

**Program Quality Assurance
Process Audit**

ST. CLAIR COLLEGE

**FINAL AUDIT
REPORT**

October 2006

This report represents the findings of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit for St. Clair College held **June 6, 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

For the Review Panel:

Signature

For the Management Board:

Signature

Review Panel
Membership

Chair: Dr. Katharine Janzen
Assoc Vice President Research & Innovation, Seneca College

Members:
Dr. Marjorie McColm, Director Academic Excellence George Brown College
Bill Jeffrey, Assoc. Vice President, School of Health Sciences' Community Service and Biotechnology, Conestoga ITAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A. CONCLUSIONS

The commitment of St. Clair College to quality is an evident strength. Their Values statement declares “We value quality in everything we do” and we heard the comment, “Quality is a way of life at St. Clair”, several times during our discussions with the different groups that we met.

This commitment to quality is evident also in the several corporate plans such as the Academic Excellence, Business, and Financial Plans. It was also obvious that Windsor as a community supports the ongoing development of St. Clair programming, as indicated by the strong advisory and funding support the College enjoys from their diverse partners, and most notably from the automotive industry.

New academic standards have been introduced with the development of applied degrees and articulation agreements with the University of Windsor. The secondment of faculty to work with the Director of Curriculum and Program Design as curriculum coaches, was recognized by the faculty group and the Panel as a very important facilitator of QA in academic programming by providing a consistent, centralized resource to facilitate effective program planning, program review and revision based on a systematic analysis of the curriculum. As well, the students told us they were confident that they were well prepared for their jobs.

The College has made a sound beginning in developing a comprehensive, integrated approach to Quality Assurance by establishing the College Quality Committee in January 2006 to oversee this process. The fact that the administrative heads of all the sectors across the college participate in this Committee is a definite strength. However, this process needs to be expanded now to include other stakeholders, most notably the front line faculty and staff.

Based on the findings of the Panel from the extensive documentation reviewed and our discussions with the various key informant groups during the site visit, it appeared to the Panel that St. Clair’s quality assurance initiatives were at this time in their development somewhat fragmented in that the QA process is not directly aligned with other significant planning cycles such as Academic Excellence, Business, and Financial planning. This is especially important given the challenges of selecting College priorities among competing resource needs. A recurring theme was the impact of limited resources on providing quality programs and implementing a quality assurance system.

The Panel noted there was only one faculty representative on the College Quality Committee and the Panel urges the Committee to be more inclusive through the active participation of faculty and staff in this Committee and other QA initiatives, as these are the front line staff who most directly impact quality in the delivery of programs.

The faculty group indicated in our discussions that there is currently limited awareness of the College's QA processes among faculty and staff beyond the sector heads level. They did not see that faculty had participated directly in the QA process the exception of the 3 or 4 faculty who had been seconded to work with the Director of Curriculum and Program Design as curriculum coaches. The faculty stressed the need to make this support a resource priority to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at St. Clair. They urged the College to make this a funding priority.

The Panel encourages the College to build on their solid foundation and commitment to Quality Assurance by moving towards a more inclusive, integrated, and systematic approach to Quality Assurance in their policies and processes; one that expands the performance indicators beyond the current heavy reliance on Key Performance Indicators and Student Comment Cards, and ensures the regular review of all programs, courses, and services.

The students who met with the Panel expressed the need for the College to review transferability of credits, within programs at St. Clair, among programs in other colleges and between colleges and universities to ensure that the students received maximum credit for past learning demonstrated; they identified inconsistencies in how advanced standing credits were assessed across St. Clair programs, and in transfer agreements with other institutions.

The Panel's specific recommendations are listed below.

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**	

- * Criterion 4 - systematic and formal evaluation of full time faculty performance does not appear to be happening consistently. There appears to be no formal process for students to give individual faculty feedback on their teaching or course content.
- ** Criterion 5 - The College has an active College Quality Committee consisting of sector heads and this committee has begun to explore Quality Assurance across college sectors; the directed program review template is a beginning but

the directed program review process focuses too heavily on KPIs as the driver for reviews.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Panel recommends that the College:

1. Establish an integrated, systematic, and formal overall Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures to ensure that all programs/services are assessed comprehensively, regularly, and consistently, and that QA processes are aligned with and inform Academic Excellence, Business and Financial Planning.
2. Establish a College Quality Committee that is inclusive of the appropriate internal stakeholders with clearly defined terms of reference that will oversee and guide the QA process.
3. Ensure that the Quality Assurance process includes the review of transfer credits available to students to ensure students receive maximum credit for demonstrated learning outcomes.
4. Continue to develop and implement an inclusive and comprehensive approach to communicating with all internal and external stakeholders regarding the on-going Quality Assurance initiatives underway in the College.