COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS (CQAAP)

AUDIT REPORT

LOYALIST COLLEGE

DATE OF SITE VISIT: January 25 & 26, 2017

PREPARATION DATE: February 22, 2017

SUBMISSION DATE: March 2, 2017

PREPARED BY: Bruce Tawse, Jason Galea, Devon Galway

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APPROVAL OF THE AUDIT REPORT

This report represents the findings of the College Quality Assurance Audit Process for *Loyalist College.*

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college President, members of the audit panel, and the Chair of the OCQAS Management Board. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this report.
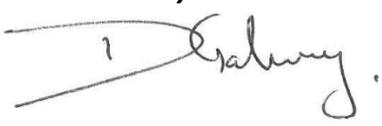
COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Ann Marie Vaughan	
Signature: *Ann Marie Vaughan*	Date: May 18, 2017

CHAIR - OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Signature:_____	May 16, 2017 Date: _____

AUDIT PANEL MEMBERS

Chair: **Bruce Tawse**	
Signature:_____	March 2, 2017 Date: _____
Panelist: **Jason Galea**	
Signature:_____	March 2, 2017 Date: _____
Panelist: **Devon Galway**	
Signature:_____	March 2, 2017 Date: _____

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Conclusions**
   General comments and summary of the findings of the audit panel.

Loyalist College has continued to develop its quality assurance model and associated processes and activities that are designed to provide the highest level of program quality and services. During the 2012 Audit, six recommendations were made to help improve Loyalist College's quality assurance activities and the College has addressed six recommendations coming out of that assessment.

The Audit Panel spent considerable time reviewing the *Self-Study Report* prepared in advance of this audit. The Report was comprehensive, well-documented and referenced, and throughout the narrative the College acknowledged further work to be done if warranted. The Panel then had the pleasure of meeting with 64 stakeholders during the Site Visit, including members of the internal staff, faculty, administration and student community, as well as external industry members, all of whom were forthcoming and willing to share their experiences. All were comfortable sharing their thoughts, including suggestions for improvement. The Loyalist community gave the impression of a very collaborative, focused and enthusiastic group who are committed to providing the best service and program quality to their students. It must be mentioned that the College staff were very organized and accommodating throughout the two-day Site Visit and their attention to every detail to make the visit effective does not go unnoticed.

The Audit Panel was able to validate most of the Standards and Requirements addressed in the *Self-Study Report* and through the Site Visit. At this stage in the College's evolution of its quality assurance model and processes, it was evident that the College continues to look at ways to improve the programs and services it offers.

For the most part, Loyalist College meets or exceeds the *Ontario College Quality Assurance Services (OCQAS)* benchmarks for quality. The Audit Panel recognizes the work the College has done to move its quality assurance initiatives forward and consequently the Panel felt that the College has "Met" all six *Standards* established by OCQAS. Within the individual criteria, however, the Panel did identify some *Requirements* that were rated as "Partially Met" and these are noted as Recommendations in the final section of the Audit Report.

The Audit Panel congratulates Loyalist College, its staff, community supporters and, of course, its students, for their commitment to continuous improvement.

2. Results
a. Audit Results

Standard	Result		
1	☒Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
2	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
3	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
4	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
5	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
6	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

Audit Decision: *(select one)*

☐Mature Effort
☒**Organized Effort**
☐Formal Effort

STIPULATIONS

Commendations

Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college has shown exemplary or leadership in the field of quality assurance and improvement. These are mechanisms that are especially good and may be worthy of emulation by other colleges in the system.

- The Panel applauds the introduction of the *Program Quality Assurance (PQA) Committee* process that serves as the foundation of Loyalist's quality assurance activities. It is evident that the annual program review has been well-received by faculty and program coordinators in that it allows them to develop and track incremental changes and improvements on a regular basis. This information ultimately makes preparing the five-year major culminating PQA Report a less onerous task and captures the chronology of changes. A repository on the LMS allows the storage and easy retrieval of program evidence on an ongoing basis. The annual program review becomes an effective tool to ensure changes are identified and introduced along the way, a continuous improvement activity. The Panel felt that this PQA process was inclusive and provided a good history of program evolution and one that could be emulated by other colleges.

- The Panel commends the timely response (ten days) for feedback to the program teams after presenting to the *PQA Committee*. The Panel heard that faculty appreciate the quick turnaround. Prompt feedback not only allowed the teams to immediately begin future planning, but it also acknowledged their work and thus motivated staff to continue making progress since they knew the outcomes as soon as possible and could build on their activity.

- The new budget process appears to be aligned with and focused on the prioritizing of services and funds to support student success. The process is done in a transparent manner that allows sharing of budget requirements by various departments so all stakeholders understand the rationale and priorities of financial decisions and how these decisions are deliberate actions to support student success.

- The Panel heard that the full rollout of the e-portfolio allowed faculty and others to have access to course materials in a consistent and easily accessible manner, something that contributes to standardization and continuous improvement. Faculty spoke very positively about the support they receive from *Learning Technology*, support that allows faculty to do their work more effectively.

- Students commented on the ease and accessibility of the *Course Feedback* process. The tool is available online, students are prompted to complete the feedback tool and it appears they do so and appreciate the opportunity to provide confidential and constructive feedback. The students commented that they saw action as a result of the feedback provided.

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- *Program Advisory Committees (PACs)* are active, engaged and meet regularly to provide the College with feedback on curriculum content and program quality. The Panel heard that the employers truly value the quality of the graduates from Loyalist and are proud to have a role in the ongoing success of the programs and students. They indicated that their voices and input are heard and feel they have a role in the programs' and the College's success.

- The Panel heard that the relationship between the Board of Governors and the College has evolved and the Board members feel more engaged and better informed. In particular, the Board has praised the College for the quality of presentations that are, in their opinion, better researched, with clear and improved data and at a level that is much more informative for a Board member. The Board felt that at one time they "used to take reports from staff at face value" but now feel comfortable engaging staff and asking questions. The Board also valued the fact that the College staff is more accountable and there is more middle-management interaction in the processes and meetings with the Board.

Affirmations
Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college itself has found a weakness, identified the weakness, and intends to correct it (a plan of action has already been articulated). In effect, this is affirming the college's judgment and findings of its own self-study.

- Follow up on Recommendation #6 from 2012: During the 2012 audit, a recommendation was made that *"a College-wide communications strategy could be developed and formalized in a procedure document that would facilitate communications of important policies, processes and procedures for all students, faculty and staff as many organizations find communication with all the stakeholders is often the most difficult task."* The document *"Current State of Quality Assurance Activities Report"* dated October 14, 2016 indicates that this recommendation is currently in process and 75% complete (pg. 6). Loyalist College has introduced many new and effective tools and processes to improve communication. The Panel encourages the College to continue this process and regularly update the Board and Executive on progress.

- Monitoring Changes to Programs: When changes are made/introduced to a program or course, it was unclear how the process is initiated and managed through the process, and by whom. The Panel questioned how cumulative changes to a program over time are monitored and addressed to ensure the spirit and intent of the program is maintained and remains within the boundaries approved by the Credentials Validation Service. The College indicated that it has identified this area as a gap and is working to formalize its policy and procedures regarding the amount of change a program can go through before it requires resubmission to the Credentials Validation Service or the Ministry for reconsideration. In the responses to the request for additional information following the Panel's review of the *Self Study Report*, it was acknowledged by the

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College that *"…we are currently working on policy we hope to have approved for implementation early in 2017 that will more clearly define this process and the associated timelines."* (Draft AOP 240 Curriculum Change Policy). The Panel affirms the College's plan to address the implementation and communication of <u>AOP 240 – Curriculum Change Policy</u>.

Recommendations

Provide clear statements that articulate areas as needing improvement. Recommendations may also be made in relation to areas of concern identified by the college in its self-study, and for which no plan of action has been articulated by the college.

The rationale for recommendations for the various Standards and Requirements has been addressed in each section of the Standards. The following recommendations are referenced to each applicable Requirement.

<u>**Recommendations:**</u>

1. *The College develop and introduce a standardized five-year PQA Report template, one that ensures that each program review addresses the same information and presents it in a standard format for easy comparison and cross-department/cross-program awareness.* **Requirement 1.2**

2. *The College should develop a standardized program map to be used across programs and disciplines.* **Requirement 2.2**

3. *The College develop a strategy to ensure the on-going conformity of programs with the EES requirements, ensuring that graduates have, in fact, reliably demonstrated the outcomes as outlined in the Credentials Framework.* **Requirement 3.2**

4. *The Panel recommends the addition of a section to the PQA reports that assesses the program's ongoing alignment with the criteria for the credential awarded, as outlined in the credentials framework.* **Requirement 3.2**

5. When new standards are provided, the College should prepare a development plan and target timelines to ensure the deadlines for implementation and necessary communication strategies are followed to meet Ministry requirements. **Requirement 3.5**

6. *The College implement changes to the PQA process as planned to ensure that all modes of delivery are held to the same quality assurance standards and processes.* **Requirement 4.1**

7. *The College develop and adopt a policy that clearly identifies and communicates the "trigger points" and limits around program changes to all involved in the review,*

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maintenance and recording of program development/evolution. The policy should identify a threshold at which the program must be fully reviewed and submitted for review by the Ministry. **Requirement 5.5**

8. *The College continue to provide clarification regarding PLAR, transfer credit and other terminology and provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff around such terminology to ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of and trained on the processes.* **Requirement 5.6**

9. *The College should review and determine the gap in professional development needs and develop a plan to close this gap review in the context of budget planning.* **Requirement 6.5**

In addition, the Panel provides the following *suggestion* for the College to consider. While this comment does not directly impact specific Requirements, the Audit Panel felt there was sufficient merit in the comments brought forward to share these with the College.

- Executive Connection with Program Advisory Committees: The Panel heard that the PACs are fully engaged and active in promoting improvements in the programs, and the PAC members are committed to partnering with Loyalist to ensure the programs and the graduates are of the highest quality. There was a suggestion that the PACs sometimes operate in isolation and are focused on particular program areas. There should be stronger connection between the PACs and the Executive members. PAC members felt that they would benefit from regular contact between the College Executive and Program Advisory Committees. The suggestion of workshops so members could gain a broader understanding of the priorities of the College and even hear the overall direction of different program areas would assist them to be better informed and more effective in their roles. *A suggestion was that the College establish a regular schedule for a meeting between the Executive Team and representatives from PACs and/or PAC clusters.*

March 2017