Continuous Improvement—
An Approach for Integrating Cycles of
Assessment & Evaluation into
Institutional Processes

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GOALS OF PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

A. For You to Conceptualize the Impact of Continuous Improvement (CI) on Institutional Effectiveness (IE) at Your College

B. Provide Ideas & Tools to Help You Operationalize CI (handout; also go to: http://www.hartnell.edu/continuous-improvement for CI plan and handbook of CI processes)

C. Cultivate Your Desire to Expand Your Role as a Proactive Force, Leader & Change Agent
1. Delineate Hartnell’s Recent Experience with ACCJC Accreditation

2. Describe Challenges in Operationalizing Institutional Effectiveness (IE) & Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement (SCQI)

3. Discuss Results of Systematic Review of Evaluation Mechanisms at Hartnell
4. Provide Framework for Grouping Continuous Improvement (CI) Processes & Inventory of CI Processes

5. Review Examples of Completed CI Process Template & Evaluation

6. Consider Approaches Designed to Document, Share & Embed CI in Your College’s Everyday Work
i. (SEE HANDOUT) refers to the next page(s) in the handout provided. **We will refer to the handout.**

ii. This is not rocket science. You’ve all done some of this stuff, though you might not have made it explicit. I’ll present certain details and examples, but don’t get lost in them. We have 60 mins. *Think big picture.*

iii. CI is much more about qualitative research and judgments than about quantitative data and hard facts. *Keep this in mind.*

iv. 4th presentation on CI within 6 months. If you’ve heard this 3 times before, *pretend you’re enjoying it.*
TOPIC #1

Delineate Hartnell’s Recent Experience with ACCJC Accreditation
Early 2013:
Leading into Team Visit for the Comprehensive Evaluation, the College could not document or determine, with any degree of precision, the extent of progress made in key areas, such as SLO assessment and program review.

June 2013:
ACCJC Places Hartnell on Probation

March 2014:
Hartnell Submits First Follow-Up Report
June 2014:
ACCJC Removes Probation and Issues Warning (*Note More Important Outcome*)

March 2015:
Hartnell Submits Second Follow-Up Report

April 10, 2015:
ACCJC Conducts Follow-Up Visit
The team recommends that the college:

- Develop a process for regular and systematic evaluation of its mission statement.

- Develop a regular systematic process for assessing its long term and annual plans, as well as its planning process, to facilitate continuous sustainable institutional improvement.

- Fully engage in a broad-based dialogue that leads to regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of learning outcomes.

- Ensure that evaluation processes and criteria necessary to support the college’s mission are in place and are regularly and consistently conducted for all employee groups.
• Ensure that program review processes are ongoing, systematic, and used to assess and improve student learning, and that the college evaluate the effectiveness of its program review processes in supporting and improving student achievement and student learning outcomes.

• Develop a process for regular and systematic evaluation of all Human Resources and Business and Fiscal Affairs policies.

• The board self-evaluation continues to be done with full participation of each board member.

• *Systematically review effectiveness of its evaluation mechanisms.*
Describe Challenges in Operationalizing Institutional Effectiveness (IE) & Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement (SCQI)
How can a college get a grip on the ginormous notion of

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS?**

What exactly is this thing called “Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement”?

And BTW, why isn’t there a search engine ...?
IE is a very broad, generic construct. It typically refers to how well the institution meets its mission and serves its students.

Effectiveness cannot be measured directly or easily, and it is determined by many factors.

It encompasses many different aspects of a college as it functions as a system.
Especially Relevant ACCJC Standard on Institutional Effectiveness (I.B.7):

The institution regularly evaluates its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission.

This became the key driving force in moving forward.
The ACCJC expects that institutions will continuously work toward enhancing their effectiveness, hence the phrase, *sustainable continuous quality improvement*.

But what exactly is *sustainable continuous quality improvement*?
a. **Quality** = Typically refers to a grade level.

→ **Example:**
Threshold level is minimally acceptable.
b. **Improvement** = Making changes, specifically, making something better as perceived and evaluated by key stakeholders.

→ **Examples:**
   - Raising performance.
   - Changing a feature.
   - Adding a new feature.
c. **Continuous** = Always striving to improve. It never stops—you should celebrate what you’ve accomplished, yet never be satisfied with the status quo.

→ **Improvements can always be made.**

→ **Factors in the external environment change, thereby dictating ways in which you must improve.**
d. Sustainable = Making changes that last over a prolonged time period, preferably indefinitely.

→ With an annual improvement cycle, you would strive to make improvements that will stand the test of time, year over year.

→ If embedded into the fabric of what you do on an everyday basis, such improvements should eventually continue without much additional effort from year to year.
SCQI—WHAT IS IT?

SCQI may be difficult to achieve, but it is an elegant and powerful concept:

*Always striving to make improvements, or changes for the better, such that better performance continues into the long-term future without substantial effort. The improvements become part of who you are, and what you do.*

The fundamental challenge is to institutionalize continuous improvement—to incorporate it as concretely as possible into the ongoing work and fabric of your institution.
A VISUAL CAN BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL

Hartnell’s Model For Integrated Planning & Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement

(SEE HANDOUT)
Discuss Results of Systematic Review of Evaluation Mechanisms at Hartnell
Review of Effectiveness of Evaluation Mechanisms:

✓ What processes are in place? Which are being implemented?
✓ Does a complete master list of elements exist? Who maintains it?
✓ What proportion and which elements in the inventory have recently been evaluated? When?
✓ Does a regular cycle of evaluation exist? How frequently are elements scheduled to be evaluated currently and in the future per the existing evaluation cycle?
Key Results of This Review:

- 17 formalized evaluation mechanisms existed
- Irregularity of evaluation cycles
- Incomplete or non-comprehensive master lists
- Inconsistent or irregular evaluation of specific elements
- Certain key processes did not exist or had not been fully documented
Provide Framework for Grouping Continuous Improvement (CI) Processes & Inventory of CI Processes
The overarching framework adopted for grouping CI processes encompassed the following 5 categories or core areas:

A. Organizational effectiveness
B. Effectiveness of strategic planning
C. Effectiveness of strategic operations
D. Processes for employee hiring and job classification
E. Performance evaluation procedures
Decisions were based on:

The accreditation recommendations requiring deficiency resolution

- AND -

Unbundling of core areas into specific processes thought to contribute substantially to institutional effectiveness.
INVENTORY OF CI PROCESSES

Resulted in Total 30 Processes to be Developed and Formalized

(SEE HANDOUT)
Ci processes may need to be modified or added as new circumstances arise. Such changes are integral to continuous improvement.

**Example:**

- The ACCJC is increasingly focusing on student achievement outcomes.
- Each college is currently expected to develop goals for institutional effectiveness and provide them to the Chancellor’s Office.
KEY ITEMS ON STANDARDIZED TEMPLATE

☑ One or More Leads are Assigned (Accountability)
☑ An Appropriate Evaluation Cycle is Followed – Every Year, Every Five Years, etc.
☑ Various Persons, Tools and Data are Involved in the Assessment Process
☑ One or More Levels of Oversight Typically Occur
☑ Improvement Needed is Specified
☑ Improvement of the Process Itself may also be Recommended

(SEE HANDOUT)
Each CI process has its own cycle relative to the evaluation of each element on the master list for that particular process

(Note importance of list maintenance)

(SEE HANDOUT)
Review
Examples of Completed CI Process
Template & Evaluation
• Task force of faculty from the Academic Senate and the Dean of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness convened over several months in AY 2013-14 to develop Administrative Procedure (AP) 4021.

• Re-conceptualized and broadened existing academic program discontinuance process to encompass program establishment, revitalization, and discontinuance.

(SEE HANDOUT)
(SEE HANDOUT)
Survey Tool for each Council:

Council Tasks
• For example, “Outcomes of each council meeting were clear and understood.”

Information adequacy
• For example, “Council members had appropriate information to make informed decisions.”

Participation
• For example, “Council members attended regularly.”

Respectful Dialogue
• For example, “Different opinions and values were represented.”

Council Purpose and Responsibilities
• For example, “The Council worked effectively towards fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities.”
## EXAMPLE OF PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION: GOVERNANCE SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

### COLLEGE PLANNING COUNCIL 2013-14

#### INVENTORY OF AGENDA ITEMS BY MONTH AND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

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<th>CPC Responsibilities</th>
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<th>2-Oct-13</th>
<th>6-Nov-13</th>
<th>20-Nov-13</th>
<th>4-Dec-13</th>
<th>18-Dec-13</th>
<th>5-Feb-14</th>
<th>19-Feb-14</th>
<th>5-Mar-14</th>
<th>19-Mar-14</th>
<th>2-Apr-14</th>
<th>23-Apr-14</th>
<th>7-May-14</th>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### INVENTORY OF CPC AGENDA ITEMS 2013-14

![Bar chart showing the inventory of CPC agenda items by month and area of responsibility.](chart.png)
EXAMPLE OF PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION: GOVERNANCE SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

Results: Overall Governance Effectiveness

Strengths of the governance system identified through the evaluation

• Over 80 percent of respondents indicated satisfaction with the governance system.

Themes of effectiveness from respondents:

• Open and transparent
• Greater participation of all constituent groups than in the past
• Opportunities for participation and engagement
• Good structure
• Posting of all agendas, minutes, and materials creates accessibility for all

Improvements for the governance system to be considered for 2014-15

• Reporting back to constituent groups
• Attendance at meetings
• Examination of quorum rules due to lack of attendance
• Flow of information to and from CPC
• Amount of time needed to move items through the governance system
Improvements Recommended and Made:

To improve communication about governance actions and discussion, a “summary/highlights” document was created and is posted to the college web site following each CPC meeting. An email is sent to all employees following each meeting informing them that the document is available for review.

(Note about governance council web pages)
Consider Approaches Designed to Document, Share & Embed CI in Your College’s Everyday Work
Examples:

- Hartnell developed and is implementing a CI Plan as one of its long term institutional plans. The plan is linked to the college’s umbrella strategic plan.

- All CI processes are included in an accompanying handbook.

- The CI plan and handbook of CI processes were approved by the College Planning Council, and are published on a college web page.
Collect, discuss and publish non-confidential assessments, evaluations, and reviews.

**Example:**

- Hartnell recently started posting all program reviews to college web pages, and has been discussing evaluations of various processes at participatory governance meetings.

A collective mindset toward data driven decision making is cultivated as assessments and evaluations are shared and discussed.
Example:

Continuous Improvement Committee—subcommittee of the College Planning Council.

(SEE HANDOUT)
How Does or Can YOUR COLLEGE Document, Share & Embed CI in Its Everyday Work and Ongoing Operations?
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT,

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS &

ACCREDITATION
✓ Higher Learning Commission—Academic Quality Improvement Plan (AQIP)

✓ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)—Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
The ACCJC is increasingly focused on improvement of institutional effectiveness.

Example of Team Recommendation for a college:
“In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that informal practices relative to critical processes be developed into written procedures that ensure their consistent, ongoing, and systematic application.”
Continuous quality improvement is a mark of institutional effectiveness... The Commission expects the institution to identify two or three areas for further study and improvement as part of its continuous, quality improvement efforts... The Essay will... provide the institution with multi-year, long-term directions for improvement and demonstrate the institution’s commitment to excellence.

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B. Provide Ideas & Tools to Help You Operationalize CI (handout; also go to: http://www.hartnell.edu/continuous-improvement for CI plan and handbook of CI processes)

C. Cultivate Your Desire to Expand Your Role as a Proactive Force, Leader & Change Agent (Note: Director → Dean → VP)
QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS