



Quality Highlights Report

Presented to the
North Central Association
of Colleges and School's
Higher Learning Commission
In support of Reaffirmation
of Accreditation

October 2014



1. Review of *Quality Checkup Report*

On April 2-4, 2014, Terra State Community College was visited by an AQIP Quality Checkup Team consisting of Brian McDermott (Central Community College, Nebraska) and Clark Coker (Dodge City Community College, Kansas). In July 2014, this Team issued a report on its visit to Terra State. This section reviews the content of that report.

1.1 – *Federal Compliance*

In all areas of Federal Compliance, the team found that Terra State meets the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission, and that no further follow-up from the commission is necessary. The Team Indicated in its report that the College’s processes are clear, systematic, and well-documented in the required areas.

1.2 – *Higher Learning Commission Core Components*

The team indicated in its Report that the College forwarded “strong, clear, and well-presented” documentation of meeting the Commission’s *Criteria for Accreditation* and all Core Components of each criterion (p. 4).

1.3 – *Review of other AQIP Quality Issues*

In all areas of quality review applicable to the College, the Team’s Report indicates that Terra State “presented satisfactory evidence” that it met each of the goals of the Quality Checkup (pp. 2-5). Additionally, the reviewers noted, regarding the College’s quality processes, “The college has spent significant effort of the past few years to address the opportunity statements in the Appraisal. The college has taken feedback from its action projects and Systems Appraisal Feedback Report to heart and built a robust report system that tracks multiple key performance/environmental scans that aid the college in both yearly and continuous quality improvement planning” (p. 2).

1.4 – *Other AQIP Considerations*

The Team noted two particular strengths of Terra State Community College in its Report; these strengths are the result of concerted effort within the College, and Terra State is proud that these achievements were recognized by the Team.

- “It is the impression of the team that a high-level effort has been made to create a welcoming environment for students and that the college’s employees are devoted to the overall success of each student.” (p. 6)
- “The college’s assessment process outlined in the ‘Assessment Protocol — Spring 2013’ demonstrates a highly systematic assessment effort that addresses general learning, program, and course level learning outcomes. This process is strongly supported by faculty and shows a strong commitment in time and resources to effectively track and improve learning within the institution” (p. 6). [This addresses Item 1R3, rated as “OO” in the College’s most recent *Systems Appraisal*.](#)

2. Program-Level Accreditation Update

Terra State’s *Federal Compliance Filing* prior to the Quality Checkup Visit indicated that the College had achieved candidacy for accreditation status with the Commission on

Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), effective August 21, 2012. Terra State achieved initial five-year accreditation with CAPTE, effective February 12, 2014.

3. Comprehensive Review of Civil Rights Compliance

Under the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Methods of Administration agreement with the Federal Department of Education/Office of Civil Rights, Terra State was selected to undergo a comprehensive Civil Rights Audit during the summer of 2014. The purpose of this on-site audit was to ascertain compliance with various types of Federal anti-discrimination legislation and was conducted as a routine part of the MOA agreement — one community college in the state of Ohio is selected for such an audit each year. The audit was *not* conducted in response to any report of non-compliance on the part of the College. The audit took place on Terra State's campus on June 11-12, 2014.

In preparation for this audit, the Associate Dean of Students led a team compiling additional data and information for the auditors and performing a comprehensive review of the College's policies, procedures, and processes concerning non-discrimination and legislative compliance with regard to students and employees. In this process, the language in several policy statements was updated, with the new language approved by the College's governing Board of Trustees. The *Quality Checkup Visit Report* from HLC indicates that the College's processes in these areas are "robust and well established" ("Federal Compliance," p. 2); this review process only updated and further strengthened this area of the College's operations.

During the on-site portion of the audit, the audit team conducted meetings with a variety of campus constituents to review the data and information provided and clarify their questions. In addition the audit team toured the campus to evaluate physical facilities' compliance with legislative requirements.

The audit team's findings were minor. The College was required to: (1) Place vertical signage at all handicap parking spaces, in addition to markings on the pavement; (2) Lower the activation handles on laboratory emergency showers; (3) Lower toilet seat cover dispensers in restrooms; and (4) Post additional signs clarifying the College's anti-discrimination policies and procedures. Terra State has since corrected the issues addressed in the audit team's findings.

4. Campus Completion Plan

The Legislature of the State of Ohio required that each college and university within the University System of Ohio (USO) and governed by the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) create a two-year plan to enhance student success, retention, and credential completion. These plans were to be created by faculty, staff, and administration at the institutions and approved at the institutional level by the Board of Trustees. Each institution's Campus Completion Plan was filed with OBR on or before June 30, 2014, for implementation beginning on July 1. Terra State's Board of Trustees approved the College's Completion Plan on June 18, 2014, and the Plan was submitted to OBR ahead of the June 30, 2014, deadline.

Terra State's Campus Completion Plan is the subject of two of the College's AQIP Action Projects (discussed below, §9.2 & §10.2), a completed project dealing with the Plan's creation and an ongoing project dealing with its implementation. The process of creating this Plan also represented changes to the College's planning process (discussed below, §6).

5. Appointment of Compliance Officers

Terra State has appointed officers of the College to fulfill roles regarding compliance in various areas since the Quality Checkup Visit.

5.1 – Title IX Officers

As part of the review process leading up to the College’s civil rights audit in June, Title IX compliance officers were appointed; this was less a change than a formalizing of the process and personnel already in place. The Associate Dean of Students was appointed as the College’s primary Title IX compliance officer, with the Director of Human Resources and the Vice President for Academic Affairs designated as secondary officers.

5.2 – General Compliance Officer

In recognition of the fact that there are great many outside mandates placed on institutions of higher education, the College appointed the Director of Institutional Research as its primary compliance officer, charged with tracking the various mandates and ensuring that the College continued to meet reporting deadlines and remained in compliance with outside mandates. This allows for the tracking of compliance to be centralized within the College.

6. Revised Planning Process

Terra State’s planning process was revised and the revised process implemented as the Campus Completion Plan was created (see §4, above, and §9.2, below). The specific elements of the revised planning process that will benefit the College moving forward, and that address Terra State’s identified opportunities for improvement are:

- Creating broad-based, high-participation, cross-functional teams to identify key areas, desired outcomes, and performance levels (acceptable, aspirational); allowing subject-matter experts to identify and implement specific interventions toward desired outcomes. [This addresses Items 1I2 and 8P5, identified as “OO” in the most recent *Systems Appraisal*.](#)
- Attaching specific metrics (KPIs) to each desired outcome in the plan, and establishing baseline (pre-intervention) measurements for these metrics; setting acceptable and aspirational goals for each metric with reference to the baseline to reflect success on each desired outcome. [This addresses Items 8R1, 8R2-8R3, and 8P5, identified as “OO” in the most recent *Systems Appraisal*.](#)
- Using internal metrics (KPIs) in conjunction with external/benchmarking metrics to measure success of interventions related to desired outcomes. [This addresses Items 2R3 and 8R4, identified as “OO” in the most recent *Systems Appraisal*.](#)

7. Revised Program Review Process

As the result of a 2012-13 Action Project (“Revitalization and Implementation of Program Review”), a renewed cycle of program review and evaluation has begun. Academic programs are being reviewed on a five-year cycle, at the rate of approximately five (5) programs per Fall/Spring semester. [The most recent *Systems Appraisal* identified Item 1P14 at the “OO” level, and this revised program review addresses this concern, in particular by requiring that the programs present all of these elements for evaluation:](#) History of the program; strategic planning in the program; academic requirements of the program; student enrollments at

course and program level and student demographics; post-enrollment employment and transfer information; direct revenues and costs of the program; program-level SWOT analysis; review of faculty and credentialing; review of program's assessment activities; plans for action based on all other elements of program review; and evaluation of previously stated plans for action (in second and subsequent cycles). Administrative decisions regarding programmatic support are made based on the combination of all of these factors, viewing the program as a whole, not merely on enrollment levels or trends.

8. Participation in Benchmarking Studies

Beginning in 2009, Terra State has increased its participation in national benchmarking studies. Beginning with participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in the Spring of 2009, and expanding with participation in the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) in the Fall of 2012, the College has collected and is studying a strong baseline dataset for these two surveys (five years, 2009-13, for CCSSE, three years, 2010-12, for SENSE). As engagement, as measured by these instruments, correlates strongly with student success, it has become increasingly important to root out the circumstances and activities that underlie strong student engagement.

In addition to these engagement surveys, the College has more recently participated in other national data benchmarking studies. In 2013-14, Terra State was a participant in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), and beginning in 2014-15, the College has joined the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). Analysis of the College's benchmarked positions in NCCBP data is underway and reporting of data to VFA is slated to begin in November.

As noted in §6 (above) data from these benchmarking sources are slated to be used, in addition to internal KPIs, to document the College's success in implementing the Campus Completion Plan, and Terra State's next strategic plan. [This participation in benchmarking systems and analysis of the data addresses Item 8R4, which was identified as "OO" in the most recent *Systems Appraisal*.](#)

9. Completed AQIP Action Projects

Since Terra State's Quality Checkup Visit in April, the College has completed and reported final results of four (4) AQIP Action Projects. The completion dates on these Projects range from March 15, 2014, to September 16, 2014. Though one (1) Project is now reported as "completed" at the time of the Quality Checkup Visit, the final reporting had not yet been compiled by that time. Each of these Action projects is discussed in greater detail below.

9.1 – *A Case Study in Documenting Human Resources Policies, Practices, and Procedures*

This Action Project was developed by Terra State's team attending the AQIP Strategy Forum in March 2013. The Project was designed to serve as a research vehicle and pilot practice task for the "Improve College's Systematic Processes with a Focus on Communication" Action Project (§9.3, below), by researching best practices for policy/procedure documentation, development, approval, implementation, and communication, followed by small-scale implementation of the determinations with the policies and procedures of a single department (Human Resources).

This Project was developed with an ambitious, six-month timeline, which was extended as the work began to be completed. The timeline, however, was the only aspect

of this Project which was considered unsuccessful. The team continued to work on this project through the Fall of 2013 and into the Spring of 2014; the team's work on the project was designated as completed on March 15, 2014. At this time, the work of researching best practices, implementing those best practices of development and review for HR policies and procedures, and communicating the revised policies/procedures to the broader community were completed.

The goal of informing the broader work of the other Action Project team was also met, and with the findings from this Project, that team was able to complete its work in a timely fashion (see below).

9.2 – Campus Completion Plan for Student Success

As mentioned in §4 (above), the Campus Completion Plan was created in response to a legislative mandate (for all state-supported colleges and universities in Ohio) that a plan to increase student success, retention, and completion be developed. This Project was developed as a project of less than one year, running from October 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014, an end date selected in compliance with the mandated submission of the plan to the Ohio Board of Regents.

This project engaged more than fifty (50) participants from across functional units and employee categories (faculty, staff, administration) who participated in internal scanning, identification of key areas for maintenance or strengthening of current efforts fostering student success, development of key performance indicators in these areas, and alignment of KPIs with external metrics (HLC/AQIP, CCSSE, VFA).

In addition to meeting the stated goals of the Project in terms of timely completion, approval, and submission of the Campus Completion Plan, and the fact that successful implementation of this plan will help the College to improve students' successful completion of courses and credentials, the process followed in developing the Campus Completion Plan refined the College's processes as discussed in §6 (above).

9.3 – Improve College's Systematic Processes with a Focus on Communication

The goals of this Project were to document existing policies/procedures at Terra State, to develop a procedure for creating and revising policies/procedures, to create a process for storing and archiving policy/procedure documents, and to create a common language and terminology for policies and procedures campus-wide. This two-year Project (November 1, 2012, to September 15, 2014) was successful in meeting those goals. Additionally, it occasioned another, short-term, Action Project, "A Case Study in Documenting Human Resources Policies, Practices, and Procedures" (see §9.1, above).

Building on the research completed by the "Case Study" team, this Project's team developed a procedure for creating and revising College policies/procedures, a timeline for the regular review of College policies/procedures by the appropriate individuals and/or bodies, and an online listing of currently in-force policies/procedures, accessible by all current College employees. The team also created the online listing with plans for archiving rescinded and/or deprecated procedures as well as earlier versions of subsequently revised procedures. The documentation, revision, and archiving processes developed in this Project remain ongoing.

This Project, with its focus on standardizing, verifying, updating, and gathering College policies/procedures, as well as making those procedures available to all College

employees, addresses the “culture and infrastructure” aspect of Item 4I2, identified as “OO” in the most recent *Systems Appraisal*.

9.4 – Tracking Implementation of *Vision 2016*.

Vision 2016 is Terra State’s five-year strategic plan, first implemented in July 2011, and continuing with projected outcomes through June 2016. The stated goal of this Project was to track the outcomes of the strategic plan. A secondary goal was to evaluate and revise the College’s planning process in service of future strategic plans.

As mentioned in previous discussions of Terra State’s Campus Completion plan (see §4 and §9.2, above), this Project’s secondary objective was met (see also §6, above, on revisions to the planning process), and that revised process applied to the creation of the Campus Completion Plan. The primary objective of this Project was also met, through the implementation of a discussion-based and consensus-driven model of determining whether the established objectives of *Vision 2016* have been met, to what extent they have been met, and what (if any) additional steps should be taken toward meeting those objectives.

This Project and its outcomes, to quote its reviewer, felt very much like “failing forward.” The initial, primary goal was accomplished in a very different manner than what was envisioned, and the secondary goal was quite successfully met. The new planning process was implemented in developing the Campus Completion Plan, and the College has established that it is at an appropriate place in achieving the objectives of *Vision 2016* given the number of completed items and the proportion of time elapsed. As previously mentioned, the process developed as the secondary goal of this project, when implemented, addresses Item 8R1, identified as “OO” in the College’s most recent *Systems Appraisal*. Additionally, the identification of the process for evaluating *Vision 2016* action items addresses Item 8R5, also identified as “OO” in the *Systems Appraisal*.

10. Ongoing/New Action Projects

At present, Terra State has three (3) open AQIP Action Projects. All Projects will run into the Fall of 2015, with two (2) retiring at that point and one (1) being retained until the Summer of 2016.

10.1 – Engaging Students in Evaluation of Courses and Instruction

This two-year Action Project was developed with the goal of revising and re-implementing the College’s instrument for student evaluation of their courses and instruction. In the first year, the draft instrument was developed and tested; the development phase included input from the student body’s elected leaders, Student Government, as well as faculty and administration.

The second year will include refinement and additional testing of the instrument, and will include determining a solution for implementing the instrument through the College’s new learning management system, Canvas. This Project was developed to partially address Item 4R3, identified as “OO” in the College’s most recent *Systems Appraisal*, with the instrument as an additional method for measuring employee (faculty) effectiveness.

10.2 – Implementing the Campus Completion Plan

Upon completion of the earlier Project, “Campus Completion Plan for Student Success” (see §9.2, above), the College elected to devote a two-year Action Project to the full scale and scope of implementing the Campus Completion Plan. Thus, this Action Project began on July 1, 2014, and continues through June 30, 2016. In this time, identified campus leaders will bring together working groups to develop and implement interventions designed to meet the named desired outcomes of the Campus Completion Plan.

These teams are meant to include both subject matter experts (e.g., admissions officers in areas dealing with admissions/recruitment) *and* a broad base of participants from across the campus. As these teams work on their objectives, the benchmarking metrics will continue according to their set (external) schedules, and the internal metrics will be calculated and evaluated on appropriate, not less than annual, timelines.

10.3 – Precision Scheduling for Student Success

This Project attempts to bring a data-driven approach to long-term scheduling of courses on Terra State’s campus. The Project is an Academic Affairs driven undertaking to:

- Establish an enrollment model based on historical trend that will predict headcount enrollment at the College for a given term;
- Establish a per course predictive enrollment model based on College headcount enrollment;
- Establish course rotations for full-time and part-time students to optimize efficiencies in per-term course offerings;
- Establish master schedules for each academic term, based on theoretical maximum enrollments which can be optimized to projected actual enrollments for academic terms.

The one-year timeline for this project is ambitious, but the modeling and course rotations work is already in progress.

11. Summary

This Report has documented Terra State Community College’s most recent efforts in the area of quality improvement. Specifically, it has addressed the College’s efforts relating to accreditation, compliance, and institutional processes. Additionally, focus has been given to the ways in which Terra State has worked to address the thirteen (13) areas identified as major opportunities (“OO”) in the College’s most recent *Systems Appraisal* from HLC/AQIP. Many of these OOs have been addressed through the College’s AQIP Action Projects and other campus initiatives. However, two of these areas of opportunity (9R2 and 9R3) address the College’s performance in relation to educational, community, business & industry, and governmental relations partnerships. Terra State has historically tracked these partnerships and the College’s participation in them by documenting the ways in which certificate and degree programs are shaped by business and industry needs (through Advisory Boards), the development of employer-specific, credit-bearing apprenticeship programs, and the development of new programs through first partnering with other institutions’ established programs in the field. These long-standing measures will be documented in the College’s next *Systems Portfolio*.