Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Institutional Proposal Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution’s President or Chancellor

Mark Bryce, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Eastern Arizona College

Name of Institution

Thatcher, Arizona

City and State

April 25, 2013

Date

The institution completes the Quality Initiative proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. The institution may choose to include a brief implementation plan that addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the outline. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Title and Description of Initiative

   Developing a Self-governing Quality Improvement Culture at Eastern Arizona College

   Eastern Arizona College (EAC) has practiced continuous improvement for over nine years as part of the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). EAC is committed to continuous improvement and strives to ensure that employees at all levels are active and engaged in improving processes across campus. This Quality Initiative is aimed at assessing and improving the quality culture at EAC. It encompasses several processes across the institution and will involve all employees. EAC anticipates a substantial institutional improvement from this Quality Initiative.

   The goals of this Quality Initiative were developed as EAC made the decision to transition from AQIP to Open Pathway. EAC’s continuous improvement processes and practices were developed while participating in AQIP. As the institution transitions away from AQIP to Open Pathway, it is important to ensure that continuous improvement remains a priority at EAC. As such, EAC has identified the need to develop a self-governing, continuous improvement culture. This Quality Initiative will include training all employees in continuous improvement, enhancing the quality culture with information sharing and open discussion of improvement areas, and the development of a cross-functional council that will be charged with overseeing continuous improvement at EAC. The goals of this Quality Initiative were
discussed and plans were made prior to the development of the Quality Initiative proposal; however, the majority of the work is to be completed during the Quality Initiative period.

**Sufficiency of the Initiative’s Scope and Significance**

2. **Relevancy and Significance to the Institution**
   This Quality Initiative is both relevant and significant for EAC. EAC employees and other stakeholders associate EAC’s emphasis on continuous improvement with the AQIP model for maintaining accreditation. Continuous improvement will remain a priority at EAC as it transitions between the accreditation models. The institution recognizes that the development of a formal process for governing continuous improvement at EAC is necessary to reassure stakeholders of this continued commitment.

   Additionally, EAC recognizes the need to strengthen the institution’s quality culture. The College Administration encourages employees to take ownership of their work area and to implement change as needed and through the proper channels. In addition, employees across the institution are regularly involved in Action Project teams that drive institutional improvement. However, feedback from employees has indicated that there is a need to expand continuous improvement training and information sharing across the institution. This Quality Initiative will drive continuous improvement at all levels of the institution and equip all employees with the confidence and knowledge to recommend major improvements or tackle smaller improvements in their work area.

3. **Alignment with Institution’s Mission and Operational or Strategic Priorities**
   The proposed Quality Initiative is aligned with EAC’s mission to provide quality higher education and to be accountable to the stakeholders for educational results, fiscal responsibility, and cultural development. Additionally, continuous improvement and institutional quality are listed as values on EAC’s Mission document. As mentioned throughout this proposal, EAC is dedicated to continuous improvement. The development of a formal self-governing quality culture will strengthen the continuous improvement processes and practices at EAC by ensuring employee input and successful outcomes in improvement initiatives on campus.

   EAC is in the final stages of developing the institution’s Strategic Plan and revising the main planning process, the Program Portfolios. The creation of the continuous improvement oversight body, the President’s Quality Council, will aid in the success of both of these operational processes and strategic priorities. The Program Portfolios will be reviewed by a sub-committee of the President’s Quality Council for common areas of improvement. The areas of improvement will then be reviewed by the President’s Quality Council as potential Action Projects. Additionally, the President’s Quality Council will be responsible for ensuring that the institutional Action Projects are in-line with the College’s Strategic Plan.
4. **Intended Impact on the Institution’s Academic Core**

EAC expects the Quality Initiative to have a substantial impact on the institution’s academic core. The Quality Initiative will equip all employees with the means to identify, recommend, and complete necessary improvements on campus. The current continuous improvement processes at EAC are sufficient but not optimal for this purpose. This Quality Initiative will build upon the current processes to ensure that all employees at EAC have a confidential channel to recommend improvements and have the necessary training to identify and act upon necessary improvements in their work area. Additionally, this Initiative will create a process to evaluate feedback from students and external stakeholders to ensure that their voice, through surveys and other measurements, is heard.

EAC recognizes that those who are working directly with students and are at the heart of the academic core, whether it be through direct instruction or through support services such as counseling, have the best understanding of what is working well and what isn’t. It is through this ideology that enabling these employees to improve the processes will strengthen EAC’s academic core and the institution at large. In addition, obtaining direct feedback from students and other stakeholders and evaluating institutional academic data to improve processes at EAC will provide added strength to the academic core.

**Clarity of the Initiative’s Purpose**

5. **Initiative Purpose and Goals**

The main purpose of this Quality Initiative is to strengthen the quality culture at EAC. The Quality Initiative will develop a self-governing, fully-embraced quality culture at EAC. As EAC transitions from AQIP to Open Pathway, the institution will continue the continuous improvement processes that were developed while a participant of AQIP, including Action Projects and Quick Fixes. This Initiative will empower employees to make Quick Fixes in their area and to recommend Action Projects to a cross-functional council that will be charged with quality improvement oversight on campus. Additionally, EAC will provide on-campus professional development and leadership training to all EAC employees. The training will include sessions on continuous improvement tools, ethics training, managing others and working in teams, and specific training needs as identified through surveys, feedback, and data analysis. The specific goals of the Quality Initiative are described below:

A. **Continuous Improvement Assessment**: An employee survey will be developed to assess the effectiveness of EAC continuous improvement processes and solicit Action Project ideas and professional development training ideas on a regular basis. Additionally, a survey will be published on EAC’s website inviting all stakeholders to recommend improvement initiatives. The President's Quality Council, described in detail below, will monitor the results of the surveys to ensure continued effectiveness of
EAC's continuous improvement processes and to prioritize and implement suggested improvement initiatives.

B. **President's Quality Council**: an oversight body for all continuous improvement activities at EAC will be created. The membership will include a broad representation of the employee groups at EAC including top administration, faculty, staff, and all current Action Project leaders. Responsibilities of the Council will include reviewing all Action Project ideas for prioritization and implementation, declaring and building Action Project teams, progress monitoring of current Action Projects, and selecting the Quality Initiative for Open Pathway. The Council will meet monthly.

A Sub-committee of the President’s Quality Council, led by an Academic Dean, will review all major institutional data and surveys to identify common areas of improvement. The findings will be submitted to the President’s Quality Council for review. The membership of the committee will be a broad representation of EAC employees and will differ from the membership of the President's Quality Council. The Sub-committee will meet on an as-needed basis.

A member of the President’s Quality Council will act as a liaison between the Council and all current standing committees. This will ensure that improvement ideas from all areas of the institution are considered and directed to the President’s Quality Council for prioritization and implementation.

C. **Professional Development Overhaul**: a series of professional development training sessions, termed Leadershops, will be developed and offered on-campus to encourage faculty and staff to improve upon leadership, continuous improvement knowledge and tools, cross training, and personal development. The need for such training has surfaced on many occasions over the last several years. EAC encourages continued development of all employees through financial support and mentoring. However, as EAC is located in a rural area, the time required for travel to conferences or training sessions regularly deters employees from attending. The professional development overhaul will evaluate common professional development needs and bring the training to EAC to mitigate this problem. Each Leadershop session will be evaluated by participants to ensure intended outcomes are met.
D. **Institutional Dashboard:** an institutional data dashboard will be developed to allow for continuous monitoring of key measures of effectiveness at the institutional and department/division level. This dashboard will aid in continuous improvement through the early identification of negative or important trends in the data. Additionally, the dashboard will provide employees with the means to identify areas of improvement in their department or division which will aid in continuous improvement at all levels of the institution. At a macro level, the dashboard will be a regular agenda item for the President’s Quality Council and the areas of improvement identified through this means will be prioritized and implemented.

6. **Progress Evaluation, Adjustments, and Recognizing Accomplishments**
   The Continuous Improvement Survey will serve as the primary tool for evaluating the progress of the Quality Initiative. The survey asks the respondents to answer eight likert style questions on their perceived effectiveness and understanding of the continuous improvement processes at EAC. It is expected that the results for these eight questions will improve as the Quality Initiative is rolled-out. The President’s Quality Council will oversee the progress of the Initiative and the results of the survey to ensure that the expected goals are being met. If, the data shows otherwise, the Council will declare an Action Project to identify the root cause and implement an improvement plan.

7. **Potential Challenges and Issues**
   The Quality Initiative has the support of EAC Administration and the majority of EAC employees. As with all change, there is some resistance, particularly with the formation of the President’s Quality Council. EAC has received feedback from a small group of faculty that there is a concern over the President’s Quality Council making the improvement decisions for the institution. The concern is that the decisions will be top down as indicated by the name of the Council. It has been explained, however, that the Council has the support from the President but the ideas and decisions will be made by the cross-functional membership of the Council. It is expected, with confidence, that as the President’s Quality Council is formed and the first round of Action Projects are declared that the confidence in the new, formal process will increase dramatically. As mentioned in question 6, the Continuous Improvement Survey will be administered regularly to ensure that the new processes are truly improving the quality culture at EAC.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

8. **Internal and External Stakeholder Support**
   The Quality Initiative has the support of the EAC District Governing Board, the College President, College Administration, and the majority of EAC employees. The goals of the Quality Initiative have been communicated to all employees via regularly scheduled meetings.
and the monthly employee newsletter. EAC Administration has asked employees for feedback regarding the Initiative. All feedback has been positive with exception to that noted in question 7.

9. Initiative Leadership and Implementation Team
Once formed, the President’s Quality Council will oversee the implementation of the remaining goals and the success of the Quality Initiative. The cross-functional membership of the Council will ensure that there is a representative from each major employee group involved in the implementation of the Initiative. The Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation and Improvement will be carrying-out the activities related to continuous improvement assessment and the professional development overhaul with the input and guidance from the President’s Quality Council. Additionally, the Office of Institutional Research at EAC will be carrying-out the activities related to the development of the Institutional Dashboard.

10. Human, Financial, Technological and Other Resource Commitment
EAC has committed substantial human and technological resources to this Quality Initiative. The Continuous Improvement Survey is administered from a new internally developed survey tool that allows for peer benchmarking. The development of the survey tool required a large human and technological commitment. Additional human resources will be dedicated to the project through the President’s Quality Council and the sub-committee charged with reviewing institutional data for improvement ideas. As mentioned in question 9, the Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation and Improvement will be dedicated to this initiative for the duration of the project and responsible for all major activities related to continuous improvement assessment and the professional development overhaul. The Office of Institutional Research will also be dedicated to the project through the development of the Institutional Dashboard. Additionally, the implementation of Leadershops, the internal professional development and leadership training sessions, will require a financial commitment; however, as budget money is tight, the Leadershop sessions will be as cost-effective as possible.

11. Sustaining the Results of the Initiative
The President’s Quality Council will be a standing committee at EAC. It will be charged with overseeing the quality culture and quality improvements on campus. The Continuous Improvement Survey will be administered on an annual basis and will act as a measure of the quality culture, to ensure that the efforts made are truly strengthening the continuous improvement processes at EAC. The results of this survey will be reviewed in detail by the President’s Quality Council. If this survey or other data suggests that the results of the Initiative are not sustained, the President’s Quality Council will declare an Action Project to understand the root cause and implement an improvement plan.
Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative (The institution may include a brief implementation or action plan.)

12. Initiative Timeline

The primary goals of the Quality Initiative are outlined in question 5, above. The anticipated duration of the Quality Initiative is two years. A graphical representation of the timeline for implementation can be seen below. The rationale for the duration and timeline is to allow for the development of each major goal, analysis of the effectiveness of each goal, and implementation of improvements as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Continuous Improvement Assessment</td>
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<td>1a. Continuous Improvement Survey Administration</td>
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<td>1b. Creation of External Stakeholder Continuous Improvement Survey</td>
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<td>1c. Analysis of the results of the survey and submission of results to President’s Quality Council</td>
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<td>2. President’s Quality Council</td>
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<td>2a. Formal declaration of the President’s Quality Council as an EAC standing committee</td>
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<td>2b. Convene President’s Quality Council for first meeting to discuss purpose and goals</td>
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<td>2c. Create first Continuous Improvement Review Committee (sub-committee) for review of data</td>
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<td>2d. Convene President’s Quality Council for review of data and Action Project selection</td>
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<td>3. Professional Development Overhaul</td>
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<td>3a. Review Continuous Quality Improvement Survey for Leadership topic suggestions</td>
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<td>3b. Schedule annual leadership schedule</td>
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<td>3c. Advertise leadership schedule to all EAC employees</td>
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<td>3d. Begin first-year leadership sessions</td>
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<td>4. Institutional Dashboard</td>
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<td>4a. Develop dashboard architecture</td>
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<td>4b. Identification of institutional, department, and division key performance indicators</td>
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<td>4c. Field Test dashboard</td>
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<td>4d. Dashboard programming by EAC Computer Services Department</td>
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Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

Jeanne Bryce, Provost
Name and Title
(928) 428-8261 jeanne.bryce@eac.edu
Phone Email
Eastern Arizona College
Institution

Shannon Seballos, Coordinator of Institutional Accreditation and Improvement
Name and Title
(928) 428-8339 shannon.seballos@eac.edu
Phone Email
Eastern Arizona College
Institution