
Action Project: Improve Application Cycle Time to Restricted Programs

Institution: Madison Area Technical College
Submitted: 2007-09-13 **Contact:** Becky Baumbach
Email: rbaumbach@matcmadison.edu **Telephone:** 608-246-6081

Annual Update: 2008-09-11**A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.**

A series of 10 team meetings and many smaller sub-group meetings resulted in a number of immediate process improvements for a selected pilot set of learning programs which have been so successful that these improvements have been expanded to include more and more learning programs. Examples include centralized admissions for programs with straightforward entrance requirements, immediate acceptance of those who meet their desired learning program's requirements without question followed-up with letters from the Enrollment Center, e-mail responses to applicants within 24 hours of application receipt, etc. As a result of these process improvements, time for applicants to receive a decision regarding their acceptance into a learning program has dropped from six plus months to approximately two weeks, with 75 percent of applicants now being accepted to waitlist status within 2 weeks of applying. Although some aspects of the improvement plan have been delayed due to software integration issues (Nolij), things are still moving forward, not backward. Due to the software integration issues and to the expansion of the scope of the project, the final completion date has been moved back.

Review (09-29-08):

The preliminary results of the pilot program are very encouraging. The documented improvements in application cycle time reflect AQIP category # 3 UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS. Madison is commended for moving forward with its stated goals and expanding the pilot project to include additional learning programs. Given the dramatic reduction in wait time for acceptance into a learning program, Madison is encouraged to assess the impact of these improvements on applicant satisfaction (AQIP category # 7).

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The Team worked to engage the Academic Coordinators from the Construction, Manufacturing, Apprenticeship, and Transportation (CCMAT), Agriscience & Technology (A&TC), Business and Applied Arts (BAAC), and Health and Safety Education (CHASE) Learning Centers for their input and support. This resulted in immediate energy and synergy around the improvement strategies because all involved could see the clear benefits. A Tollgate Review was presented to College Council on April 22, 2008, which was well received and appreciated.

Review (09-29-08):

It is apparent that the goals of the action project were well received by a diverse constituency of academic coordinators. The team is to be congratulated for securing broad based support from the academic units. Securing such "buy in" and appreciation from the College Council showcases AQIP category # 5 LEADING AND COMMUNICATING (5P8).

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

More learning programs have been identified for inclusion in the expanded pilot with the full support and engagement of each Learning Center's faculty and staff. Data queries have been established to create reports for each program, providing information by term, which will enable better management of waitlists. Criteria and processes have been identified that support wait listed students' entry into learning programs or removal from wait lists. In order to ensure sufficient staffing for this centralized effort continues, resource needs have been identified and operational and personnel requests have been included

in Unit Plans.

Review (09-29-08):

Expanding the pilot to include addition programs should provide additional insight regarding the effectiveness of the processes. With full support from each Learning Center's personnel, Madison is poised for full implementation of the project. In the spirit of planning continuous improvement (AQIP category # 8), it might be useful to obtain feedback from the stakeholders regarding the efficacy of the project. The identification of resource needs and additional personnel demonstrates Madison's FORESIGHT.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

The centralized admissions process for those restricted programs that have clearly defined and straight-forward admissions requirements represent a very effective practice for MATC. The centralized admissions process has resulted in a significantly shortened turn-around time for admitting students to the learning programs or to the learning program's Waiting List and also significantly reduced the time for applicants to receive information regarding the status of their application.

Review (09-29-08):

The reduction in turn-around time for admitting students and for applicants receiving status information clearly addresses AQIP categories # 1 -HELPING STUDENTS LEARN and # 3 UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS. Madison may consider showcasing its success in improving the application and admittance process within the college community and at forums attended by personnel from similar organizations.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

Software updates and installations yet to be made are still an obstacle. We also know that more personnel resources will be needed at critical times in the application cycle but plans are underway to address that issue. The new processes represent a major sea change in the culture of the College and a major hurdle remains in bridging the old way with the new way of admitting students and maintaining Wait Lists. But small steps have been successful and we are gaining on it.

Review (09-29-08):

The adoption of any new technology/software is often received with varying degrees of support or resistance. The successful integration of a new system may be facilitated by identifying strategies for addressing the needs and continuing concerns of users at varying levels of comfort (FORESIGHT). In keeping with AQIP category # 4 - VALUING PEOPLE, Madison may consider developing a plan for training and support of personnel.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

We are confident that the internal process is working very well and could not be stimulated except from within.

Review (09-29-08):

Global Assessment - 2. Madison is making substantial progress towards the completion of its action project and their initial success with the pilot is commendable. As they move toward expanding the pilot and integrating software updates we wish them continued success.