1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this action project is to build on the Rubrics for Peer Review of Teaching already passed by the Faculty Assembly:
   1. Each academic department will develop and approve a set of guidelines and processes that adds to the Rubrics for Peer Review of Teaching to ensure quality course delivery for online and on campus courses.
   2. The Business Department has developed a set of standards involving quality assurance for online courses that can be used as a reference.
   3. A series of metrics will be developed involving course quality including student evaluations.
   4. The result of these metrics will be used to make course improvements.

2: Reasons For Project

A: The advancement section of the 2006 HLC Comprehensive Evaluation Visit recommended that UMC “put into place processes that will support the level of expected growth and provide the desired level of course quality across programs”. The enrollment growth in online courses makes this an institutional priority at this time. Maintaining comparable quality between online and on campus courses is essential.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: All academic departments, Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, Center for Adult Learning

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Adoption of course quality assurance procedures by all departments

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The year period of time is needed to develop and adopt these processes along with developing metrics.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The action project team will report to the AQIP Steering Committee on progress with the goals of:
   1. Fall 2011: development of procedures for each department
   2. Fall 2011: determination of appropriate metrics
   3. Winter 2011: approval of procedures by department

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Measures of success will include:
   1. Number of departments adopting a quality assurance process for all courses
## Project Update

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

#### A:
During the action project, each of the four academic departments developed and approved a set of guidelines and processes that added to the Rubric for Peer Review of Teaching to ensure quality course delivery for online and on campus courses (goal 1). During their development, each department referenced the set of standards (and process) created and used by the Business Department during their quality assurance for online courses over the last several years (goal 2). During the action project committee meetings, the standards and processes for each of the departments were discussed and compared to determine the similarities and differences between the four departments. This review showed that a majority of the standards were the same or similar across all departments, differing only by a small number of standards that were identified as unique based on course and department needs and preferences (e.g., labs). The review also showed that the course quality review processes used by each department were also similar, but varied slightly based on the level of usage (experience using the standards) throughout the year.

As the course standards are implemented to increase quality in courses prior to delivery, a process was also created to connect post-delivery data (student evaluations) to those courses (goal 3). The process involves identifying the average evaluation scores for specific evaluation questions for all courses taught within each department and providing that information to the Department Heads to share with faculty. This information can be used during on-going discussions the departments have regarding course quality as well as within individual faculty member/Department Head meetings. This process will be implemented during the fall 2012 semester (due to summer break as well as time to gather data). The results of these metrics will be used to make course improvements (goal 4).

During the last three years, response rates for course/instructor evaluations (“Student Ratings of Teaching”) have been significantly lower than in previous years. Since data from course/instructor evaluations are an essential component to on-going course improvement efforts, increasing the response rate for all courses is an important factor. A process was created to increase evaluation response rates. The process primarily consists of implementing current guidelines for online and on campus courses (instructor encouraging completion, setting time aside during on campus class sessions, etc.). A small pilot study is being implemented to measure the impact of these practices within selected online and on campus courses. This pilot will be implemented at the end of the spring 2012 semester and data from the pilot will be used to make recommendations for fall 2012 semester.

### 2: Institution Involvement

#### A:
Since each department was required to establish course quality standards and processes, each faculty member was part of the discussion (and their approval). Interest and involvement was also increased since each faculty member will be impacted by their department standards and process (as every course will eventually be reviewed as the project continues to be implemented). The department ownership of their standards and processes was an important element in the success of this action project.

The action project committee meetings also provided a forum for information to be shared among the departments. The committee consisted of one member from each of the four departments. During committee meetings throughout the year, members shared resources, discussed issues and concerns, provided updates on department efforts, and communicated information to and from their departments regarding the project.

In addition, the AQIP Steering Committee Coordinator provided information regarding the action project to the campus community. Project information was provided during presentations at Faculty Assembly and Campus Assembly meetings during the year.

### 3: Next Steps

#### A:
Course Quality Standards (Pre-Delivery)

With approved course quality standards and processes, each department will continue applying those standards to their courses. In addition, as the project is implemented, improvements will be made to the process as more courses are reviewed (e.g., logistics, documentation, etc.). While the Business Department has used their course quality standards and processes for several semesters, the other three departments implemented their standards and processes this year as part of the action project. As the implementation
continues, departments will continue to make refinements to enhance the process.

**Post-Delivery Quality Process**

As the course standards are implemented to increase quality in courses prior to delivery, a process was also created to connect post-delivery data (student evaluations) to those courses. During the summer 2012, after course/instructor evaluation data is available for the spring semester, average ratings for specific evaluation questions will be generated for all courses in each of the four departments (for example, evaluation question 1 average rating for all department courses). Once generated, the data will be sent to Department Heads. Department Heads will determine the best use of the data in their course quality improvement efforts (e.g., sharing the data with faculty via email during summer, department meetings in the fall, one-on-one faculty/Department Head meetings, etc.).

**Increasing Course/Instructor Evaluation Response Rates**

Since data from course/instructor evaluations are an essential component to on-going course improvement efforts, increasing the response rate for all courses is an important factor. A process was created to increase evaluation response rates. The process primarily consists of implementing current guidelines for online and on campus courses (instructor encouraging completion via email or during class time, setting aside during on campus class sessions, etc.). A small pilot study is being implemented to measure the impact of these practices within selected online and on campus courses. This pilot will be implemented at the end of the spring 2012 semester. Data from the pilot will be used to make recommendations for fall 2012 semester implementation during the course/instructor evaluation timeframe.

### Resulting Effective Practices

**A:** This action project had two significant outcomes: online and on campus course quality standards and the process for implementing those standards. On and off campus resources were used during the design of these standards/processes, including those of the campus Business Department, Quality Matters, and examples available on the Internet. As those resources were helpful to this action project, these standards/processes may be helpful to other campuses that are implementing course quality initiatives.

### Project Challenges

**A:** The following are potential challenges the institution faces regarding this action project.

- Since this action project starting this year, there are a significant number of courses that need to be reviewed in every department (mostly on campus courses). Since this project occurred at relatively the same time as more online courses are being developed, applying these new quality standards to online courses shouldn’t be an issue. The challenge is applying these standards to the hundreds of on campus courses. Each department will need to develop a timeline to ensure this quality assurance project continues.
- In order for this project to continue and be successful, support, direction and pressure needs to be provided by administration.
- A strategy needs to be created in order to continue this project beyond the 2011 – 2012 academic year. Developing a process to continue the project needs to be created (committee members, leader, objectives, timeline, etc.).

### Update Review

**Project Accomplishments and Status**

**A:** It is rare to have such a systematic listing of goal completion with a short, compact Action Project, but UMC has done it! This review is clear, concise, and complete with the next steps already identified! You are demonstrating several of the Principles of High Performing Organizations including Focus on Stakeholders, Promoting Collaboration, and Integrity in Words and Deed. As you look toward the completion of the pilot study, you may want to consider perusing some of the improvement-related materials at the HLC Resources for Institutions ([http://www.hlcommission.org/information-for-institutions/resources-for-institutions.html](http://www.hlcommission.org/information-for-institutions/resources-for-institutions.html)).

### Institution Involvement

The Broad-based Involvement shows that UMC Values People (AQIP Category 4) as well as Leading and Communicating (AQIP Category 5). All of this collaboration is building cross-functional relationships (AQIP Category 9) that will help to retire this Action Project. It is now time to think about what comes next. What can University of Minnesota, Crookston build on top of the foundation that has been poured? Where will this Project take the university next? It may be advantageous to build on the Project by creating a program evaluation rubric that uses these course evaluation rubrics to perform program-level assessments.

Next Steps

This Project is progressing quite nicely. Though there are a few more things to be completed before this Project can be officially retired and the completion date is past due, this Action Project is showing good progress toward completion.

Resulting Effective Practices

These resources and successes may be helpful to other campuses, as you have stated. You may want to consider submitting a proposal to present your results at the next HLC Annual Meeting in April or at the regional Association of Institutional Researchers conference. No matter what is done from this point, keep the ultimate goal in mind as you continue your labors toward this Project’s completion.

Project Challenges

FANTASTIC insights! You will need the support of the institution to continue this project to completion, and there is quite a bit of work left to do! There are some solid challenges identified here—competing priorities and monumental labor. The goal should not merely be identification. The goal should be to lead through the challenges toward ultimate completion. You are on the right track. Now it is time to finish the race!

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

The initial project as proposed has been completed. The project update has been submitted and reviewed.

2: Success Factors

All departments have approved a set of quality standards to ensure quality course delivery for both on campus and online courses. A process has been established to utilize student evaluation data in making course improvements. A pilot project was conducted to increase response rates for student evaluations of courses.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A process needs to be developed to continue evaluation of courses using the quality standards. In addition, there needs to be continued work in increasing student response rates and utilizing the resulting data.