

## QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

# Purdue University Calumet

Hammond, Indiana  
April 11-13, 2007

### Quality Checkup team members:

**Brian McDermott**

Director of Research and Effectiveness  
Central Community College  
Nebraska

**Nancy L. Stokes**

Assistant Vice President for Employee  
and Labor Relations  
The University of Akron

## 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, Purdue University Calumet presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet provided the team members multiple documents prior to the visit that were reviewed and discussed in multiple pre-visit telephone conferences. Most of the questions surrounding the contents of the first Systems Portfolio were addressed prior to the actual visit date. The Team recommends that PUC completely rewrite their Systems Portfolio. The rationale for this suggestion is that so much improvement has occurred since the time of the Systems Appraisal, that the original document is no longer representative of the institution. It is the intent that the Systems Portfolio be a dynamic document – one that can be used as a base for all future documents and for internal planning and operations. As more data is gathered and analyzed, it can then be incorporated into the Portfolio and trend analysis will become evident. It is suggested that data be included in narrative sections (Context and Process questions) so that it is demonstrable and the Results section can be reserved for outcomes of the improvement processes. It is the belief of the team that PUC's approach to the issues and documentation were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

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

The Team discussed one accreditation issue identified in the Systems Portfolio addressing the assessment of student learning with the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, AQIP Steering Committee and five AQIP assessment committees. After two days of meetings and discussion, it is the opinion of the Team that Purdue Calumet has sufficiently addressed this issue as identified by the Systems Appraisal. Purdue Calumet agrees that some shortcomings existed in the assessment processes within the University. Within the past year and one half, they have developed processes to integrate assessment functions across courses, programs and Schools. Further, PUC is in the process of establishing an Office of Assessment including the hiring of an assessment coordinator who will, hopefully, be in place by fall 2007. The Team recommends that the coordinator create a process map of current assessment efforts to align efforts and to avoid duplication. Twenty-four core General Education courses have been identified and are being assessed in a pilot exercise to establish the base for university-wide assessment of general education. Program review is being revitalized and restructured to utilize assessment processes and findings. The Team recommends that PUC University-wide learning objectives should be cross-walked to both course and program level learning objectives. PUC AQIP

committees report realizing that processes need to be established to address improvement issues rather than identifying and implementing band-aid solutions which generally do not address root problems.

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

Issues identified by the Systems Appraisal have been addressed in a formal response from the PUC AQIP Steering Committee. Focus teams were developed to address each of the identified issues including accreditation and strategic issues. Specific actions have been identified by most of the teams. This Team believes that these positive action responses clearly show PUC's commitment to the quality improvement process. This Team recommends that quantifiable measures be identified and publicized addressing outcomes expected by the focus teams.

Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

Prior to and during the visit the Team observed a high degree of commitment to the integration and ongoing development of Purdue University Calumet's continuous quality improvement program. During the visit, the Team discussed one strategic issue identified in the Systems Portfolio addressing student and stakeholder needs, supporting institutional operations, and measuring effectiveness with the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, AQIP Steering Committee and five AQIP assessment committees. After two days of meetings and discussion, it is the opinion of the Team that Purdue Calumet has sufficiently addressed this issue as identified by the Systems Appraisal. It was reported in every meeting that PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) philosophy has been accepted and actioned in each area of the University. In tandem with the development of the new Campus Master Plan, PUC has built the infrastructure to systematically assess student and stakeholder needs. PUC is currently in the process of centralizing and evaluating the data addressing student and stakeholder needs. It is the opinion of the Team that institutional operations will be supported by the critical measures captured in this infrastructure. 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.

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

Based on the documentation provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the team's judgment that the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet performance in this area is acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

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

Evidence was provided to the team that indicated Purdue University Calumet thoroughly complied with this goal of the Quality Checkup. Several discussions were held which included a conversation on how the institution evaluates and takes action on third party comments/suggestions. Based on those conversations, it is the opinion of the Team that Purdue University Calumet performance in this area was acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

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

Based on the documentation provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the team's judgment that the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet performance in this area is acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations

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

Based on the documentation provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the team's judgment that the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet performance in this area is acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations

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

Based on the documentation provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the

team's judgment that the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet performance in this area is acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations

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

Based on the documentation provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the team's judgment that the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet performance in this area is acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations

Other USDE compliance-related issues (Program Reviews)

Purdue University Calumet provided multiple examples of how the institution is conducting program reviews at multiple levels. These reviews include many factors that support and align with the stated mission and objectives of the college. Based on the evidence provided prior to and observations made during the visit, it is the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. Purdue University Calumet's performance in this area is acceptable and complies with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Other AQIP issues

The Team encourages PUC to continue to grow participation in the continuous quality improvement efforts. It is commendable that the number of persons aggressively involved has grown to 65 within the last year and one half. By further increasing participation, PUC should achieve a higher degree of employee satisfaction as more persons are included and aware of the quality efforts of their peers on behalf of the institution. The high energy level demonstrated by highly capable champions of the AQIP initiative will be a great asset in future continuous quality improvement efforts at PUC.

Acknowledging that the AQIP committees have clearly identified processes and expected outcomes, the Team recommends that timelines and targets be included as integral parts of the process design and communicated to a broader audience. It was stressed that a plan without a deadline is a wish and a goal without a target is nebulous.

The Team believes that it is understood that the Strategic Plan presents the vision and goals of the institution that are achieved through a commitment to continuous quality improvement. AQIP activities represent the implementation of the Plan; it is the roadmap. The Team believes that the use of the AQIP data collected and processes developed in the past year and one half will be essential to the development of the new Strategic Plan.