



The Iowa Lakes Community College Quality Effort

In an effort to assess employee perceptions of AQIP, the college administered a short, anonymous survey, consisting of both open-ended and Likert-type questions, to all 282 full- and part-time employees, including faculty, staff, and administration. A total of 162 employees responded ("respondents"), which equates to a response rate of 57.45%.

AQIP Process Itself

The first part of the survey focused on the AQIP process itself. The AQIP process questions assessed three "levels": (i) the general purpose of AQIP; (ii) AQIP's impact on the college; and (iii) AQIP's impact on individual employees.

General Purpose of AQIP

A total of 87% of the respondents indicated that they know the purpose of AQIP; approximately 9% were unsure. Only 34% of the respondents feel very informed about current AQIP action projects; nearly 51% feel somewhat informed, and about 10% feel very uninformed. However, the latter group of 61% indicated a desire to be more informed about current AQIP action projects. Approximately 78% of the respondents disagree, or strongly disagree, that AQIP "is a waste of time"; about 18% are unsure.

AQIP's Impact on the College

Nearly 95% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that AQIP is important to the college, and approximately 89% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that the AQIP process helps the college improve; 11% are unsure.

AQIP's Impact on Individual Employees

About 83% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that AQIP personally affects, or may affect, them, with 15% unsure. And approximately 66% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that the AQIP process helps them personally improve; 29% are unsure. Of interest, about 63% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that they are part of the AQIP process; 28% are unsure, and approximately 10% either disagree or strongly disagree.

AQIP Action

The second part of the survey focused on student advising, a recently retired AQIP action project. Almost 50% of the respondents indicated that the advising process at the college has changed during the previous three years, while 30% are unsure and 20% disagree. When asked whether they've discussed with a student why he or she has dropped out of the college, only three out of the 62 comments related to a student advising issue; indeed, several commented otherwise: student advising is not a cause of students dropping out of the college.

Summary

The data demonstrate that there is much greater awareness, engagement, and employee buy-in than originally believed. Further, employees appear to recognize the results of the college's action projects and general commitment to continuous quality improvement processes that ultimately benefit students and Iowa Lakes. However, the college recognizes that work is needed to "educate" new employees and those with a low level of engagement in the process. In sum, the decision to pursue AQIP was a wise decision for the college.



Question	Representative Comments
The AQIP process affects, or personally affects, me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It affects everyone!" • "I hear that it affects me but I'm not sure how."
The AQIP process helps Iowa Lakes improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Through AQIP we can identify areas that need improvement and brainstorm to find a solution." • "We just selected an area to work on, but I thought it was an area where we were doing a fine job already." • "And it enhances our communication with each other and our outside communities."
The AQIP process helps me improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am always looking to improve processes even if they are going okay." • "I've learned some things that I can do in my job to improve how student services are offered." • "Although I'm reluctant to attend meetings, I'm glad afterwards that I have participated."
The AQIP process is a waste of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If we do AQIP right it is very good – if we do it poorly it is a waste of time." • "Sometimes it does feel like it's drilled into us. But overall, some of it does seem to stick."
Tell us ways you feel AQIP affects your job at Iowa Lakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It helps set goals." • "It makes me feel more involved in the decision making process." • "It takes time away from students." • "I have learned more about advising students." • "It helps us look to the future for improvement." • "It does not."
Do you feel the advising system at Iowa Lakes has changed in the past three years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We have improved on training staff, outside of faculty, to advise." • "It has improved." • "They are training more people to help with advising in the summer, but other than that, no I don't think it's changed much." • "It has made advising more visible college-wide." • "Faculty did get an advising handbook." • "We keep talking about having an advising center but the process is taking too long."
In the past three years have you spoken with a student who has dropped out and found out why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Just not ready for the rigor of the program and the expectations for the amount of study needed to pass classes." • "Money and time is the most common reason." • "No, advising wasn't the issue. The issue was either academics or financial." • "Mostly financial or personal reasons." • "No, the reason was financial." • "No, usually opportunities to enter the work force are the main reason." • "I believe it was more a family or cultural issue vs. Iowa Lakes. An advisor may have been able to help, however the advisor would have needed to be aggressive in tracking the student."