

## Appendix 5 Summary of Comments from Constellation Survey

February 2005

The Constellation Survey was completed by 360 employees at Shawnee State University during the last week of February 2005. The survey had three demographic questions followed by eighty-one statements that were ranked on two dimensions:

- How important is the statement to SSU and
- How is Shawnee State University doing with respect to the statement.

Each statement had a comment button where additional observations and explanations could be offered. Four open ended questions allowed for more extensive comments at the end of the survey. This report is a summary of the comments for Shawnee's Constellation Survey.

Questions 4 – 84 were organized by the nine AQIP Criteria. These questions had a total of 552 comments or about 7 comments for each survey statement. The comments associated with the survey statements tended to identify concerns, highlight areas of success and raise questions. The following comments are samples from the hundreds of comments received.

The comments are organized by the nine AQIP criteria. For each criteria three sample comments are presented – 1) positive highlight of success, 2) critical comment or concern, and 3) a question. More detail about the AQIP criteria and principles can be found at: [http://www.aqip.org/pafiledb/uploads/Princ\\_Categ.pdf](http://www.aqip.org/pafiledb/uploads/Princ_Categ.pdf)

Several individuals from the Strategic Planning Committee (Carl Hilgarth, Kitty Linde, and Dave Todt) prepared this summary from the large document listing all the comments added to the Constellation Survey. The entire 68 page listing of survey comments is posted on the SSU intranet AQIP site if you would like to see the source document for this summary report. Individual names were removed from the comments, except for the President's. The complete collection of comments is on the SSU website at: <http://www.shawnee.edu/acad/aqip/pdf/ShawneeConstellCommentsfiltered%202.pdf>

### **AQIP Criteria 1 – Helping Students Learn**

This is better than it was 10 years ago, but we still have a long way to go. I think that we have much more support, campus-wide, for academic goals for our students. In particular, we have gotten much better at informing students about why they are required to take courses outside of their majors.

I think that we can do a much better job with letting our students know what is expected of them, particularly since we are an open-enrollment institution. Students need to know that more will be expected of them in college...this is not just high school all over again. But, if we say this, we need to make sure that the rigor in our programs indeed matches what we profess.

I am not familiar with the Student Affairs depts.

## **AQIP Criteria 2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives**

One example is that of athletics. Most faculty wouldn't agree with me on this, but I believe that having a strong athletic program (coupled with high academic expectations of our athletes) only improves the public image of our University. Let's be frank, having winning teams is wonderful PR and brings pride to our University. This helps to endear us to our Portsmouth community and is a wonderful recruiting tool for enrollment management. We need to put money into our existing sports, and work on having some exciting and winning teams besides basketball. And most importantly, we need to graduate those athletes!

Another bad question. Non-educative activities should have no place here. Everything we do need to have some educative meaning.

What exactly are SSU's "non-education activities and objectives"? I have no clue.

## **AQIP Criteria 3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs**

I think our new focus on Alumni affairs will improve this relationship and our former students loyalty to us after they graduate.

As we have grown, we have become more cumbersome and plodding in our reactions to the needs of students. We should streamline efforts and try to become more agile as an institution.

We appear to have an issue with some instructors not understanding and/or honoring ADA regulations, as they pertain to the classroom accommodations for disabled students. Perhaps a new criteria for this should be added to the instructor/course evaluation form to raise awareness about this issue?

## **AQIP Criteria 4 – Valuing People**

I appreciate the learning communities and the Lilly conference. As well, I appreciate the funds set aside if I choose to attend a conference or to order videos/books through our library. But I do wish that there was more available for membership dues/renewals (I had this at my last institution and it was very helpful).

Our current evaluation system for administrators and support staff are not taken seriously enough by all departments. They are not done consistently by all departments and when they are they are done I fear they are done pretty superficially. I cannot speak to faculty evaluations.

When I was hired, I did not go through any type of orientation. I was just "thrown in there" and learned as things came up. Orientation would be helpful, especially learning what department deals with what issues, how to go about using university money, and university policies such as vacation time and sick time.

## **AQIP Criteria 5 – Leading and Communicating**

When needs arise, I have found the campus leadership to be sympathetic and responsive within the fiscal means they have available.

VERY important--but judge for yourself: most of us really have little idea of what each other's jobs actually entail. If we did, we wouldn't send so many students on so many wild goose chases.

Many of the committees are inactive. Meetings are not well attended, unless \$ is involved. Too many committees?

## **AQIP Criteria 6 - Supporting Institutional Operations**

Shawnee has always placed priority on the facility. This is a strength, however, other areas need priority too.

Some higher administrative staff-faculty seem to travel an awful lot while some newer faculty do not have the opportunity to attend seminars. There is not an adequate system here to see that money is distributed evenly among staff-faculty & etc. Rank is pulled among those here the longest. They seem to feel they are entitled to what ever they want to do.

I feel that this is one of the biggest weaknesses at Shawnee State. Some of our students are still being given the run around. I believe that in our department, we try very hard to be helpful and make the student's transition to SSU as easy as possible. If we don't know the answer to their problem, we try to find out for them by picking up the phone. I believe the student really appreciates when an employee goes the extra mile to help them.

### **AQIP Criteria 7 - Measuring Effectiveness**

The health sciences and other accredited programs are heavily involved with meeting external standards.

This is done unevenly across campus. Some do; some don't.

Our department takes this seriously and we work on this semi-annually. Gives us a focus on what we have done and what we need to do. Is this a requirement for all departments?

### **AQIP Criteria 8 - Planning Continuous Improvement**

We need to make sure that we keep our edge. Let's not just compare, but be better.

The problem here is that we, as an institution, have different programs with different needs. Some faculty see our future as a pure liberal arts college and some our future as a pure trade school. Unfortunately, we need to share the vision of giving the students the most effective education that we can. This, in most cases, is never going to be a one-size-fits-all approach. We need to share a vision of educating and doing so flexibly.

At last!!!!!!! The question (*5-10 year vision for SSU*) in fact states SSU's major problem. There is NO agreement on this issue at all. Does anybody wish to address the question??

### **AQIP Criteria 9 - Building Collaborative Relationships**

I believe that we are working very hard to do this. I think we need to broaden our student base, esp. to Kentucky, West Virginia, and neighboring states. We have tremendous potential here due to our degree programs and our commitment to small classes. I think we should promote this to a wider area.

There is a fair amount of distrust between faculty and administration. This could be due to the union environment...I am not sure. I do know that it exists, with both sides often suspecting hidden agendas.

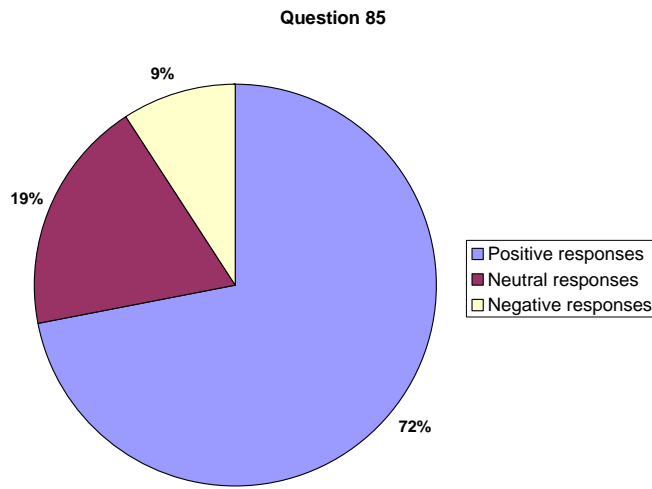
Depends upon the Department. Some work and communicate quite well while others seem to be totally dysfunctional and do not even communicate well internally.

The last four questions allowed for a more open ended response. In general the responses to these questions were very positive. The following summary gives some statistics for each of the questions followed by some sample responses. Again samples for each question (except #87) are provided in categories, 1) positive statements, 2) critical comments or concerns, 3) neutral or mixed statements, and 4) questions.



Question 85 – 240 responses

**How would you describe your current level of enthusiasm and/or reservation for improving Shawnee State through the use of systematic quality improvement? Why?**



Sample Comments

I am enthusiastic about the process, but once the report is in, we need to act on the suggestions. We are a good school, but I personally feel that we could make it to Newsweek. With our small classes, quality campus housing, degree programs, sports programs that have welcomed walk ons, we have a lot to offer. Let's think big, instead of just Southern (depressed) Ohio. Let's make our community a part of our university.

I am very excited about the prospect of systematic quality improvement. Too often, over the years, I've watched SSU develop good ideas during the course of our 10-year evaluations only to see them die on the vine between visits of the accrediting agency. Shawnee State has so much potential. I am looking forward to the "community building" I think will be the result of the AQIP process.

Low. Systematic quality improvement assumes someone is in charge of the process, has the authority to make change and the resources to accomplish it. That is not us.

Moderately low because I have seen empire building, lack of cooperation, and lack of communication between faculty and administrators and between departments for too many years. The current committee process makes it too hard to be innovative and to change courses.

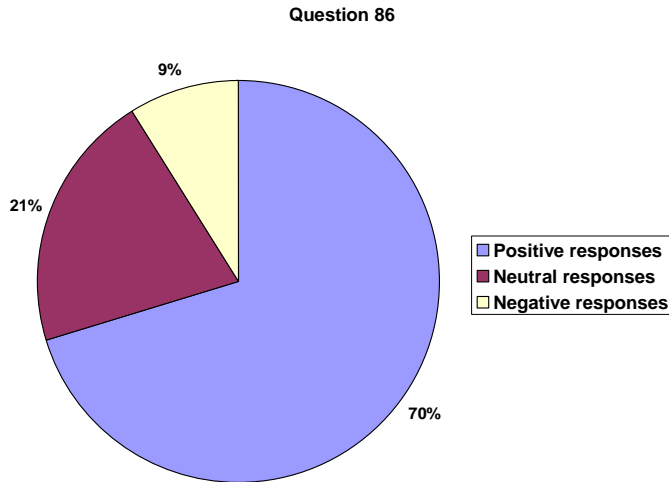
What is "systematic quality improvement"?

Here is a resource for a basic answer to the question, what is systematic quality improvement? Please see the article by Stephen Spangehl, Director of AQIP at the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, at the AQIP web site:

<http://www.aqip.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=25&Itemid=40>

Question 86 – 245 responses

**Overall, how would you describe your professional satisfaction at Shawnee State?**



Sample Comments

SSU is a remarkable institution that serves a critical need for a population who would otherwise be without access to higher education or opportunities for the improvement of their human condition. We have some challenges, however, in communication and building a sense of value among the personnel which, ultimately, translates into service issues for students and general attitude on campus.

I have seen this institution grow beyond the expectations I had when I arrived over 15 years ago. There are minor areas where things could be different, but overall, this place has been amazing.

As an adjunct faculty member, I been shown nothing but cordial respect. Colleagues have not diminished my role or contribution to the (English) department despite my recent hire or part-time status. The classes I have been given are sufficiently challenging without being overwhelming. I am quite satisfied with my experience at SSU thus far.

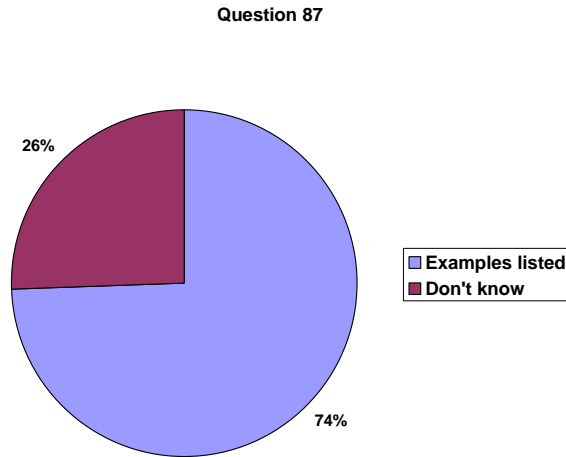
Overall I am highly satisfied with my professional opportunities at SSU. I feel SSU supports professional satisfaction most of the time, but that better processes need to be in place to address ongoing needs of growth, development, and change across and within programs, departments, and courses.

Despite it's many faults I am very satisfied at SSU. I suppose my great pessimism comes from the fact that I see so much potential, yet so little progress. I hope that AQIP will allow us to achieve greater strides in our quest for greatness.

Professionally, the organization is lacking. The university could be so much more. Enrollment has been steady, but at the current status of the university, it will likely decrease. We need more qualified and committed faculty and adjuncts. In addition, we need administrators that are willing to look to the future and put in the time and energy to expand SSU into the next century. For instance, SSU is so far behind on online courses/degrees. This should have already been up and running for associate degrees and most bachelor degrees.

Question 87 – 207 responses

**What are 1-3 examples of processes, areas, programs, etc., at Shawnee State that have established an improvement cycle?**



Approximately three-fourths of the respondents to this question identified areas where an improvement cycle was being used at Shawnee State. Please look at the complete document for the list of the processes, areas and programs cited for working on improvement. Several example statements are listed below.

Sample Comments

The Title III grant program has been quite successful, in part because they started with clearly stated goals, measured accomplishment, and changed the goals when appropriate. Several recent disciplinary accreditations such as the nursing and teacher education programs follow a clearly identified set of improvement processes. Academic outcomes assessment, though uneven at the department level, has systematically reviewed and modified its university-wide activities, making mini-grant awards to encourage innovation.

1. The English/Humanities Department has a clear list of improvements for each year and painstakingly works to implement them. 2. Student advising approaches are better, though they may not be evaluating for further improvement. 3. Action to involve alumni in SSU seems to be producing improvement.

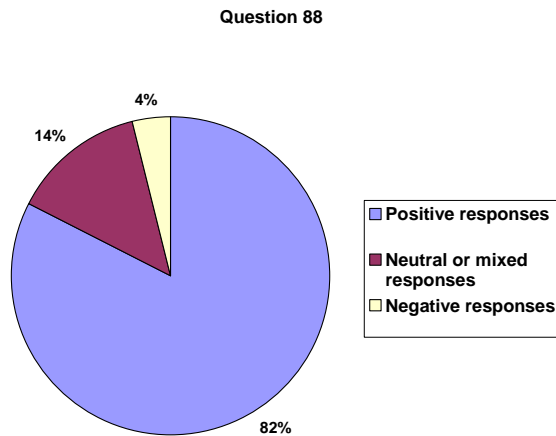
1. Faculty Learning Communities - I wish we could expand these to include administrators! 2. Facilities work teams - the custodial and grounds staff do an excellent job keeping our campus beautiful.

1. MySSU - the electronic communication revolution in interacting within the University and beyond, is a very positive avenue through which job performance on various Institutional businesses becomes highly effective. 2. Observations reveal that people are positively responding to changes that effect quality improvement. 3. New programs like the Computer Gaming courses in Fine, Digital and Performing Arts, Nursing courses and Engineering curricula, are all excellent examples of established improvements.

I speak from a limited perspective, but I find that the adjunct meetings we have are helpful. I am looking forward to the one on March 4 when we will actually sit down as a group and grade some papers. I am most anxious to learn what the other adjuncts and full-time profs do when they assess writing.

## Question 88 – 245 responses

**Overall, how would you describe the success of Shawnee State University in meeting the needs of the people of the southern Ohio region?**



### Sample Comments

We have many programs to offer to the students of the southern Ohio region. We can offer housing to area students who want to live on campus and students who do not, can commute. Our athletic program is excellent. We have a great girls and boys basketball team for the community and Golden Bears to support. We have girls and boys track and a soccer team to support. Overall, I think that the success of Shawnee State University is meeting the needs of the people of the southern Ohio region and it will continue to do so as it grows in enrollment.

I feel that Shawnee State has made a great impact on the Southern Ohio Region. It has given many area students a chance to receive a better education at an affordable price. Many students would not have an opportunity to receive a degree in higher education without Shawnee State being located here.

I believe Shawnee State is the mainstay of southern Ohio and we have an opportunity, as well as an obligation to be the best we can be.

Overall, SSU is adequately meeting the goals of southern Ohio. It has opened doors to students that would never have had the opportunity to attend college. People in the region are hesitant to leave the area and SSU gives those students the availability of a university and staying close to home. SSU is also becoming a more traditional college setting with the development of housing.

Let's get past Southern Ohio. We need to go global to succeed. We will never meet the needs of the people of this area until we can be the catalyst for more quality industries, jobs, in this area. We need to work with area industrial development. Our graduates deserve more than minimum wage jobs if they choose to stay here. But, we also need to attract employers to campus who can offer our students jobs. Our job fair needs strengthening.

Apparently we are not meeting the needs of the community when people within walking distance in the city of Portsmouth have not even been on campus. Communication with the news media is slow and often events are printed when they are over or do not give enough information for people to know if they want to attend. People often get the Shawnee Shuffle here.

I think we are moving away from meeting the needs of the region due to wanting to increase enrollment.