

*A brief update on Operational Projects and quality issues at Stark State College of Technology*

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## **2007 - 2010 Strategic Plan**

The 2007-2010 Strategic Plan was approved by the President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees at the end of the spring term.

A cross-component team of faculty and staff as well as students, alumni, trustees, and business and community leaders helped clarify the content and structure of the updated Strategic Plan. This Plan represents a step forward in strategic thinking at the College with enhanced Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), a performance Dashboard, and the integration of strategic planning and accreditation processes. Watch the web and the College Intranet for Operational Project and KPI updates.

The complete plan can be found at [www.starkstate.edu](http://www.starkstate.edu) or on the College's Intranet.

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# Strategically SPEAKING

## **2007 Stark State Community Awareness Survey**

The Community Awareness Survey was an Operational Project from the 2005-07 Strategic Plan that supported College Strategic Goals of maintaining high stewardship. The Center for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) conducted the Survey on behalf of Stark State College of Technology. CMOR collaborated with Stark State College of Technology Research Committee to design survey questions.

### Favorability Ratings:

Large percentages of respondents rated Stark State favorably on general dimensions, such as Convenience (85%), Accessibility (83%), and Overall Quality (77%). The overall proportion of respondents rating the College favorably declined on more specific dimensions due to large numbers of respondents not expressing an opinion.

### General College Choice Factors:

Although respondents indicated that a diverse set of factors influenced college choice decisions, several key factors were identified. Nearly all (96%) respondents thought that degree offerings were very important, as well as cost (83%), reputation (76%) and location (54%). Of these, the specific program/degree and location were deemed most important. Per location, closeness to home and perceived safety were the most important factors. Ninety-four percent of respondents also indicated that they preferred a small to medium-sized school.

### Specific Awareness and Marketing:

Over half of respondents (52%) indicated that they or family members had attended Stark State and almost 70% indicated that they knew of neighbors, friends, or co-workers who had attended the College. Eighty-one percent of respondents had heard of Stark State through friends and family, which exceeded all other advertising methods.

### Conclusions:

Overall, general awareness and opinion of SSCT was very positive among Stark County residents. Almost all respondents thought that degree offerings and cost were very important factors in college choice decisions. Furthermore, almost all respondents indicated that they preferred a small-to-medium sized college and that closeness to home was important. Finally, more respondents heard of the College through word-of-mouth than any other advertising method. This underscores the importance of being true to our mission of providing student-centered education, and of maintaining the highest possible customer service standards.

***Please see the College Intranet or contact Institutional Research and Planning for Survey reports.***

# QualityMATTERS

## Academic Quality Improvement Program

### Higher Learning Commission

The Mission of the HLC is “serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher education.” The Core Values of the HLC are quality, integrity, innovation, diversity, inclusiveness, service, collaboration, and learning, each being of equal weight and importance. In support of their Mission and Core Values, the Commission offers two accreditation models that colleges can follow: PEAQ (Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality) and AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program). PEAQ is the model that is most similar to the traditional accreditation process we followed previously. AQIP’s goal is to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges in order to assure and advance the quality of higher education.

Two requirements of the AQIP process are Action Projects and the Systems Portfolio.

### Action Projects:

Three Action Projects were identified last fall at the AQIP Strategy Forum in Chicago, IL. The three Action Projects are *Assessment of Student Support Services and Support Departments*, *Capitalizing on Information/Learning Resources to Foster Learning*, and *Consistency of Policies in Internal and External Publications, including the Web*.

### Action Projects: (cont.)

Volunteer teams were formed last spring and have already made considerable progress in identifying steps to improve institutional quality. Twenty-eight faculty and staff members are serving on the Action Project Committees. An update for each Action Project was sent to the AQIP Division of the Higher Learning Commission in September. The AQIP Division of the HLC forwards the updated information to AQIP Reviewers. The AQIP Reviewers will send us feedback on each Action Project by October 2007. An AQIP requirement is that we have three active Action Projects at all times. Each of the Action Projects needs to be completed within one year. Two future Action Projects will be on *Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes* and *Developing a Process to Authenticate Teaching Credentials*.

### Systems Portfolio:

Committees were formed for all nine Categories of the Systems Portfolio last spring. The nine Categories are: (1) Helping Students Learning, (2) Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives, (3) Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs, (4) Valuing People, (5) Leading and Communicating, (6) Supporting Institutional Operations, (7) Measuring Effectiveness, (8) Planning Continuous Improvement, and (9) Building Collaborative Relationships. Each of the Categories has questions that relate to our Context for Analysis, Processes, Results, and Improvement for that Category. Sixty-five faculty and staff members are serving on the Category committees.

The Systems Portfolio is due to the AQIP Division of the HLC by May 2010.

### AQIP Sources of Communication:

Various college-wide mediums of communication are being used to provide updates on our AQIP accreditation process. This newsletter is being produced a few times each semester. Updates are reported at the President’s monthly Cabinet meeting. Detailed information on the progress of each of the Action Project committees and Systems Portfolio committees is on the S-Drive in the AQIP folder. College-wide updates are being held periodically. Information is on the AQIP website at <http://www.starkstate.edu/AQIP/index.html>. Monthly updates are also provided at the Expanded Executive Council meetings and AQIP-Strategic Planning Steering Committee meetings. Periodic updates are provided at the Faculty Association and College Staff Association meetings.

Please contact Dr. Lada Gibson-Shreve @ 330-966-5457 Ext.4326 or [LGibson@starkstate.edu](mailto:LGibson@starkstate.edu) if you have questions or want more information about AQIP.