



## AQIP Action Project Commitment Declaration:

# Effective Institutional Structures and Practices for Internal Communication and Institutional Decision-making

*March 10, 2009*

*Prepared by:*

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*MCTC participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) of the Higher Learning Commission which emphasizes two purposes for accreditation: assuring quality and stimulating improvement. AQIP infuses the principles of continuous quality improvement and systems thinking into the academic culture.*

*AQIP Action Projects are designed to be the kickoff for a continuous series of projects aimed at quality improvement. MCTC is expected to have at least three action projects in progress at all times. For more information on Action Projects, visit the [AQIP website](#).*

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**Institution:** Minneapolis Community & Technical College

**Planned project kickoff date:** March 10, 2010

**Target project completion date:** December 31, 2011

**Actual project completion date:**

**A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer.**

Effective Institutional Structures and Practices for Internal Communication and Institutional Decision-making

**B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer.**

The questions which this Action Project will address are the following:

1. What are the most effective lines of communication across the college to:
  - to obtain information,
  - provide input on important issues, and
  - understand campus decision-making processes
2. How can existing structures and resources be used more effectively to increase communication and involvement with decision-making and campus initiatives?
3. What new structures and resources should be put in place to improve communication and involvement in decision-making initiatives?

**C. Identify the single AQIP Category that this Action Project will most affect or impact.**

Category 5: Communicating and Leading

**D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now**

Over the past two years, MCTC has engaged in an on-going conversation about the means to improve internal communication about important college issues and decisions. In response to that conversation, an Action Project, *Engaging Employees in Internal Communications by Maximizing Technology*, was initiated in the spring of 2008. The primary outcome of that project was a College Blog. As reported in the September 2009 Action Project Update, the employee engagement with the blog was minimal and the Action Project Team concluded that additional internal communications tactics needed to be developed. The blog in and of itself did not solve the internal communications issues. Over the past ten months, the topic of internal communication and decision-making has continued to be an area of interest. Improving internal communications was the primary focus of the AQIP Strategy Forum team (November 2008), a faculty development day (February 2009), an Excluded Administrators' meeting (April 2009), a follow-up Excluded Administrators' retreat (July 2009), and a faculty break-out session during Fall Opening Days (August 2009).

The result of all this conversation is the conclusion that explicit, transparent communication and decision-making processes will help to advance the goal of effective communication across all units of the College. Hence, this Action Project is an important priority for all College constituents.

**E. List the organizational areas — institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units — most affected by or involved in this Action Project.**

All organization areas and all employees at the College will be affected by this Action Project.

**F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve.**

First and foremost will be improved communication tools and increased understanding about decision-making at the College. Although the focus of much of the discussion thus far has been about administrative processes and responsibility, this action project will impact and require process changes from all leadership and organizational groups at the College - including unions, employee units, and faculty coordinators.

**G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion).**

The timeframe for this project expands a year-long timeframe. This will allow time for information-gathering in preparation for developing and proposing solutions for improved communication across the campus.

Spring Semester 2010:

- Process map current processes for communication and decision-making. Answer the questions: What is occurring now in the college related to decision-making and communications? What committees are in place that make decisions and how are recommendations communicated? How are decisions communicated?
- Create a decision-making matrix for major decisions at the College (map out how some decisions have been made in the past two years). Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
- Disseminate AQIP leading and communicating questions and answers to the college.
- Create a communication/decision-making checklist that outlines steps to follow in recommending and communicating decisions. A communication checklist that serves as a template/tool for leaders and employee groups to keep them informed and to assist them in understanding how communication should flow in decision-making groups on campus.
- Ensure that proposed matrices are vetted through various leadership groups and with online tool.
- Identify proposed improvements for communication through technology.
- Identify metrics for assessing success of recommendations.

Opening Days Fall 2010

- Present college-wide conversation on the communication tools, decision-making matrix, and communications checklist.

**H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing.**

This Action Project will reside in an online eFolio (electronic portfolio) which will allow for interactive communication to all employees. The committee will take recommendations to important meetings (cabinet, union, etc.) to create awareness and get feedback. eFolio tool will be used to provide updates and elicit input.

**I. Describe the overall “outcome” measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals.**

The overall outcome for this Action Project is increased employee satisfaction through the PACE Survey. At the most concrete level, the primary outcomes of this action project will be:

- The College community indicates, through an employee survey, which areas of our communication strategies are working and which areas need improvement.

**J. Other information**

**K. Project Leader and contact person (First Name, Middle Initial, Last name, Title, Email, Telephone).**

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