Feedback Report:
Key Themes

for

Milwaukee Area Technical College

April, 2011
The Wisconsin Fast Forward is an assessment program designed and administered exclusively by Wisconsin Forward Award under the directorship of Wisconsin Center for Performance Excellence (WCPE). The primary goal in offering this recognition program is to help organizations understand their strengths and opportunities for improvement as defined by the most current criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program.

Your application has been reviewed by two Senior-level WFA Examiners. They have considered your responses to the seven categories of the criteria and prepared the following Feedback Report for your consideration. It is important to remember that the Examiners have prepared this Feedback Report exclusively from your application document and their interpretation of what it contained.

Congratulations for being recognized for your achievements with the Wisconsin Forward Award program!
Executive Summary: Key Themes

What are the most important strengths or outstanding practices (of potential value to other organizations) identified?

- The organization has a strategic planning process that revolves around the Plan-Do-Check-Act improvement cycle. Five strategic goals have been identified, and there are core committees and strategy work teams that address key initiatives. These elements are all key components that allow the leadership to guide and grow a sustainable business model.
- The organization has taken steps to both recognize employee achievement and provide professional development opportunities for the workforce. The organization has developed mechanisms for both recognizing contributions of employees and seeking input from them regarding the workplace, operations, and individuals' satisfaction. Valuing workforce members' input is an important aspect of developing customer-driven excellence within organizations. The organization has also provided professional development programs and tuition reimbursement opportunities for those who seek to keep up in their disciplines or advancement in the workplace. The professional development opportunities ensure a qualified workforce and reflect the organization's respect for its employees.
- The organization has recognized the importance of managing its Information Technology systems and has developed systems for managing quality, availability, and distribution of computing resources across the college and all its campuses. The institution also manages its enterprise software and licenses through a centralized management system that ensures regular replacement of hardware on a 3 to 5 year cycle. With the increasing dependence on current technology for educational operations, having the management and service approaches for IT in place is a key step in achieving the institution’s goals and objectives.
- The organization has begun to develop approaches and processes that align with its strategic goals and objectives, but the organization has not yet developed clear pathways for determination of its strategic challenges and advantages or how the organization can systematically measure its progress in these areas. Identifying and understanding the organization’s core competencies and focusing on the core competencies in process development could enhance the organization’s ability to compete for its share of the educational market in the future.
- The organization appears to be at an early stage of determining how to obtain, track and evaluate significant information from all stakeholders and partners and peers. While the applicant cites numerous surveys, it is not clear that they have systematically assessed the usefulness of the data or whether they are canvassing the stakeholders, partners and peers to determine alignment of the institution’s core competencies with current and future market needs.
- The applicant addresses diversity in the student applicant pool through programs such as English as a Second Language. However, given the changing demographics
for post-secondary education and for the workforce, it appears that the organization has an opportunity to capitalize further on diversity within the institution. Determining what populations the institution serves, the demographic breakdown of its potential applicants and employees, and analysis of future trending data may provide institutional insights for planning and development of programming. While the applicant has identified the college’s Core Abilities and states that these are the learning outcomes of all graduating students, it is not clear how the Core Abilities are used in the Strategic Planning, Academic Planning, program evaluation and analysis stages. Re-focusing the work process systems around the Core Abilities as listed (Communicate Effectively; Collaborate with Others; Respect Diversity; Demonstrate Responsibility; Think Critically and Creatively; Utilize Technology; Apply Math and Science; Demonstrate Environmental Responsibility; Embrace Change) could help integrate the institution’s knowledge management and other work systems more effectively.

**Considering the applicant’s key business/organization factors, what are the most significant strengths, opportunities, vulnerabilities, and/or gaps (related to data, comparisons, linkages) found in its response to Results Items?**

- The applicant is at an early stage of collecting and using data for an effective system to achieve management by fact. The results presented generally lack sufficient segmentation that limits understanding of opportunities for improvement. Tracking data for analysis of trends is a longer-term process reflecting multiple cycles. Segmentation is desirable for rich understanding of data trends and would enable analysis by program, division, or stakeholder group.
- Linking data to strategic goals, action plans and accountability are elements that enhance institutional ability to achieve both short and longer-term goals. While the institution is identifying strategic goals and some action plans, the material presented does not provide full information about the progress being made, and further, assigning individual accountability for action plans would provide structure to the process and information for leadership as they assess institutional growth.