



*Ontario College Quality Assurance Service*

*Service de l'assurance de la qualité des  
collèges de l'Ontario*

# **Program Quality Assurance Process Audit**

## **Final Audit Report – Executive Summary**

### **SAULT COLLEGE**

### **April 2009**

This report represents the findings of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit for Sault College; the on-site portion of the audit was performed during the period **March 30-April 1, 2009**.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

The Audit Team finds that Sault College has, substantially and satisfactorily, met Criteria 1, 3 and 4 and partially met Criteria 2 and 5.

It became clear, during the site visit, that the College demonstrates significant strengths at the program and school level but that an unusually high rate of turnover at the senior level has prevented the College from moving forward with a corporate-level and consistent set of policies and processes with respect to quality assurance. However, the current College leadership demonstrated, throughout the interviews with the Audit Team, a strong commitment to enhancing the College's quality assurance processes and to developing a set of College-wide policies and systems to support and advance them.

Thus, there are a number of factors that provide the Audit Team with assurance that the College is poised to move forward with its quality assurance processes:

- Stable and progressive leadership at the senior level
- Strong and widespread support for the senior team throughout the College
- Committed faculty and program advisory committee members
- Enthusiastic students
- Strong roots within the community
- Renewal of the contract for the Manager, Quality Assurance
- Clear action plans to address the gaps identified through the College's self-study.

### **B. OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
Criterion 1	X		
Criterion 2		X	
Criterion 3	X		
Criterion 4	X		
Criterion 5		X	

### **C. COMMENDATIONS**

The Audit Team identified a number of areas where Sault showed exemplary practice and leadership in the field of quality assurance and improvement. A number of these would be worthy of emulation by other colleges. A short description of each follows:

(1) Both the President and the Vice-President Academic, as relative newcomers to the College are working diligently to position the College for change. To this end, and among other things, they are reaching down into the organization in order to encourage staff support for the changes that need to be made. For example, the President has instituted a series of “Coffee with the President” sessions during which staff are encouraged to share ideas and concerns. Full minutes are taken of these meetings to provide assurance that staff suggestions are taken seriously. The Vice-President, Academic meets with program co-ordinators every two weeks, again in order to solicit ideas and feedback. Staff have indicated their support for this dialogue which seems to be working to bring a sense of cohesion and direction to the College.

(2) The College has addressed a major concern regarding the difficulties that students have with college-level mathematics. The College has hired an experienced, retired high school teacher who has carried out a thorough and detailed analysis of student mathematics requirements and skills, both at the high school and college level. This has led to a major shift in the way that mathematics is taught at the College (much more focus on program-related skills); the project is showing early signs of increasing success rates among College students.

(3) The College has prepared an extensive “Minimum Teaching Qualifications” document outlining, in detail and for each subject area, minimal requirements for prospective faculty: diploma or degree requirements, professional qualifications, practical experience, teaching experience.

(4) The College has developed a “Program Report Card”, an annual compilation of information for each program providing data regarding: applications, enrolment, student satisfaction, student retention, completion rate, graduation rate, graduate satisfaction, employment rate, OSAP default rate and program costing. While the data is not unique to Sault College and many colleges use such data in their own internal analyses, Sault has developed a process that compiles the data automatically from existing data bases and, as well, makes the data freely available to all staff.

## **D. AFFIRMATIONS**

As noted above, Sault College has prepared a set of “Improvement Initiatives” identifying 17 areas, arising out of their own self-study, that require further development:

The areas identified include:

- Update Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition policy
- Update Direct Credit Transfer policy
- Further embed the program learning outcomes mapping project with links to the program and curriculum review processes
- More in-depth auditing of course outlines to ensure they are complete and prepared to the College standard
- Update program review schedule and, as part of that, formalize program and curriculum reviews
- Develop a corporate process to ensure that program changes are documented, audited and approved
- Manage process to enhance flexibility in the delivery of programs
- Improve professional development processes and plans for faculty
- Implement a formal schedule for faculty performance reviews
- Update the faculty performance review template and process
- Monitor and strengthen the systems and processes that will ensure quality curriculum development and delivery (e.g. Co-ordinator's forum)
- Formal implementation of a quality assurance process policy and related procedures that are standardized, college-wide , sustainable and engaging
- Formal process to track the impact of recommendations made as a result of program and curriculum reviews
- Further the development of timely, effective communications to all staff regarding the quality assurance process and further engagement of all staff to ensure the process is supported, evaluated and accountable

The Audit Panel is in agreement with the Improvement Initiatives raised by Sault College and congratulates the College for identifying these issues in a clear manner and for developing realistic work plans to address them

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Audit Team identified several areas that will assist in improving program quality assurance at the College. A short description and rationale for each of these items follows:

1. The Province's "Framework for Programs of Instruction" includes an outline of the required Learning Outcomes for Essential Employability Skills (11 are listed) and a further five "themes" that are intended "to provide direction to colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfill the General Education requirement for programs of instruction." There is some evidence to suggest that Sault is not consistently using the most current Framework in assessing its courses of study (e.g. use of the old term "Generic Skills" instead of "Essential Employability Skills"). It is recommended that the College, in developing its new review processes, ensures that staff use the most current Framework.
2. The College is urged to ensure that it adheres to the General Education requirement for Ontario College Diploma and Advanced Diploma programs, i.e. that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study.
3. As the College develops its more formal and corporate-level quality assurance processes, it is encouraged to meet with and obtain assistance from staff involved in quality assurance activities at other colleges in order to solicit ideas to facilitate the development of their own policies, processes and tools.