The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Charles Stewart Mott Community College: Campus Cultural / Behavioral Readiness

### Project Details

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<td>3-Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs</td>
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### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

**A:** One of the major accomplishments of this team has been its systematic and disciplined use of the AQIP 7-step CQI process. During its regular meetings, the team engaged in activities specifically related to the quality process and has effectively used a number of quality tools in its deliberations. By working on and returning to its charter, the team quickly narrowed its focus on “behavioral” readiness and civility.

On September 19, 2011 the team presented its formal recommendations (outlined in #3 below) to the President and Executive Cabinet. The team awaits review and approval of its recommendations for Step 5 implementation.

**R:** The team is to be commended on the facilitation of processes and the engagement of the campus community in formulating the recommendations for the President and Executive Cabinet to strengthen an understanding of student and other stakeholder needs. As well, seek to impart an appreciation for the efforts necessary to create a positive environment through affirming appropriate behavioral responses by all MCC community members. As the team awaits a response from the college president, assume approval of the recommendations and support in implementing the next steps. Continue to employ the same systematic and disciplined approach to the project that the team has demonstrated thus far. Appreciate the investment others within the faculty and staff have made so far, and the contributions they can offer in creating ownership of the desired cultural change throughout the institution. This is the time to build advocacy for the initiative. If there are opportunities for others to be tasked as ambassadors within specific work groups, this may be of great benefit for the action project. Behavioral change takes time and more than one path may lead to the success of the initiative. Give consideration of the CQI process to look at ways to refine your work and look at multiple options for achieving the goals of cultural change if the president or senior team makes suggestions for modification of the project.

### 2: Institution Involvement

**A:** Given the nature of its topic, this team took great effort to involve a wide segment of the college community in the topic of civility and behavioral concerns on campus.

- Three separate "Civility" surveys were deployed, one targeting faculty, the second targeting staff, and the third targeting students. Results were analyzed and crosstabulated to determine priority/severity of certain issues and then presented at faculty meetings.
- Team members presented an "update" at two separate faculty meetings. Additional qualitative responses were collected at the meeting (a microphone was passed around and responses were captured in real time by typing them on a screen during the meeting).
- Input on "civility statements" in course syllabi were solicited from all college faculty and compiled as part of the team’s research activities.

In addition to team activities, the actual membership represents a broad involvement of the campus community. One of the co-chairs of this team is a former president of the faculty association and current honors coordinator and faculty counselor; the other is a dean of workforce development with extensive experience in non-credit and first-time college students. Membership on the team includes a wide range of faculty, as well as administrators and staff from Academic...
Affairs and Student Services.

R: The engagement of people within the institution is critical if this project is to have value for the college. While the team worked to ensure a broad segment of the campus was surveyed on the topic of civility, the efforts spent with faculty in scheduling additional meetings, seeking qualitative feedback on the topic, and the development of sample civility statements for incorporation in course syllabi demonstrates an appreciation for those who could have an immediate impact on the success of the effort. Please continue to provide opportunities for faculty to understand and develop ownership of the project. As well, make certain there are opportunities for faculty to be part of the action project team. If they embrace the goals of the initiative, the project may attain a level of sustainability beyond this phase of the quality improvement effort and support a valuable cultural shift within the institution.

3: Next Steps

A: Before any implementation work may proceed, the team is awaiting review and approval by the President and Executive Cabinet. The major recommendations of the Campus Cultural/Behavioral Readiness team are:

- Formation of a committee to create "cultural values" for MCC and campus-wide campaign to promote civility
- Enhanced New Student Orientation to include a civility/cultural values component; lengthen orientation to 3.5 hours
- Institutional efforts to train faculty, administrators, and staff on how to manage behavioral concerns in the classroom and hallways, etc.

While several previous college-wide activities have focused on mission, strategy, and AQIP-related issues, no previous activities have engaged the entire institution in a conversation on values. Additional recommendations contained in the formal report to the President include suggestions about dealing with the Mott Middle College High School (a high school resident on Mott's campus), incident reporting and information sharing, and ongoing survey work focused on campus civility issues.

R: This action project represents a unique opportunity that has engaged the entire institution in a campus-wide conversation about how to effect an environment conducive to supporting behavioral change and affirming positive student outcomes. Each of the five areas that have been identified as next steps for the project help to maintain this broad approach of sustaining college-wide dialogue, faculty and staff involvement, professional development, and opportunities for student development through the enhanced New Student Orientation. Given that improvements are being sought for the four organizational processes identified in the development of the action project including the new student orientation, academic discipline, conflict reduction, and improved classroom behavior, the team should work to ensure the development of appropriate measures that evidence the impact of recommended strategies. This will be important in determining the future scope of work for this initiative and formulation of subsequent efforts in creating the desired campus culture at MCC.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Many of the effective practices that have emerged from this group relate to the organized and detailed facilitation of the team meetings. Among these are:

- Co-chairs alternate meeting facilitation
- Each meeting begins with an "informal check-in" selected ahead of time by a member of the team. These are non-work related icebreakers and have included items such as: [provide 2 or 3 examples]
- A "what are you hearing?" section on the agenda where team members informally share campus news, rumors, or happenings related to the team's work
- Detailed minutes are taken for each meeting and briefly reviewed at the beginning of each meeting
- Chairs re-print all team-related correspondence and include them with a meeting packet
- All artifacts of the meeting (survey reports, literature reviews, sample documents from other colleges, etc.) are centrally archived and saved
Another effective practice has been close alignment with the Achieving the Dream (ATD) initiative. During both of their 2010-2011 visits, the ATD Coach and Data Facilitator met with the co-chairs of this team to discuss current activities and coordination of effort.

R: The integration of quality improvement efforts between the action project and Achieving the Dream (AtD) has great value, especially as it relates to effecting a climate that supports and affirms student behaviors that lead to constructive outcomes in the college environment. Often faculty and staff are confronted with a myriad of initiatives with programmatic approaches that could be viewed as duplicative. The alignment of these efforts strengthens institutional systems and the context for marshalling resources and support around the goals of the action project and AtD. The effective practices in group meeting facilitation and promoting active participation by all group members should be used as a model in expanding these practices among other work groups.

5: Project Challenges

A: While many of the team’s recommendations are likely to be straightforward and non-controversial, some center on complex cultural issues such as language, behavior, culture, and dress. In addition, some of the suggested improvement theories that involve classroom management, policies, and syllabus civility statements are voluntary issues that impact faculty governance. For this reason, the team’s recommendations center on professional development, training, and building of awareness.

R: The action project team has provided opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in the development of recommendations to strengthen and endorse the appropriate behaviors desired within the campus community. Those recommendations that look to change or modify values and cultural assets that are externally influenced may be perceived as difficult and challenging. It is important that the development of those values and behaviors that are held in highest esteem and endorsed by those within the MCC community. The determination of standards and limits of what is tolerated on campus will be respected if all within the environment support them, serve as advocates and standard bearers for those values. The extent to which the values of the MCC community are not to be constrained or delineated within collective bargaining agreements but supported as the framework through which the integrity and dignity of all are recognized and supported; this effort will be of great benefit for students, staff and faculty. Try not to place the initiative within the context of governance, but maintain and promote the desired values to be shared by all. Therefore, the work of the team in establishing the appropriate context, developing advocates, soliciting input, engaging and expanding broad representation at all levels of the institution will support the success of the project and assure that the cultural change being sought will be sustained. The team is to be commended on its work. The institution is making reasonable progress towards completion of the project and the effort to strengthen Campus Cultural and Behavioral Readiness.