

**Program Quality Assurance
Process Audit**

**GEORGE BROWN
COLLEGE**

**FINAL AUDIT
REPORT**

September 2006

This report represents the findings of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit for George Brown College held on **June 2, 2006**.

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college personnel, members of the Review Panel, and the Management Board of the OCQAS. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this Report.

For the College:

Signature

Date

For the Review Panel:

Signature

Date

For the Management Board:

Signature

Date

Review Panel Membership

Chair: Bonnie Rose,
Executive VP/VP for Academic Affairs, Niagara University

Members: Raymonde Hanson,
Academic VP, Algonquin College
Elka Walsh,
Consultant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A. CONCLUSIONS

George Brown College is to be commended for its focus on excellence in teaching and learning, and its commitment to quality assurance. The College has undertaken a comprehensive effort to place quality assurance within the context of strategic and academic planning. Throughout the College planning process, there is a clear commitment to quality and excellence. This commitment includes dedication of significant attention and resources to the effort at the level of the senior management team, in the strategic planning process, in the budget for the Department of Excellence, and in communications and professional development designed to build a culture of quality assurance throughout the institution.

The Review Panel was impressed with how strongly the College focuses on quality of programs within its academic strategic plan, and on how that focus has permeated all their planning processes. The institution appears to follow its operating principles, which include the following:

- Student-centred programs and services
- Evidence-based decision-making
- College-wide consistency and quality
- Quality assurance that measures performance and results.

While the process is well resourced and is being carefully implemented, the College itself would note that the work is not complete. The College has introduced new approaches to program development, approval and review over the last three years. We note that its quality assurance program is well-resourced and is being carefully implemented. It is a work in progress and continued effort is required to ensure that a consistent and systemic culture of assessment and quality assurance permeates all divisions and departments, and that all staff understand their role in supporting quality assurance.

At this point, the context for quality assurance is clear, and the program review process itself seems to be comprehensive. The two key areas for future development are in the implementation and monitoring of recommendations from program reviews, and in faculty evaluation. These are areas on which the college is working.

The panel noted the centralized approach used for quality assurance at the College, with much of the effort coming from the Office of Academic Excellence. This centralized approach is helpful in building the culture and consistency. Over time the quality assurance processes and responsibilities (including elements of the annual and multi-year cyclical processes) may need to become more embedded in the academic departments if the process is to be timely and sustainable. The Panel also noted that the College has a valuable source of information with annual student feedback, and yet it was not clear as to how this information is used in making decisions and assuring quality on an annual basis at the program level.

George Brown College has a unique administrative structure. Within this structure, the key to future success in quality assurance will be the consistent development and implementation of business plans, the effectiveness of the senior management team, and the link of quality assurance to evaluation of Deans' performance. To this end, it will be helpful for the College to set out in a policy context what they are doing now. As well, accountability for the implementation of these strategies will need to be identified clearly in business plans and linked to the evaluation of Deans' performance.

B. OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL

Criterion	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Criterion 1	X		
Criterion 2	X		
Criterion 3	X		
Criterion 4	X		
Criterion 5		X	

Note. The Panel found that George Brown College is on its way to a system that would fully meet all the criteria, and that those areas in which the criteria are not yet met appear to be a factor of time and development of a culture. In another assessment system, this finding might have been “not yet fully met, but with a plan in place to do so”.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following, while not necessarily new ideas, are intended to help the College build on what it is already doing:

- The College will want to make sure that its feedback processes are documented and included in annual program reflection and planning, as well as in the cyclical review. We note that, concurrent with the Panel's audit, the College was completing a review of its governance structure, and understand that a number of changes have been announced to underline the accountability of the Vice-President Academic Excellence (VPAE) for the implementation of the quality assurance program, and in particular, of recommendations from the program review process. The changes include the creation of a new Academic Management Committee composed of all the Deans, which will meet monthly and be chaired by the VPAE.
- As was noted by College personnel in the site visit, it will be important to develop computer-supported systems (e.g., for summarizing and analyzing student feedback)

to support the process as much as possible, because of the size and complexity of the College.

- The College leadership team may want to think about the multi-year program review cycle and its sustainability. The current approach is efficient in providing for review of clusters of programs, but the anticipated 7-year cycle for program reviews may be too long a time period to ensure good quality assurance. This being said, the Panel recognizes the fiscal constraints under which the college operates and understands that a sustainable cycle must also be affordable.
- It will be helpful to place more emphasis on quality assessment within departments as part of the annual cycle (e.g., KPI results, student feedback, maintaining active Program Advisory Committees).
- The College may want to consider making more explicit links to the Quality Criteria in its systems for review of the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) and equipment.
- It will be important to continue development of initiatives such as having the Program Planning and Review Committee (PPRC) look at results of program reviews and implementation of recommendations, and strengthening faculty evaluation.
- Keep up the good work on communication and building a positive culture of assessment and a learning organization.