal education learning outcomes to improve common-learning assessment

- Visit by Dr. Terrel Rhodes from Association of American Colleges and Universities
- EFTF draft outcomes to be discussed in CAAC





Feedback on Annual Project Updates; Material for Portfolio

Assessment: “...excellent progress in the first year of this project...The institution is to be commended for all the hard work it has done to embed assessment into its culture...”

Learn in Order to Serve: “While...in the early stages...there is the possibility that it [the project] could still inform others as a learning tool.”

21st Century Education: “...the University has taken the role of a Learning-oriented Organization...”

Identifying New Action Projects or Other Improvement Projects

- HLC Systems Appraisal Feedback Report based on the Portfolio led to “Campus Quality Survey”
- Current or evolving needs, such as new state funding formula drove “Learn in Order to Serve” project
- New Continuous Quality Improvement Application Process, which will invite faculty and staff to identify assessment-driven needs and improvements for special consideration and support

The Role of Action Projects in the AQIP Process

Action Projects:

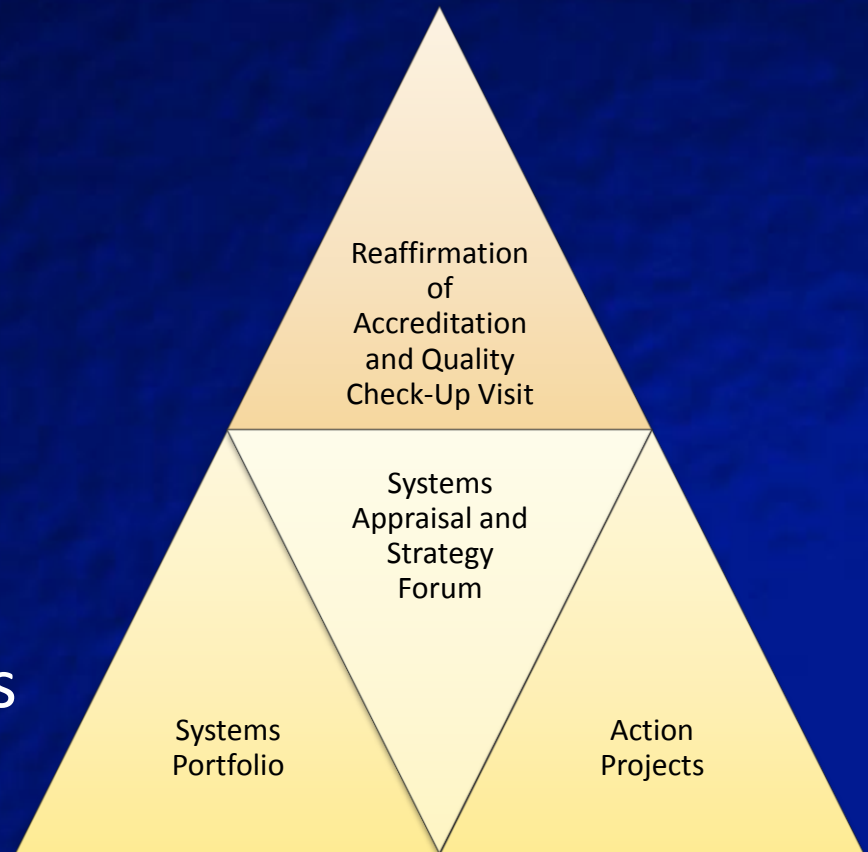
- At least three per year
- Intended to keep institutions focused on continuous improvement
- Publically shared and reported on HLC's Action Project Directory
- Annually reviewed by HLC
- Improvements described in Systems Portfolio



The AQIP Portfolio

In addition to Action Projects, the Portfolio is:

- Institutional review, guided by the systems-analysis questions for each of the nine categories of core institutional processes
- Foundational activity describing current practices and levels of performance
- Driver of improvements



The AQIP Portfolio—The Categories

Categories and Writers:

1. Helping Students Learn,
David Peter and Mary Hollars
2. Other Distinctive Objectives,
Alan Johnson and Brad
Musgrave
3. Understanding
Students/Other Stakeholder
Needs, John Livers and
Donna Clinkenbeard



Process
Questions

Results
Questions

Improve-
ments
Questions

The AQIP Portfolio—The Categories

4. Valuing People, Chuck Reinhart and Richard King
5. Leading and Communicating, Jana Vieck and Lynn White
6. Supporting Institutional Operations, Joan Puckett and Cindy Beaman
7. Measuring Effectiveness, Lisa Spitz and Krystal Spencer
8. Planning Continuous Improvement, Tim Eaton and Mike Gress
9. Building Collaborative Relationships, Mary Bowen and Rick Coleman

The AQIP Portfolio—The Writing Process

- Review 2007 Portfolio and Systems Appraisal
- Review quality portfolios from other institutions
- Review VU's Strategic Plans
- Review Action Project Update responses
- Identify VU's current core institutional values and processes—"Premier Learning Institution"
- Writers prepare 7-9 page drafts answering systems analysis questions, due April 1st, 2012
- Final Draft of Portfolio, due May 31st, 2012

Anticipated Action Project Update and Portfolio Reviews

- Assessment Action Project: Positive response strong progress with almost all programs reporting; work to do for distance and early college learning, but evidence of developing system
- Systems Portfolio: Many more results to report and Action Project improvements; need work to centralize processes, but moving in right direction

