

# St. Cloud Technical College

*placing you first*



## Systems Portfolio Update

April 2008



### St. Cloud Technical College

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In an effort to continue with our quality improvement, St. Cloud Technical College (SCTC) reviewed systems to examine strengths and opportunities for growth. We gathered information about each system and assembled teams to move forward on them. We also assembled teams to examine the 2006 Systems Portfolio and the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. Finally we identified areas for clarification and explanation to address the opportunities for growth listed in the 2006 Systems Portfolio Feedback Report.

To implement these efforts, SCTC administration determined that continuous improvement was important to the success and future of the college. This Systems Portfolio Update Report outlines the initiatives and efforts in progress and planned for the future. SCTC is dedicated to continuing its efforts of quality improvement goals and values.

The first major investment SCTC made in its Quality Process was creating a full-time position of an Academic Quality Improvement Program Co-Chair position to fully initiate and oversee Continuous Quality Systems at St. Cloud Technical College. The focal points of this position this past year have been:

1. Develop an AQIP Team to champion the efforts of continuous quality initiatives.
2. Communicate and raise awareness of SCTC's continuous quality initiatives with the campus family.
3. Focus on the implementation and/or continuation of SCTC's AQIP Action Projects:
  - a. Strategic Planning
  - b. Assessment
  - c. Communications
4. Develop an Assessment Team.
5. Develop a Communications Team.
6. Prepare the campus for a Quality Check-Up Visit.
7. Update SCTC's 2006 Systems Portfolio found at [SCTC Quality Web Site](#).

### **Quality Crew (AQIP Team)**

The first task of the AQIP Co-Chair was to assemble the SCTC AQIP committee/team. This group of people came to be called the **Quality Crew**.

- *The Quality Crew's Mission is to lead and champion continuous quality improvement at St. Cloud Technical College.*
- The Quality Crew's accomplished goals this past year include the following:
  - Reviewing the Systems Portfolio and compiling data to update the document.
  - Planning the agenda and format for the Quality Check up Visit ("*Celebration of Quality*").

- Sets goals for next year that include continuing to review, compile, and update data for the Systems Portfolio.
- Initiated a process to review AQIP Action Projects and determine which should be continued, revised or retired.

### **Quality “A” Team (Assessment Team)**

- A new Assessment Committee called the **Quality “A” Team** was formed to review, evaluate, and advance past and current assessment processes and systems.
  - *The mission of the Quality “A” (Assessment) Team is to facilitate the measurement of all major aspects of the education processes and the use of data for continuous improvement in our service to students, programs, employers, and the various infrastructures that support quality education at St. Cloud Technical College.*
- The Quality “A” Team accomplished the following goals this past year:
  - Met on bi-weekly basis to craft, set and implement goals.
  - Attended AQIP Assessment Conference in Lisle, IL.
  - Reviewed the former 12 Step Assessment documentation tool.
  - Reviewed the current 3 Phase Assessment documentation tool developed and implemented in 2006/2007 by SCTC’s Institutional Researcher.
  - Redesigned the 3 Phase Assessment documentation tool, which shows **current completion rates by our academic programs are: Phase 1 - 100%, Phase 2 – 73%, and Phase 3 – 59%.**
  - Below is an outline of each of the documentation steps of the 3 Phase Process:
    - Phase 1: Tying Program Outcomes to College Outcomes.
    - Phase 2: Tying Course Outcomes to Program Outcomes.
    - Phase 3: Results & Actions: 1) Discuss Results; 2) State action(s) taken based on results.
  - Presented and tested the 3 Phase Assessment documentation tool with select academic programs.
  - Provided training at a Faculty In-Service Assessment Tools and Course and Program Outcome writing.
  - Based on feedback from a training session at a Faculty In-Service, the Quality “A” Team met with each academic area presenting assessment tools to assist them with completing the 3 Phase Assessment documentation tool and other assessment processes.

- The goals for the Quality “A” Team are to continue evaluating and promoting the use of the assessment documentation tool process and system of implementation.
- Encourage, train, and assist colleagues with assessment processes and documentation.

### **Quality Communications Team**

- The **Quality Communications Team** was formed to review, evaluate, and move forward on SCTC's communication systems and processes. This team is assessing its purpose and developing its mission, focus and goals.

### **Appreciative Inquiry Process**

In November 2007 St. Cloud Technical College adopted the process of **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** to increase **Communications** and craft its **Strategic Planning** efforts into the future. This initiative has also fallen under the leadership of the Academic Quality Improvement Program Co-Chair. The evolution of this process is as follows:

- Phase 1: Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Steering Committee of approximately 30 people from the campus and community partners came together to discover the core values of SCTC and form a foundation for focusing on SCTC's strength's to move into the future.
- Phase 2: For a full day the campus was closed, and ALL employees were taken off campus for a day of Appreciative Inquiry reflection and processing to discover together the Core values and beliefs at SCTC.
- Phase 3: A report “*Many Voices, One College*” was compiled from SCTC's four most important areas of opportunities and strengths. In the report these are called “Provocative Proposals”, but they have come to be known as “**Action Plans**” on the campus. The report was disseminated electronically to the entire campus and stakeholders. The four Action Plans are the new foundation for our Strategic Planning efforts for the academic year 2008-2009 and into the future.

A brief synopsis of the Four Action Plans are as follows (stated as goals in future tense) and can be found at SCTC Quality Web Site:

#### Action Plan 1 - SCTC Embraces its Core Value - Student Success

##### Expected Results:

- College-wide student success (retention from semester to semester) increased by 4 percent. It is recognized that some students attend for personal goals other than degree or diploma.
- Current employment placement rates (between 95 and 97 percent) will be maintained in technical programs.
- Increased successful completion of credits.

Action Plan 2 – SCTC Utilizes a Comprehensive Decision-Making Model

Expected Results:

- Decisions are made based on data, discussion and documentation.
- College-wide support exists for allocation of college resources to targeted initiatives.
- The decision-making model includes established feedback loops.

Action Plan 3 – SCTC Owns its Own Associate in Arts Degree

Expected Results:

- Student retention, graduation and transfer rates increase within the Associate in Arts Degree by 25 percent at SCTC, within five years.
- Academic suspensions and probations decrease by 25 percent (within five years) among students enrolled in the Associate in Arts Degree.

Action Plan 4 – SCTC Has State-of-the-Art Technology in its Career Programs and Support Systems

Expected Results:

- Student satisfaction with technology increases by 6 percent in three years.
  - Employer satisfaction with technology skills of SCTC graduates increases by 6 percent in three years.
  - Increased alumni participation in surveys, events, foundation activities, and donations.
- Phase 4: A group of volunteers were trained from the Appreciative Inquiry Steering Committee to become facilitators of the Four Action Plan Team. Their goal is to bring these plans and results into the future with extensive campus involvement.
  - Phase 5: Four Action Plan Teams have come together to plan and implement steps to proceed into the future with the goals they have proposed for their Action Plans.

**Systems Portfolio Team**

A small team, led by the AQIP Co-Chair, has come together to refine the data gathered by the **Quality Crew** to edit the living systems portfolio. Below is a list of processes for accomplishing their responsibilities:

- Meet on a weekly basis to plan, gather, and edit data and information for Systems Portfolio.
- Review input on the Systems Portfolio from the Quality Crew.
- Target and solicit data from key resources on campus to update Systems Portfolio.
- Update the Systems Portfolio by spring of 2009.

**In addition to building our Quality Teams, implementing our Appreciative Inquiry process, and developing our Systems Portfolio Team, the college re-emphasized its focus on Student Learning and Effective Teaching:**

St. Cloud Technical College's continuous improvement systems and processes have been in place in the past and will continue to be in place in the future. The improvements made this past year have been in the development of formal Quality Teams and documentation improvements implemented

by the Quality Teams, the AQIP Co-Chair, and the utilization of the Appreciative Inquiry process on the campus.

Assessment of student learning was and is being tracked by the Institutional Researcher and the Quality "A" Team through a thorough and accepted 3 Phase Assessment Documentation Tool. Phase 3 specifically allows faculty to analyze, reflect, and act upon data gathered through their assessment documentation processes. Changes are made to course and program outcomes based on the information and data collected and shared with stake holders and industry experts.

Other proof of student learning is documented and assessed through student portfolios, SCTC's Phi Theta Kappa and other student organizations, service learning projects, internships, third party accreditation reports, analysis of capstone projects, and results from our ACT Student Satisfaction survey.

Student learning is also evidenced in our employer survey results, placement data rates, and demand from employers for our graduates. The data collected from these various assessment activities is analyzed and used to modify existing programs and learning course and program outcomes.

Various methods of effective teaching are in place as well. For several years St. Cloud Technical College has had a process of instructional review called the SPRAD Review. In this process instructors set goals for their teaching; they are observed during several teaching sessions, and feedback is given in a narrative format. Students are also given the opportunity to give feedback on courses using the SIR II evaluation. The results of these evaluations are shared with the faculty in a summary report. Based on the data and feedback from these evaluation systems, faculty make appropriate changes when necessary. These are formative processes intended to assist in professional development.

Other methods of evaluation of effective teaching at SCTC include feedback from Student Internship programs, Supervised Occupational Experiences, Capstone Projects, National Test Preparations results, student organizations industry competitive achievements, and Third Party Accreditation Standards. We are investigating systems and processes to improve our current assessment of effective teaching and see this as an opportunity for growth in our future.

#### **St. Cloud Technical College's future continuous quality improvement goals:**

1. Continue on with a full-time AQIP Co-Chair position for the academic year 2008-09.
2. Utilize Appreciative Inquiry within all of our quality efforts.
3. Move forward with the Quality Crew (AQIP Team) goals: Champion quality efforts across campus and collect data to update the Systems Portfolio.
4. Maintain the current goals of the Quality "A" Team (Assessment) and implement the following new goals:

- a. Review and implement a process to evaluate the current College Wide Outcomes for possible revision.
- b. Develop a Student Service Assessment Documentation Tool, in coordination with Student Service area utilizing their current planning and assessment processes.

Continuous Quality Improvements have always been an integral part of maintaining industry standards in SCTC's Technical Education Programs. Faculty, along with their learners, are always looking for ways to upgrade and maintain the highest standards in their labs and classrooms. The key to maintaining these standards for us has been the utilization of the Appreciative Inquiry Process wherein we as a campus determine our Core Values, and act on those Core Values by implementing appropriate manageable processes. These processes move us into the future successfully to meet our mission of *preparing students for life-long learning by providing relevant technical education and training for developing necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to obtain, maintain, or advance in a career.*

SCTC's Quality Documents can be found at SCTC Quality Web Site or cut and paste into your browser: <http://stcloudtcportfolio.project.MnSCU.edu/>  
SCTC Web page: [www.sctc.edu](http://www.sctc.edu)