

# QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

## Central Arizona College

Coolidge, Arizona

February 7-9, 2007

### Quality Checkup team members:

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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 visit agenda was organized according to how best to assess and review progress made since the 2004 System Appraisal Feedback Report. Institutional representatives shared information through PowerPoint presentations, policy documents, program materials, and joined in helpful discussions of issues and questions based on the systems portfolio review.

The 2004 System Appraisal Feedback Report lists 84 Os and OOs. The College demonstrated various levels of involvement in projects to address 60 of them.

The 2004 System Appraisal Feedback Report also enumerates 6 Strategic Issues. Each strategic issue is being addressed in some detail. Descriptions of specific actions/activities /plans can be found on the College's website and in CAC's Quality System program (Quality Initiatives; Guiding Documents; Strategic Operational Planning; Curriculum Assessment and Processes; Program Review; Support Systems and Structure; Learning College; Data and Information Management; and Future Quality Initiatives).

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

***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.***

There were no accreditation issues listed in the 2004 Feedback Report.

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.***

### **Process Improvement**

College personnel verified the focus on process improvement from administration and student services through facilities and curriculum development. Curriculum assessment processes are addressed through the Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System (ACRES);

mandatory program review every 3 years; and Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) approval. Process improvement practices are clear and being organized throughout the College.

### **Strategic Planning**

At the CAC, operational planning and budgeting is driven by its strategic goals. The College's continuing commitment to strategic planning is evidenced by its publication of its Strategic Goals (2006-2011): Create a dynamic environment for learning success; Maintain a culture supporting employee success; Advance community relations and partnerships; Strengthen effective communication throughout the internal and external College community; and Maximize fiscal and physical resources. The budgeting process is designed to support the planning process.

### **Collaborative Relationships**

The College has a clear and articulated understanding of the strategic importance of key collaborative relationships. Incorporated into its program for Quality Systems is an initiative for the development and measurement of partnerships.

### **Defining Quality**

The College utilizes, and has internalized the AQIP approach to continuous quality improvement. They have articulated and published the CAC Quality System, an academic quality improvement program, as well as establishing an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality supported by a Quality Council and under the direction of a Quality Initiatives Coordinator.

### **Assessment and Outcomes Measures**

Program review, both academic and non-academic, is based on an assessment model. Within the academic sphere, the model is based on measures of effective teaching and learning as well as program viability. On the non-academic side, the model is based on evidence of effectiveness, evaluation of service satisfaction and staff development systems. Both models require alignment with institutional vision, mission, and strategic goals, the identification of strengths and opportunities and the development of action plans to address opportunities. In support of the assessment and outcomes model, the College maintains an Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Knowledge Systems.

### **Funding**

The College is cognizant of the limitations to its funding model based on resources, population growth and state funding. However in light of the recognized commitment to continuous improvement, the budget development process is designed as a planning document in support of the organization's strategic goals.

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.***

Central Arizona College's commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement as a leadership model is apparent in the organization's positive response to the Systems Portfolio Feedback Report (December, 2004) as well as their proactive efforts in support of CQI as a consequence of creating/submitting their AQIP Systems Portfolio (May, 2004).

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 Quality Checkup Team reviewed the documents relating to the USDE default rate. The documents indicated that the default rate in 2003 was 10.2 and in 2004 8.8, a decline of 1.4 percent.

Other Title IV compliance issues

***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 USDE, Office of Federal Student Aid sited CAC for "Improper Needs Analysis" for the period July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004. Through agreement with the USDE, the matter was resolved in August 2006

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.***

The College Catalog lists program details, provides references for scholarships and financial aid, and contains the refund policy, dates and amounts. The length of classes and course

requirements are also listed.

The CAC webpage lists all tuition, fees, and differential costs for particular programs.

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 CAC advertising and recruiting materials reviewed by the team were consistent with the fairness and accuracy values of the Higher Learning Commission. CAC references to the HLC were appropriately accompanied by all required contact information for the Commission.

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.***

The College has an institution-wide accreditation relationship with the Higher Learning Commission. In addition, the CAC maintains specialized accreditation for multiple programs defined in the College Catalog.

The Statement of Affiliation Status indicates Central Arizona College is scheduled for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2007-2008.

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.***

Records of student complaints are maintained in several administrative offices.

Other USDE compliance-related issues

***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.***

No other USDE compliance-related issues came to the team's attention.

Other AQIP issues

General comments and counsel from the Quality Checkup team for the institution

- Communication is a challenge and an opportunity for the organization
- Ombudsmen program procedures should be clear to students
- A review of the strategic planning cycle may prove valuable
- Establishing goals for increasing minority employment reflective of the student body and the community will enhance relationships.

Throughout the organization there is an eagerness for the continuous quality improvement processes being deployed to achieve the goals of the College. A prevalence of quality is developing and is being nurtured.