

QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

Lakeshore Technical College

Cleveland, Wisconsin

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Quality Checkup team members:

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Academic  Quality Improvement Program

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Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained, experienced AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's online Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification);
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewer(s) trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluator(s). Copies of the Quality Checkup report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. A copy is retained by the Commission for the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio*

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The processes and measurements described in the most recent Systems Portfolio were evidenced during discussions conducted with the representative college constituents. It is clear that the college has worked diligently to improve their processes. The most recent Systems Portfolio is only a snapshot in time and does not reflect the further process improvements that are being made at LTC.

Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal

There were no accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal. The visit did not provide evidence of any accreditation concerns.

Review of the institution's approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the *Strategic Issues Analysis*.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The college evaluated the results of the Systems Appraisal. Each O and OO was evaluated to identify if the item still needs to be addressed, is currently being addressed, or reflects a deficiency in the information provided in the Systems Portfolio

- Strengthening the 'assessment –institutional change' loop: The college has developed a Process Improvement strategy. The loop is still not fully closed in correlating assessment, data and process change but the college is actively working on addressing this need.
- Further developing benchmarking and institutional comparison data: The College does benchmark against federal IPEDS data and is working with the Wisconsin Technical College system to develop other benchmarking measures. Some of the measures are unique to the institution and as such make benchmarking difficult but the college is working to identify institutions to benchmark against.

- Realignment of Mission and Vision and Current Context: LTC has done an excellent job in aligning its mission and vision to its current quality process. The board, administration, faculty and staff should be commended on the quality process that they have developed and the integrated nature of that process.
- Using the data and disseminating outcomes and results – especially to the internal constituency: LTC has done an excellent job in developing and implementing quality statistical monitors at all levels of the organization. The monitors are then used for decisions making. The decisions being made based upon data are good decisions.

LTC has done an excellent job in improving their quality process since the first systems portfolio. Integrated quality processes are in place and are being implemented for the improvement of the organizational processes and student outcomes.

Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

LTC has a strong commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement. The college has developed an impressive quality process. The level of energy expressed by the board members, administration, staff, faculty, and students for the quality process was outstanding. The college's dedication to quality was evident.

USDE issues related to default rate (renewal of eligibility, program audits, or other USDE actions)

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The team reviewed the documents relating to the USDE default rate. The documents show that the default rate in 2002 was 6.0%; 2003 was 3.5% and 2004 it was 2.9%. In September of 2006, the USDE re-approved eligibility and full certification for the distribution of federal financial aid at the College. The expiration date is 2012. The team also reviewed the LTC Student Loan

Default Management Plan.

Compliance with Commission Policy IV.A.8, Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Multiple avenues of notification including the college newspaper, local newspapers and the college website were used to inform the various levels of stakeholders of the upcoming Quality Checkup Visit. The team reviewed evidence of each of these instruments.

Compliance with Commission policy 1.C.7, Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

LTC is one of the sixteen colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System. The WTCS Board is the coordinating agency and is responsible for setting statewide policy, program standards and distributing aid in alignment with the Department of Education and accrediting policies. The WTCS Board establishes program policies on credits, program length and tuition rates across the WTCS. Consistency is provided across all participating colleges. The team reviewed the WTCS policies regarding credits, program length and the WTCS Administrative Bulletins regarding tuition.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.2, Advertising and Recruitment Materials

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

The team reviewed the various LTC recruitment materials and found them to be in compliance with the Higher Learning Commission standards. Currently, LTC is undertaking a project to incorporate Higher Learning Commission contact information into all advertising/recruitment

materials. Since this project is underway, some materials had Higher Learning Commission contact information and some did not. The plan of correction is being implemented.

Compliance with Commission policy III.A.1, *Professional Accreditation*, and III.A.3, *Requirements of Organizations Holding Dual Institutional Accreditation*

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

In addition to the institution-wide accreditation relationship with the Higher Learning Commission, LTC has specialized accreditation for auto collision repair, automotive maintenance, criminal justice, dental hygiene, emergency medical services, judicial reporting, medical assistant, nursing assistant, nursing associate degree, paralegal, paramedic, and radiography. The team reviewed letters of accreditation for each of the programs from their respective accrediting bodies. All programs were found to be in good standing.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.4, *Organizational Records of Student Complaints*

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

LTC has a defined written process by which it addresses student complaints. The team evidenced detailed logs of the complaints received, how each complaint was addressed and the resolution of each complaint.

Other USDE compliance-related issues

None noted.

Other AQIP issues

Discussions with community stakeholders, staff at an off campus site, faculty, staff, students and even board members confirm the positive campus climate toward quality and organizational commitment to meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. LTC is doing an excellent job in meeting the needs of the community it serves.