

The Shawnee State University Quality Effort – May 10, 2010

At the end of spring semester 2010 a survey of faculty and staff at Shawnee State University was completed to prepare for the AQIP Strategy Forum. The survey was administered through SurveyGizmo to discern faculty and staff knowledge of, involvement in, and attitudes about the AQIP accreditation process. Following several demographic questions, employees were asked five questions about AQIP at Shawnee State.

1. How familiar are you with Shawnee’s current quality improvement program, AQIP?
2. Which AQIP Activities have you been involved in?
3. What is your opinion about the AQIP Process?
4. Who on campus is responsible for AQIP?
5. What do you expect from Shawnee’s involvement in AQIP in the future?

Results

One hundred and thirty-seven Shawnee State employees completed the survey. This response represents approximately one-third of SSU faculty and staff. Two-thirds of the respondents were from the Division of Academic Affairs, which is the largest employee group on campus. Survey completers had varying years of experience at Shawnee state:

Years of experience	Count	Percent
0-5 years	43	31.6%
6-10 years	23	16.9%
11-15 years	16	11.8%
Greater than 15 years	54	31.7%

How familiar are you with Shawnee’s current quality improvement program, AQIP?

Knowledge of AQIP	Count	Percent
Very Familiar	19	14.0%
Somewhat Familiar	57	41.9%
Not Very Familiar	37	27.2%
Not At All Familiar	23	16.9%

Which AQIP Activities have you been involved in (check all that apply)?

AQIP Involvement	Count	Percent
Vital Focus/Conversation Day	45	62.5%
Action Projects	32	44.4%
Strategy Forum	23	31.9%
Reporting Results	19	26.4%
Creation of Systems Portfolio	13	18.1%

For the last three questions, respondents were given a text block in which to reply. It was hoped that a set of richer comments would be achieved with this open ended response opportunity. The responses were categorized into related groups. It should be noted that about one-third of the respondents did not enter anything in the open ended response text blocks. A table of results for each question is provided followed by some typical and other responses.

What is your opinion about the AQIP Process?

AQIP Attitude	Count	Percent
Positive	44	49.4%
Neutral or No opinion	33	37.1%
Negative	12	13.5%

Typical Responses – Positive

AQIP has kept accreditation activity in front of us constantly and moved Shawnee toward a culture of continuous improvement.

Much better than the prescriptive, dogmatic self-study and site visit.

Typical Response – Neutral

Great potential. Need to make it a regular part of doing business, rather than rushing to meet deadlines at the end.

Typical Response – Negative

I am in strong favor of quality improvement. That said, I think many times there is not enough action behind the plans. I feel that it takes too long to talk about what we should do and we don't spend enough time doing what we should do.

Other Interesting Responses

AQIP purports to be a TQM/CI management system. While there are many things to criticize TQM/CI for, AQIP does not even meet the stated criteria for a TQM/CI system. It's focus on top down, bureaucratic, management by objective methods is in actuality, reminiscent of the old Fordist regime. Toyota's abandonment of "total quality" in favor of "management by objective" is a major part of the story behind the defective gas pedal. We do not need TQM/CI systems in academia to enhance worker participation and design of "product quality". These mechanisms already existed in the shared governance process, which actually gave faculty a much greater voice than any phony prop-corporate TQM/CI system. In effect, AQIP is rather Orwellian in how it functions. It purports to be leading to greater "bottoms up" organization, but it is really more top down and control oriented. Frankly, it

reflects the growing drive to de-skill and homogenize the workforce. It is an expression of corporate hegemony and a rather vulgar one at that.

Ideally, AQIP should be an excellent mechanism to enable the entire campus to continuously identify weaknesses, apply fixes, and analyze outcomes -- closing the loop to improve all facets of university life -- teaching, learning, community, culture, etc. Perhaps on this campus AQIP clarified the process of establishing some priorities; however, the projects that were identified and the changes that have taken place "via AQIP" would/should have happened regardless. My recollection is that one of the chief concerns identified initially was the need to provide teaching and learning experiences relevant to the needs of students seeking viable employment in a difficult economic climate. I am not aware that that concern has been addressed; in fact, I do not recall having seen a status report or update on any of the AQIP projects. If information has not been communicated regarding the actions taken or successes of these projects, it suggests to those staff members not immediately affected by the AQIP projects that AQIP is irrelevant to their work (unlike North Central Accreditation which we all needed to be continually aware of.)

I agree that SSU needs to have quality improvement strategies...but we need to focus more on actual programs to give accreditation to some of our fading programs (like plastics). We have very few graduates...and very few who can go on to get a Master's degree in that field because SSU plastics tech. grads, have not graduated from an ABET accredited university.

Who on campus is responsible for AQIP?

AQIP Responsibility	Count	Percent
Provost/Provost's Office	32	34.0%
Everyone	30	31.9%
Strategic Planning Committee	6	6.4%
Administrative Team	12	12.8%
Don't Know	14	14.9%

Typical Responses – Provost

Provost's office/Dave Todt

Typical Responses – Everyone

The entire campus has a vital role in the process.

Typical Responses – Strategic Planning Committee

Strategic Planning Committee and everyone at some level in collecting data sharing their input.

Typical Responses – Administrative Team

Senior Administrative University officials

Other Interesting Responses

The answer probably should be everyone, but in a practical sense, it is the upper level administrators such as the Dean and Provost. They are the ones who have to pull together the reports from the activities of everyone else on the various committees.

What do you expect from Shawnee’s involvement in AQIP in the future?

AQIP Expectations	Count	Percent
Continuous Improvement	15	20.0%
Continued Accreditation	9	12.0%
Better Processes on Campus	13	17.3%
Increased Communication	7	9.3%
No Change	5	6.7%
Don’t Know	26	34.7%

Typical Answer – Continuous Improvement

Focus on continuous improvement based on the needs of the campus community (within the strategic plan of the USO)

Typical Answer – Continued Accreditation

Continued improvement in ALL University functions and responsibilities.

Insurance that SSU maintains accreditation, identification of strengths and weaknesses.

Typical Answer – Better Processes on Campus

Provides for goal setting and processes for allowing those goals to be met.

Typical Answer – Increased Communication

Perhaps more information sharing about it. The goals need to be broadcast often and clearly.

Typical Answer – No Change

About the same. We tend to place band aids on issues/problems rather than find real solutions.

Other Interesting Responses

Continued guidance and direction, examination of goals, elucidation of strategies to achieve those goals

To actually listen to the problems staff are having and attempt to correct the problems especially as concerns the CARS and Jenzabar systems we all use daily. As an example, get the degree audit system in MySSU to work already so students can run their own degree audits. This would take a huge load from the Success Center.

I would hope that, in light of the "doom & gloom" financial predictions, a plan is developed that will promote creativity in working through this economic contraction. However, if this plan is not developed with input from all levels and is strictly "top-down" change (something we seem to do quite often), resistance will be strong and morale will continue to erode.

I would like to see the university use AQIP as a bully pulpit to 1) continue to improve the campus living environment for our residential students , 2) to "persuade" faculty to develop innovative instructional methods, concentrating especially on supplementary and complementary electronic learning resources for students who need extra help and/or remediation; and 3) to develop a distance education program that is competitive with other institutions in Ohio.

Graduation rates increased due to retention in programs, quality of programs enhanced and student activities offered increased.

I expect AQIP will lead (as it already has) to increased hiring of more layers of "management" (i.e.) top and mid level administrators and more centralization, direction and control. It will also lead to greater homogenization in the classroom: more "McDonaldization".

As an institution of higher education, I think it is important to provide opportunities for our students to be actively engaged in the community. I hope that Civic Engagement will be a part of the accreditation process in the future and that we actually recognize and fulfill our role as a resource to the community through this process.

Would love to spend our money figuring out how to pay our adjunct faculty better and maintain better teachers within the university. As a full-time adjunct with 2 children, I am eligible for food stamps and government assistance. With such a high number of adjunct faculty, it would be nice to be given quality training within departments that is needed to better the learning environment for the students of SSU.

More on closing the loop and documentation of our accomplishments and not just collecting data

Conclusions

The survey results indicate that a majority of faculty and staff on campus are aware of AQIP and the role of continuous quality improvement in maintaining Shawnee State's accreditation. Fifty-six percent of respondents were very familiar with or know something about AQIP. The large majority of the employees responding to the survey have been involved in some AQIP activity.

Most employees have a positive opinion about AQIP. Some concerns and negative attitudes do exist that can and should be addressed in future communication and AQIP information. While many respondents recognized that AQIP and quality improvement is the responsibility of everyone on campus, there is a perception that the Provost's Office is responsible. While the Provost's Office has taken a lead, it will be important to engage more individuals on campus in a way that they see their day-to-day jobs connected to AQIP and continuous improvement.

Expectations for the future of AQIP at Shawnee State range from maintaining accreditation to solving significant campus challenges (advising, financial uncertainty, engaging the community, etc.) Too many employees either had no expectations or did not know enough to have and expectations. That points again to a challenge to communicate the AQIP process better and more actively engage a larger percentage of the campus community in AQIP activity.