



AQIP Category Eight: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Context for Analysis (C)

8C1 Future Vision

NDSCS will continue to be a strong comprehensive college that is learner-focused with a full collegiate atmosphere characterized by a greater diversity in the student body. It will continue to impact the economic development of the state as it meets workforce training needs. Regional campuses will be expanded with the STTC offering a variety of our programs. Emphasis will be on more diverse delivery systems that provide increased accessibility to programs and innovation. The marketing plan has created an impressive image of the college that draws students from more metropolitan areas. There is a greater reliance on non-state supported resources as programming continues to grow through increased collaboration with other institutions and partnerships with business and industry.

8C2 Long and Short-term Strategies

These strategies support innovation, responsiveness, access, technology, and a collegiate atmosphere, all part of the mission of NDSCS.

Table 8-1 Long and Short-term Strategies

Long Term Strategies	Short-Term Strategies
Focus on distance delivery	Increased reliance on electronic marketing
Increase number of partnerships	Increase summer program offerings
Attracting out-of-state students	Increase summer facilities usage
External funding sources	Install IT wireless servers
Attracting more part-time students	Develop smart classrooms
Offer general education courses in Fargo	Remodel Student Center to include student club
Additional focus on government relations/public policy	
Upgrade/remodel residence halls	
Develop reward strategies to recruit and retain employees	

Processes (P)

8P1 Planning Processes

NDSCS planning process is cyclical, see figure 5-2. The timing is tied to the AQIP process and to the SBHE strategic planning process. Sometimes it has been a challenge for administration to align the two processes so that it is a seamless process for the campus. Up until 2005, NDSCS was the only AQIP institution in ND; Bismarck State College became an AQIP institution this year and other NDUS institutions are considering applying for acceptance into AQIP. Perhaps there will be more flexibility in strategic reporting in the future.



NDSCS reacts to the new initiatives set by the SBHE and the legislative accountability measures, as well as to the feedback provided by the AQIP reviewers, in establishing new goals and targets. All departments file action plans that will carry out these goals and targets over a specified period of time. In the spring, departments report on the results (progress to date, accomplishments, etc) of their action plans and determine goals and targets for the next year. Feedback from the AQIP reviewers is analyzed by the AQIP Strategy Team who makes recommendations for further action. These recommendations go through the campus communication and approval channels. SBHE initiatives as well as the AQIP Goals are reflected in the Campus Alignment Plan, which is submitted to the system office.

In 2001 an extensive strategic planning session to review the mission and vision of the college was held with over sixty campus employees. Various focus groups were held with community members, with their input taken back to the campus for refinement and acceptance. This process resulted in a revised mission and vision statement for the campus, which was approved by the SBHE.

There is also a biennial facilities review process which identifies capitol needs. A campus committee reviews recommendations from departments, prioritizes them, and funds those given the highest priority. Some campus needs may be driven by risk management, fire marshal, or safety reports.

8P2 Selection of Strategies

Strategies are selected by a combination of many things, some of which are imposed by outside forces and others as a result of researching trends and responding to needs. There are sometimes conflicting expectations that require prioritization and collaboration. The NDUS Roundtable Report resulted in twelve accountability measures added by the SBHE. These measures required collaboration among the eleven institutions agreeing to common measures and instruments to provide the required data. This enables the university system to produce comparable data among the institutions as well as benchmark against national norms. Changing demographics, job trends, assessment data, program review information, budget planning, changing needs of students, and advisory committees input all contribute to long and short-range planning.

8P3/8P4 Developing and Aligning Action Plans

Key action plans are developed at the department level as a response to the strategic planning that has taken place with AQIP and SBHE initiatives, see figure 5-2. The feedback from the AQIP review team is communicated at an all-campus meeting and taken to appropriate planning and management teams for action and incorporation into their action plans. Assessment planning is also developed at the department level, reviewed by the assessment committee and the respective division, and integrated at the institutional level into planning and budgeting cycles. The President's Advisory Committee also reviews the data and provides feedback. The minutes of these meetings are distributed to the campus via e-mail. Responsibility for the action plan implementation is documented in the strategic planning document and the Campus Alignment Plan and usually carried over into the performance appraisal process. The performance appraisal process measures individual goal attainment against those held responsible in the strategic plan.



8P5 Selecting Measures and Setting Performance Projections

Measures and performance projections were originally set through the AQIP Strategy Forum planning process, which has been previously described. These have been updated on an annual basis through feedback from the AQIP Action Plan review process, SBHE expectations, legislative accountability measures, environmental scanning, economic impact research, and projected enrollments. The measures and performance objectives are based on benchmarks and historical trends but also are meant to stretch the institution and not only merely be measures that would be accomplished anyway.

8P6 Appropriate Resource Needs

Planning drives the budget; there is prioritization at each level beginning at the department level. Budgets originate at the department level, sent to the respective supervisor such as Dean or Director, then forwarded to the Vice-President level. Prioritized lists prepared by the Vice Presidents, are reviewed by the Management Team and sent to the Executive Team for final decision prior to approval by the President. Historical funding, the ability to self-generate, partnership contributions, compliance funding, accreditation requirements, enrollment trends, and data collection are all considered in determining resource allocation. At times, a resource need might be phased in over a period of time, partially funded, or delayed, if funds are not available.

8P7 Ensuring Employee Development

Faculty professional development needs are often reflected in assessment plans that include budget implications for learning improvements cited in the report. Faculty are required to obtain vocation certification through a new clinical practice process that includes coursework, workshops, and faculty mentoring. The performance appraisal process also includes growth plans and planned professional development activities to support job performance. Professional development for all employee groups is a line item in the budget, so all employees have access to support changing institutional needs. If it is an institutional training issue, such as training for PeopleSoft, the training required and resources to support it was determined at the administrative level. Resources have been set aside and grant monies sought to support faculty development in developing online courses and programs. The North Dakota Community College Consortium also provides faculty with professional development for the advancement of teaching and learning. Employees can also take advantage of tuition waivers to increase needed expertise.

8P8 Measures of Effectiveness for Planning Continuous Improvement

NDSCS does not formally evaluate its planning processes; however, there are several measures that indicate that the planning process is effective. Several categories within the Campus Quality Survey are used to measure effectiveness:

- Strategic Quality Planning
- Quality/Productivity Improvement Results
- Quality Assurance
- Measurement and Analysis.



The Vital Focus conducted in 2001 included a category titled “Measuring Effectiveness.” The Campus Accomplishments Report that is filed with the NDUS is reviewed by the SBHE and accomplishments among all the institutions are listed.

RESULTS (R)

8R1 Results for Planning Strategies and Action Plans

NDSCS accomplishments are published annually in the Campus Accomplishments Report. Highlights of significant accomplishments for 2003-04 include:

- Baseline of entrepreneurial activity was established for each department. All departments are filing current year entrepreneurial activities which will be evaluated in June 2004 and recognized in August 2004 when faculty return. The total department entrepreneurial activity for 2003-04 was \$932, 137.
- New partnerships established with Newman Signs, U.S. Army National Guard, Eide Bailly, Miller Electric, ND Job Service, MSCTC, and SE Education Con Joint Powers Agreement.
- Number of businesses served in Workforce Training up 7 percent. Number of participants served up 28 percent. Gross revenue (\$819,275.18) up 5 percent. Related Study Department provided 1,556 courses in 2003-03 compared to 1,326 in 2001-02 for a 17-percent increase.
- 15 academic program assessment reports exceeded expectations of the Assessment Committee rubric scoring 15 points or higher. Assessment and Action Plan reports were utilized for developing the 2004-05 budgets.
- A Technology and Learning Committee was established primarily with faculty representation. The strategic plan calls for faculty development and infrastructure improvements to allow for student accessibility to information and leaning enhancement.
- Expanded wireless Internet connection to all residence hall buildings.
- Comprehensive marketing plan established. Consistent image achieved through multiple efforts. Two regional and one national marketing and publication awards have been awarded to the college. Media relations and name recognition have been enhanced.
- Academic program offerings are meeting the needs of business and industry as assessed by advisory committees.
- The College expanded its program offerings via distance education/new programs by 12. In 2002-03 the college had 11 departments with 36 online courses developed. In 2003-04 this increased to 14 departments offering 66 online courses, a 55-percent increase in offerings.
- Campus wide survey on employee recognition was administered. Feedback was used to develop a multi-level plan to recognize and reward employees to be instituted fall 2004. Developed a three-level Reward and Recognition Process that addresses all employees. The third and highest level recognizes departments, teams or committees that have developed and implemented innovative methods that impacted student learning and development. This plan will be implemented in the 2004-05 academic year.
- Notification has been given for a \$200,000 Congressional directed grant for Pharmacy Technician Training. The total grant requests for FY04 are in excess of 3,800,000. This is



approximately 25 percent higher than what was written in FY03. The Sloan Foundation Grant was received for \$45,000 to fund the development of Architectural Drafting and Estimating as an online program. The college also received a state grant as part of the Two-Year College Consortium to develop nursing curriculum that will serve statewide needs and a \$10,000 grant associated with researching the feasibility of wind energy.

- Student retention improved 3 percent in 2003-04 to 57 percent.

8R2 Performance Projections

New AQIP targets for the next 3-5 years are:

- Focus on improvement of general education learning outcomes
- 20% of programs add a significant writing component to their curriculum
- Provide additional programming for students on topics of diversity
- Increase enrollment of international students
- Provide increased opportunities for cultural exchanges for students
- Provide workshops for faculty in order to improve critical thinking skills of students
- Credit generated distance education increases by 15%
- Dual credit growth by 5%
- Workforce Training increases 15%
- Campus summer facilities usage increases by 10%
- Delivery of credit and noncredit courses increases at STTC from baseline
- Develop a plan to address the needs of 25-44 year old population in metropolitan area
- Grant revenue increases by 10%
- Partnerships increase by five
- Increase entrepreneurial funds of academic departments and profit centers by 5%
- Institutional investments produce additional revenue.

8R3 Comparison of Performance Projections

NDSCS can compare what other sister institutions are doing and have accomplished to fulfill the initiatives of the SBHE and legislature. Data that is submitted for the Campus Accomplishment Report, as well as accountability data, can be compared by institution and to the entire system. NDSCS is consistently achieving at high levels and demonstrating proactive planning that aligns with business and industry needs, the demographics of ND, and improving accessibility of programming to North Dakota citizens. (Please refer to Figures 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 2-1, 3-8, 3-9, 5-3, and Table 1-6 for specific comparison data with other NDUS institutions.)

8R4 Results of Planning Effectiveness

Stakeholders consistently indicate that the system in place for planning continuous improvement is effective. The Vital Focus survey conducted in 2001 gave the category "Measuring Effectiveness" a score of 4.07, ranking fourth out of nine categories. The Campus Quality Survey comparison data for the past four years of distributions demonstrate improved scores in the four areas depicted in figures 8-1 through figures 8-4.



Figure 8-1 Campus Quality Survey, “Strategic Quality Planning”

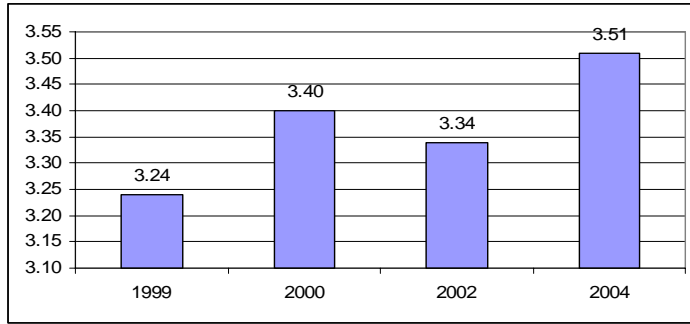


Figure 8-2, Campus Quality Survey, “Quality and Productivity Results”

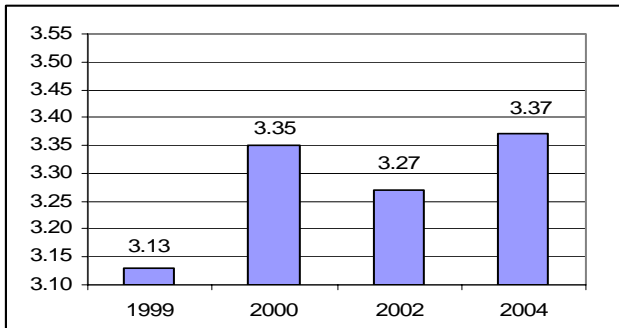


Figure 8-3, Campus Quality Survey, “Measurement and Analysis”

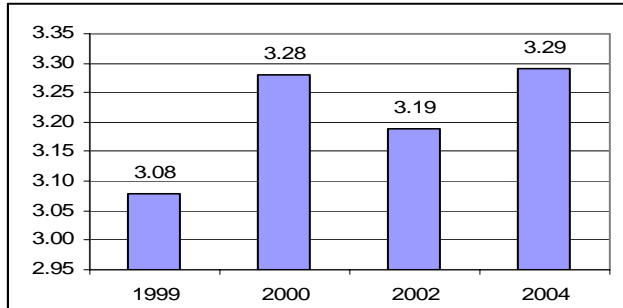
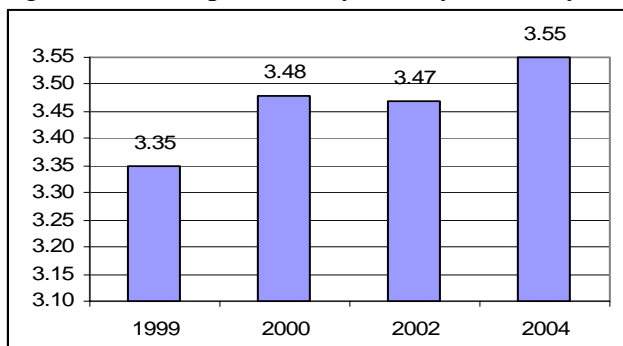


Figure 8-4, Campus Quality Survey, “Quality Assurance”





In 2001 the NDSCS mission and vision statements were reviewed and updated and future goals for the college were established. This included a broad range of 60 employees from the campus and 40 community members. The entire campus is included in the planning processes on an annual basis when new targets are established, as outlined previously.

IMPROVEMENT (I)

8I1 Process and System Improvement for Planning

The PDCA cycle is incorporated into college planning, as figure 5-2 indicates, so that continuous improvement is part of the ongoing process.

8I2 Setting Targets and Communicating Results

Targets are set for improvement based on data that has been collected, AQIP reviewer feedback, and initiatives set by the NDUS. Improvement priorities are centered around the three AQIP Goals of improving student learning, increasing access, and developing new sources of revenue as indicated in 8R2. The formal communication process is outlined in figure 5-1. Campus-wide meetings, meetings with Advisory Committees, meetings with standing committees, and regular communication with external stakeholders keep everyone informed of current campus priorities and results of past accomplishments.