The University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) is relatively new to AQIP, having been accepted as an AQIP institution in December 2010. UMC has been actively engaged in AQIP activities since then, with the past 2.5 years having been particularly active.

In light of three key leadership changes (Chancellor in July 2012, first-ever Institutional Effectiveness Director in February 2013, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in July 2013) and HLC’s revised 2012 Systems Portfolio guidelines, UMC requested that the due date for its first Systems Portfolio be changed from November 2013 to June 2014. With confirmation that UMC understood that the remaining activities (Strategy Forum and Comprehensive Quality Review) leading up to Reaffirmation of Accreditation would take place within a compressed time frame, Dr. Sunil Ahuja approved the request.


UMC Special Circumstances

UMC has been involved in three very substantial University of Minnesota (UM) system-wide technology projects in the last three years. In April 2015, the enterprise-wide PeopleSoft upgrade went live after more than three years of preparation. After more than a year of preparation, the enterprise-wide installation of Campus Labs launched in spring of 2015. The enterprise-wide rollover of the University’s web sites will occur in mid to late November 2015, but the behind-the-scenes work has been ongoing for more than a year.

Minimal additional resources were available to support these changes, so existing staff time was diverted to the work. Several months after the go-live date, staff (especially those in Human Resources and Finance) are dealing with portions of the PeopleSoft upgrade that remain problematic across the UM system. Plans to support campus processes (e.g., strategic planning, assessment) through technology were put on hold until the contract with Campus Labs was negotiated and staff could be trained. Ideas for redesigning current websites and
creating new websites have been put on hold until the content management rollover takes place later this semester.

In addition to these system-wide changes, UMC has had two major capital projects underway (construction of a new Wellness Center and an electrical infrastructure project). Campus staff, especially those in Student Affairs and Athletics, have also been engaged in Title IX Campus SaVE Act planning and implementation.

These large system-wide and campus initiatives occurring simultaneously, with limited additional staff resources, impacted UMC’s ability to advance other campus-level projects as quickly as desired.

With the transition calendar and these special circumstances as context for the Comprehensive Quality Review, UMC offers the Quality Highlights information below.

**Actions Capitalizing on Systems Appraisal Feedback, Strategic Challenges, and Strategy Forum**

The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report (SAFR) identified three strategic challenges, namely that UMC has:

- Significant work to do on campus-level processes (not just UM system-level processes), metrics, and benchmarks
- Significant opportunity to develop a more systematic approach in the collection and analysis of data
- Outstanding opportunity to create a sense of urgency incorporating Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) and establish performance targets for key measures

The SAFR also indicated that UMC may want to reaffirm its commitment to AQIP (e.g., rejuvenate Steering Committee, use of comparative data with peer and aspirational institutions). Although early in its AQIP quality journey, UMC is committed to the continuous improvement philosophy and framework provided by AQIP, as this Quality Highlights Report documents.

Based on analysis of the feedback and strategic challenges identified in the SAFR and its own experience, the Strategy Forum team identified Category 5: Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship as the focus for the February 2015 Strategy Forum. (See Appendix A for the Category Worksheet.) The Chancellor’s Cabinet and Executive Committee affirmed this focus, which was then communicated broadly in forums such as the Faculty Assembly, Campus Assembly, and the bi-weekly electronic campus newsletter.
The Strategy Forum team consisted of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA), Institutional Effectiveness Director, Faculty Assembly Chair, an academic department head (the AQIP Steering Committee’s chair), the campus CIO (the AQIP steering committee’s co-chair), the Student Activities Director, and a faculty member with expertise in continuous improvement. Although only two members had previously attended a Strategy Forum, the team successfully completed the Strategy Forum with a solid draft Action Project.

Over the course of several meetings after the Strategy Forum, the team continued to refine the project and develop the Action Project Charter. Early in the process, the team felt that the charter needed to be expanded to include specific deliverables. The team’s biggest “aha moment” came when it realized that items identified as metrics and the deliverables were essentially the same. Specifically, the metrics were poorly disguised deliverables (things to be done) and not measures at all. The team rewrote the metrics, gaining a much better sense of the project in the process.

The Action Project is focused on identifying key campus-wide processes for each of the AQIP Categories, as well as owners, metrics, and data sources for each identified process. Led by the Institutional Effectiveness Director and sponsored by the Chancellor, VCAA, and AVCSA, the Action Project team began work on schedule. The five-member team has focused its initial work on AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn. After one month of work, the team has identified ten key processes, eight measures (with more to be identified), and numerous recommendations for further work.

This Action Project sets the stage for the creation of a dashboard that reflects targets and performance data for key campus-level processes. It also paves the way for identification of division- and unit-level processes and metrics.

The “aha moment” described earlier has been translated into several other projects on campus, including strategic planning, recruitment and retention, assessment, and the Kaizen process discussed below. For example, metrics for recruitment and retention action plans were also generally poorly disguised deliverables (e.g., develop a program, offer a new activity). By distinguishing deliverables as just that, deliverables, units are now also more clearly challenged to identify true measures.

While this “aha” might not be an insight to an organization more advanced in its quality journey, it has been crucial to UMC as a relative newcomer to continuous improvement. UMC recognizes that much work remains to be done to institutionalize such understanding across campus.
As suggested in the SAFR strategic challenges section, a reexamination of peer institutions will be undertaken in 2015-2016. UMC’s emphasis on career-oriented majors makes peer selection somewhat difficult, as institutions of similar size tend to be private and/or have a much larger complement of liberal arts oriented academic programs. The current list of peer institutions was last reviewed in 2006.

AQIP Steering Committee

In its reconstituted form, the AQIP Steering Committee is charged to “provide broad-based campus leadership for AQIP participation, accreditation, and continuous improvement.” The eleven members of the committee include eight “Category Leads” who serve staggered three-year terms, a student named by the Crookston Student Association, as well as the VCAA and the Institutional Effectiveness Director, both of whom serve ex officio. Members are drawn broadly from across campus based on their functional knowledge and expertise in a given AQIP Category. Appointments to the Steering Committee are made by the Chancellor.

The Steering Committee’s duties are to:

- Aid in AQIP Action Project selection, monitor progress, and analyze outcomes upon completion of Action Projects.
- Participate in assembling the campus Systems Portfolio, and aid in analyzing and responding to Systems Appraisal feedback.
- Sponsor and lead continuous improvement activities within their institutional units, while advancing their personal knowledge of continuous improvement principles and techniques.

In addition, the Steering Committee has determined that it needs to play a lead role in communicating “all things AQIP” to the campus community.

Since its first meeting in February 2015, the Steering Committee has:

- Developed and begun to implement a communication plan that includes AQIP “talking points”
- Articulated and communicated a process for soliciting and chartering new AQIP Action Projects
- Validated the process by reviewing and chartering a new Action Project
- Clarified the role of the Category Leads in developing the Action Project Charter
Six members of the Steering Committee were also members of UMC’s Strategy Forum contingent, an intentional overlap that helped build the Steering Committee as a team. The overlap also strengthened the follow-through after Strategy Forum. The Steering Committee is also playing a key role in preparation for the Comprehensive Quality Review.

**Role of Action Projects in Advancing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)**

Since becoming an AQIP institution in late 2010, UMC has retired eight Action Projects, six of them successfully completed and two unsuccessfully retired. (Successfully completed Action Projects substantially met the objectives outlined in the Action Project Charter. The two unsuccessful Action Projects did not complete the objectives and did not meet milestone dates outlined in the Charter.) Three Action Projects are currently underway.

**Active Action Projects:**
- Online New Entering Student Pathway
- Advancing Student Success Through Data Processes, Policies, and Metrics
- Engaging Faculty New to UMC: Becoming Confident, Competent, and Engaged

**Retired (and successfully completed) Action Projects include:**
- Student Retention and Success
- Integrating and Assessing Student Achievement of UMC Core Competencies
- Improve Academic Advising
- Course Quality Assurance
- Revising Program Review Process
- On-Campus Transfer Student Persistence and Satisfaction

**Retired (and generally unsuccessful) Action Projects include:**
- International Student Success and Satisfaction
- Online Student Retention, Graduation, and Satisfaction

In different ways, Action Projects in all three of these categories have helped advance UMC’s continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts. From the retired and generally unsuccessful projects, the lesson has been about the importance of a project leader who is committed to driving the project to completion and institutionalizing the changes. In addition to commitment from this kind of project leader, the successfully completed projects had team members who were invested in the project. The three current projects have strong leadership, committed members, and high-level sponsorship.
Two of the successfully completed projects resulted in processes that are “built-in” continuous improvement drivers. The revised program review process, which incorporated best practices gleaned from other institutions, incorporates qualitative and quantitative data to guide planning and improvements in each academic program. The Course Quality Assurance project resulted in each academic department developing and approving a set of guidelines and a process to ensure quality course delivery for online and on-campus courses. (See Appendix B for a summary of lessons learned from Action Projects.)

The Online New Student Entering Pathway was of sufficient scope and complexity that UMC employed Kaizen methodology for the first time. Sponsored and led by the VCAA, the Kaizen involved more than 15 staff and faculty members from three academic departments, the Center for Adult Learning, the Admissions Office, and the Registrar’s Office. Prior to launching the project, members of the Chancellor’s Cabinet and the Executive Committee were invited to attend introductory training on Lean methodology offered by the State of Minnesota’s Office of Continuous Improvement.

The Kaizen team reported on the “before” process, the “after” process, and the 30, 60, and 90-day action plans to the Chancellor’s Cabinet and the Executive Committee. The before and after process flowcharts were posted in an area that experiences a lot of meeting-related traffic. The remaining action plan in this project is determination of the process metrics that will be used to evaluate effectiveness and efficiency in the future.

This Action Project increased the number of people trained in Lean methodologies, deepened the knowledge of a key process for all involved, streamlined the process, facilitated improved communication and cooperation among several departments, and raised awareness of continuous improvement on campus. It also led to identification of staff members who had interest and skills in advancing continuous improvement.

Collectively, Action Projects have kept continuous improvement at the forefront. Through the bi-weekly electronic campus newsletter, reports (and sometimes formal action) at Faculty Assembly and Campus Assembly, academic department meetings, and standing meetings, regular updates about Action Projects have been frequent reminders that UMC is an AQIP institution with a commitment to continuous improvement. The one-year launch-to-completion Action Project time frame has added urgency to the PDCA cycle.

Further, the campus has become much more demanding that decisions be data based. Progress is being made to establish targets and benchmarks, gather and analyze data, and use the results to continue improvement for a wide variety of small and large projects across the campus.
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

As noted in the 2014 Systems Portfolio, UMC’s VCAA, Institutional Effectiveness Director, and the four faculty members on the Assessment Committee have led a renewed focus on program-level learner outcomes. In 2013-2014, every academic program reviewed and refreshed its program-level learning outcomes and developed a plan to assess achievement of those outcomes. In 2014-2015, faculty collected data and submitted reports on their findings. In addition to leading a “Brown Bag” session on assessment and assisting colleagues, the Assessment Committee hosted the first annual “Super Fun Assessment Day,” an “all hands on deck” workshop that dedicated faculty time to reviewing and analyzing the data and writing annual reports.

Annual reports were received from 27 of the 29 (96%) academic majors. (Copies of each program’s annual report will be available in the Resource Room.) The VCAA, Institutional Effectiveness Director, Assessment Committee members, and the heads of the academic departments have reviewed each of the annual reports using a rubric to evaluate the assessment reports and methodologies. The department heads are using the rubrics in discussions with faculty members about 2015-2016 assessment efforts.

Overall observations about the assessment methods and use of findings suggest the need for more training on drilling down into assessment data to determine specifically where to direct improvements. The Assessment Committee, department heads, Institutional Effectiveness Director, and others will develop and offer this training.

The Assessment Committee will continue to provide leadership, professional development, and consultation to the assessment effort. As in the past two years, members of the Assessment Committee are attending the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, with funding provided by the VCAA.

The Assessment Committee will also assist the Institutional Effectiveness Director with the launch of an assessment module in Campus Labs, an enterprise-wide software system. With the new assessment module, which Campus Labs anticipates releasing in fall 2015, all program-level learning outcomes, assessment plans, and reports will be stored in one place. This new assessment module holds promise that UMC will also be able to ramp up assessment of Common Learning outcomes relying on direct measures, where currently most of this assessment is done indirectly.
Finally, after the rollover of the UMC website to the new Drupal content management system and launch of the Campus Labs assessment module, the Assessment Committee will be asked to guide development of an assessment website that puts assessment resources in the hands of faculty members.

**Academic Program Review**

As described earlier, revision of UMC’s academic program review process was the focus of an Action Project in 2012-2013. The result was a completely revised process. The program review cycle changed from three years to six years. Expectations for the rigor and content of the review were substantially raised.

Implementation of the revised program review process was the focus of a follow-up Action Project in 2013-2014. The program review template was created in the new enterprise-wide Campus Labs platform. After consultation with the academic departments, Academic Affairs identified the review year for each of the academic programs. Institutional Effectiveness created the template data set and met with faculty and department heads to review the new process.

In 2014-2015, two programs began work on their program reviews, but later in the year than expected due to the newness of the process. Only one program (Agricultural Business) completed its self-study within the academic year. The other programs will be completing their review in 2015-2016. An additional six programs begin the review cycle in 2015-2016.

As faculty are introduced to the new program review process, they learn that program review is “a strategic planning process for the academic program.” They are provided a standard data set that includes enrollment, retention, and graduation data. They also receive training in Campus Labs.

As faculty conduct the program review, they are also improving the program review process itself. The process was refined at the end of 2014-2015 on the basis of the feedback faculty provided.

The program review process is being adapted to the review of UMC’s general education program. The General Education Program Review Committee, with faculty members from each of the four academic departments, was organized in Spring Semester 2015. The Committee expects to do the bulk of the review in 2015-2016, with the Liberal Arts and Education
Department serving as the lead department. Updates and reports will be provided regularly at department meetings and meetings of the Faculty Assembly.

**Strategic Planning and Institutional Priorities**

In 2013-2014, UMC adopted “Real-Time Strategic Planning” as its planning approach. Designed for non-profit organizations (and a good fit for AQIP and UMC’s culture and history), Real-Time Strategic Planning increases organizational capacity for strategic planning and establishes a foundational understanding of the future business model, institutional identity, and the criteria (known as the Strategy Screen) by which potential programs and strategies will be evaluated. As new opportunities and challenges arise, UMC uses these foundational tools to determine how to respond.

Implementing this model with a large and broadly based Strategic Planning Leadership Team, UMC identified three institutional priorities in 2013-2014:

- Strategic Enrollment Management
- Strategic Philanthropic Support and Engagement
- Developing UMC as a Rural Economic Development Resource

More recently, UMC has added “Diverse and Inclusive Campus Culture” as an institutional priority. Progress on each of these priorities is summarized below.

**Strategic Enrollment Management**

A Strategic Enrollment Management Committee (SEMC) was formed in 2013 with the charge of “guiding the development, communication, implementation, assessment, and refinement of a strategic enrollment management plan that results in attaining the most appropriate enrollment as measured in student quality and quantity.” SEMC members include faculty members, directors and staff with responsibility for recruitment, the Academic Success Center director, VCAA, AVCSA, the Diversity and Multicultural Programming director, the Athletic Director, the Finance Director, and others who are interested in recruitment and retention. Using recruitment and retention data, SEMC identifies opportunities for improvement, advises on recruitment and retention strategies, and reviews enrollment projections.

In 2014-2015, as part of the strategic planning process, each unit of the campus was challenged to develop action plans to enhance recruitment and retention. As part of this effort, units were asked to identify S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant,
October 1, 2015

Time-bound) goals that measure impact and not just deliverables. The majority of these plans will be implemented in 2015-2016.

Academic departments focused their action plans on developing additional articulation agreements, forging stronger relationships with faculty from two-year colleges, and enhancing engagement with on-campus students. Student Affairs adopted StrengthsQuest as part of a new year-long approach to engaging new students. The offices of Financial Aid, Human Resources, and Finance developed a plan to increase student access to on-campus employment. The Admissions Office, Athletics, and the Center for Adult Learning increased coordination and communication in recruitment. The Admissions Office and International Programs Office collaborated to create a comprehensive recruitment plan to diversify and expand the number of international students on campus. While most plans required no additional resources, the international recruitment plan resulted in establishment of a dedicated budget in FY16.

With leadership from the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, campus-wide metrics are being identified. Targets have been established for four-year and six-year graduation rates. When implemented, the Campus Labs strategic planning module will enable all units and campus leadership to track completion of action plans and, ultimately, impact on recruitment and retention.

**Diverse and Inclusive Campus Culture**

Recognizing the importance of preparing students for the highly diverse world into which they will be graduating, UMC is, with increased intentionality, integrating diversity, inclusion, and engagement into campus conversations and programming this academic year. With students from more than 40 states and 20 countries and from both very urban and very rural areas, UMC reflects the diversity of the greater world and, as such, is a “laboratory” in which students can safely and openly explore difficult topics with people who are different from them.

The initiative launched with a two-day summer retreat that brought 60 faculty, staff, students, and alumni together for discussions on UMC data (quantitative and qualitative), retention of diverse students (e.g., race and ethnicity, home state, size of home community), demographic trends in college-going populations, diversity leadership, communication, creating a respectful workplace, and understanding disability. The retreat was facilitated by three staff members from the UM system offices of Equity and Diversity
(OED) and Disability Resource Center. UMC’s directors of Diversity and Multicultural Programming and Disability Resource Center served as facilitators as well.

The retreat was followed by a plenary session on campus climate during Opening Week of fall semester. The October 23 Professional Development Day for faculty and staff will be devoted to this topic. Members of the Executive Committee will be completing the Intercultural Development Inventory. Several “It’s a Wrap” sessions on various topics will be led by faculty, staff, and/or students. This year’s sessions follow the successful “It’s a Wrap” model established in Spring Semester 2015 providing open and safe space for UMC community members to talk about sensitive or difficult subjects.

Strategic Philanthropic Support and Engagement

The major goal of this initiative is to enhance and leverage support for UMC by engaging various internal and external constituencies, including current students and their families, alumni, faculty, staff, business and industry, community members, and donors in order to nurture a culture of philanthropy and pride. Priority action items include outreach to alumni—of both on-campus and online programs—and asking them to serve as advocates to support the recruitment and retention of prospective and current students; the development and promotion of greater connection to campus history, donor gifts, and the legacy of alumni; working with regional youth organizations such as 4-H to promote the campus and its programs; and increased sharing of UMC’s positive impact on the community, region, and state.

An important outcome in 2014-2015 was the creation of the Crookston Campus-Community Connection (C4), which is comprised of leaders from UMC and the Crookston community who meet monthly. Town/Gown relationships are very strong already, yet C4 is discussing ways to make the relationship even stronger. They are also exploring ways to develop more student internship opportunities in Crookston, how to encourage students, faculty, and staff to patronize local businesses, and how to attract more community members at campus-sponsored educational, cultural, and entertainment events.

Rural Economic Development

UMC is in the process of establishing a Center for Rural Economic Development (CRED) that will bring two existing activities together under one umbrella and add one new endeavor to UMC. UMC’s existing Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Center will come under the CRED umbrella. Sometime
in 2016, they will be joined by a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) satellite office. Working with the current host (UM Duluth), UMC is developing plans to host the Northwest Region SBDC on campus in late 2016 or 2017. In addition to helping fulfill the UM land-grant mission by providing service to the region, the CRED will enhance the educational experience of UMC students by engaging them in projects and research studies related to economic development and entrepreneurship.

**Distance Education Quality Highlights**

In 2006, UMC received Higher Learning Commission authorization to offer any of its academic programs online. UMC currently offers 14 majors and 7 minors completely online. Five certificates are offered completely online as well. (See [www.umcrookston.edu/online](http://www.umcrookston.edu/online) for the UMC online learning website.)

Online learning is strategically vital to UMC. Substantial resources are devoted to ensuring quality in online programs, including technology support for faculty and students, pedagogical training and consulting support for faculty, support services for students, and a quality assurance process for review of online courses.

*Technical support* for faculty and students is provided by both UM central IT and by UMC IT. Central IT hosts and supports the Moodle online learning management platform. UMC IT includes the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT), which supports UMC’s courses in Moodle. CTLT staff provide group training and individual consultation for faculty using Moodle sites for online, hybrid, and on-campus courses. Students and faculty experiencing technical difficulties can access support at UMC during standard business hours and at central IT 24/7/365.

*Pedagogical training and consultation* are also provided by the CTLT staff members, both of whom have extensive experience in online learning. UMC has supported Quality Matters training for 35 faculty members and is a member of the Online Learning Consortium, which offers additional support. Experienced online faculty members mentor faculty new to online learning. Working with staff from the newly established UM Center for Educational Innovation, several UMC faculty and staff completed the Online Learning Consortium’s Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs in summer 2015. During 2015-2016, broader discussions among faculty and staff will prioritize and address opportunities for improvement that were identified in the review.
October 1, 2015

*Academic and support services* available to on-campus students are also available to online students. Financial Aid, Library, Counseling and Career Development, Registrar’s Office, Academic Success Center, and the academic departments are among the offices providing such support. (Financial aid is not available to students in certificate programs, so UMC does not have any programs that fall under the Gainful Employment requirements.)

*Targeted online academic and support services* for online students include:

- Recruitment, registration, and troubleshooting in the Center for Adult Learning
- Online academic advisors in the three departments that offer online programs
- Online tutoring
- Support for online students who are on academic probation, including conditionally admitted students

The *quality assurance process* for online (and on-campus) courses was developed through an AQIP Action Project. As the process has evolved since its completion in early 2012, each academic department has a rubric that a faculty committee uses to review new and redesigned courses before the courses can be offered to students. With a focus on course design, the rubrics expand on UMC’s Rubric for Peer Review of Teaching that is used for peer observations of classroom teaching. One department (Business) has since expanded its model by developing a rubric and review process for course delivery expectations.

Finally, it is worth noting that UMC’s online programs have received recognition by US News and World Report, the Princeton Review, and Affordable Colleges Online, among others. The online programs in accounting, communication, and health management have also been recognized with discipline specific awards.

**Concurrent Enrollment Quality Highlights**

UMC’s concurrent enrollment program “College in the High Schools” (CIHS) has been accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) since 2007, with reaccreditation granted in 2014. NACEP accreditation distinguishes high quality concurrent enrollment programs administered by institutions of higher education throughout the nation.

Specific UMC measures to assure quality in CIHS programming include:

- A position in the Center for Adult Learning is dedicated to working with the CIHS program. This staff member (and the Center director) maintain relationships with CIHS high schools through regular visits.
October 1, 2015

- Academic department heads and discipline faculty review credentials of prospective CIHS instructors. A systematic re-review of the credentials of all current CIHS instructors is planned as part of UMC’s implementation of the HLC’s revision to the Assumed Practices on Faculty Roles and Qualifications (B2).
- Academic department heads and discipline-based UMC faculty review syllabi to ensure academic rigor and adherence to UMC syllabus expectations. Discipline-based UMC faculty serve as coordinators for CIHS instructors.
- Annually, CIHS instructors, high school principals, and school superintendents are invited to a day of professional development and discipline-based discussion with UMC faculty. CIHS instructors are required to participate at least once every three years.

Beginning in 2015-2016, UMC will have a CIHS Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board. The Board, which will be advisory to the VCAA, will be comprised of UMC faculty members, school superintendents, high school principals, concurrent enrollment teachers, high school counselors, school board members, secondary academic administrators, and parents. Invitations to serve have been sent.

The Advisory Board will enable UMC to learn more about the needs of constituents in this important area of academic programming. It will also provide an excellent opportunity to continue to build and strengthen relationships with school districts and schools throughout the region.

**Ongoing Work and Conclusion**

In addition to the active AQIP Action Projects, the four strategic initiatives, and other ongoing projects discussed above, UMC continues to work on several other opportunities for improvement, including:

- Reinvigorating Program Improvement Advisory Committees (PIACs), which have been dormant in many programs for the last three years
- Documenting systematic processes for Study Abroad programs
- Prioritizing and implementing changes based on the Online Quality Scorecard
- Implementing the Campus Labs modules for assessment and strategic planning

With leadership from the AQIP Steering Committee, additional Action Projects will be developed over the next several months.

UMC looks forward to elaborating on these quality highlights and other aspects of institutional quality and accreditation during the November 9-11 site visit.
Appendix A

Strategy Forum Category Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List the two or three AQIP Categories where your institution needs the most improvement. Base this on your Systems Appraisal and other surveys, data, and plans in place.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 5 Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 6 Quality Overview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify the one AQIP Category that you believe it is most critical for you to work on first. (This will be the category that you will focus on at the Strategy Forum and the area where you will target a specific campaign for improvement including future Action Projects.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 5 Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within this most critical Category, identify a more specific and significant challenge — i.e., one or two processes or performance results that you consider targets for change. Explain why improving these is important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process for selecting, organizing, analyzing, and sharing data and performance information to support planning, process improvement, and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process for determining the data, information, and performance results that units and departments need to plan and manage more effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which opportunities for improvement (identified as O or OO or comments in your Systems Appraisal) led you to identify this Category and this significant challenge?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Challenge: “UMC has a significant opportunity to develop a more systematic approach in the collection and analysis of data to better understand needs and strategic direction.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O and OO comments throughout point to the absence of results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What feedback from other sources (consultant reports, other accreditation reports, research studies, performance results data, complaints, system breakdowns, etc.) led you to your conclusion that this Category and its significant challenge represent a key opportunity for your institution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our own awareness, as we wrote the Systems Portfolio, that we had limited results to report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing public calls for accountability; creation of multiple dashboards and state and national performance measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What positive forces and support exist among your leadership and employees for addressing this challenge now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor’s Cabinet identified the need to prioritize focus on Knowledge Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor and Vice Chancellor personally committed to increasing data for decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing demands by UMC faculty and staff for data to inform planning and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty interest in program-level data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology staff interested in data to support technology decision making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What strengths have been identified as S or SS in your Systems Appraisal that will assist you in addressing this challenge?

- Recent creation of the Office for Institutional Effectiveness and staffing it with a highly qualified director.
- Senior leadership team recently stabilized with a new Chancellor in July 2012 and new Vice Chancellor in July 2013.
- Process strengths, especially in Category 1.
- Strong system-level support and structures for data management.

### What obstacles to addressing this challenge currently exist that will need to be considered to make any change effort successful?

- Institutional Effectiveness Office consists of one full-time director and a 20%-time person who will retire in May 2015.
- Campus-wide, a fairly limited understanding of metrics and few campus-wide or unit metrics established.
- Prevalence of “anecdotal” for decision-making, sometimes even resulting in disregard of data that does exist.
- Cultural reliance on “small campus” as sufficient to ensure effective communication, collaboration, and decision-making.
- Limited time to think and analyze due, in part, to need to “put out fires”.
- Ability to generate data far outpaces our ability to understand and use it.

### How would addressing this challenge better meet the needs of your students, external stakeholders, faculty, or staff?

- Data-based decision making will lead to more efficient use of resources.
- Programs that are continuously using data will lead to better outcomes for students.
- Shared data and analysis will enable faculty and staff to better understand decisions that are made and participate more effectively in decision-making processes.
- Better understanding of how student activities/student affairs and IT add value to the student learning experience.
- Ability to meet external demands for data and gain external support.
Appendix B

Action Project Lessons Learned

- Identification of a leader willing to take ownership of an action project is critical to the project’s overall successful completion. Additionally, areas affected by the process being evaluated must buy in to the project’s goals.
- Key institutional leaders (Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, academic department heads) must be supportive of AQIP activities.
- Successful action projects result in processes that continue to be utilized and monitored following the official close of the project.
- Action project documentation needs to include the data supporting why decisions were made as well as outline new process identified. It may be utilized years after the close of a project to explain why something occurred.
- UMC has primarily focused on action projects centered on Academic Affairs and Helping Students Learn; there is a need to broaden the impact to other facets of AQIP.
- UMC is not effective at communicating AQIP activities across campus, including action project progress and their outcomes. AQIP updates should be a regular part of Campus Assembly and Faculty Assembly meetings.
- Defined continuous improvement and project management methodologies would provide a framework for directing the work of action project teams and might ensure more timely completion of work. Training in continuous improvement and project management methodologies is needed for some action project owners.
- Regular involvement of the AQIP Steering Committee might better ensure action project success.
- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness is a key resource for successful action project completion, but is often far removed from the particular process being evaluated to be the project owner.
- Action projects have been selected by a general call for submission across campus, followed by the AQIP Steering Committee selecting official projects by ranking them according to importance to the institution and urgency of completion. Those with highest importance and urgency were selected.
- UMC has shown the ability to change the direction of an open project when results or actions direct such a change. The conscious decision to close a stalled project has not been demonstrated.
- Much continuous improvement is occurring outside the framework of AQIP and stated action projects. How these fit into the AQIP process has not been a part of the conversation, and sometimes not being defined as an AQIP action project has stalled progress.
Requested URLs

Faculty/Staff Handbook: www.umcrookston.edu/faculty-staff-handbook

Student Handbook: https://drive.google.com/a/crk.umn.edu/file/d/0B1vVdMtocjRhVGd3clQzN2lTSWRCYjV4VHl8TXdajhBZ3lj/view

UMC Catalog: http://www.catalogs.umn.edu/umc/