

# **COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS (CQAAP)**

## **AUDIT REPORT**

### **NIAGARA COLLEGE**

**DATE OF SITE VISIT:** May 30 & 31, 2017

**PREPARATION DATE:** July 1, 2017

**SUBMISSION DATE:** June 27, 2017

**PREPARED BY:** Geoffrey Cudmore, Deidre Bannerman &  
Christine Boyko-Head



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**APPROVAL OF THE AUDIT REPORT**

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

Signature: 	Date: October 20, 2017
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**CHAIR- OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

Signature: 	Date: October 17, 2017
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**AUDIT PANEL MEMBERS**

Chair: <i>Geoffrey Cudmore</i> Signature: 	Date: July 24, 2017
Panelist: <i>Deidre Bannerman</i> Signature: 	Date: July 17, 2017
Panelist: <i>Christine Boyko-Head</i> Signature: 	Date: July 17, 2017



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. Conclusions

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

It is the overwhelming view of the audit panel that Niagara College has an excellent and comprehensive suite of quality assurance policies, processes, and practices. Since the last audit in 2012, the college has committed significant resources in the creation of the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE), and has developed many “best-practice” policies and processes to achieve its current level of quality assurance. The college’s commitment to continual quality improvement is imbedded in the culture of the institution as it was evident throughout the Self-Study and confirmed continually during the site-visit.

The on-line Self-Study document submitted by Niagara College was thorough, well written, and proved very easy for the audit panel to navigate. The evidence provided was comprehensive and reflected a level of candor that again supports the College’s commitment to continual quality improvement.

The site visit was orchestrated very well. It provided members of the audit panel with good opportunities to validate information provided in the self-study and to probe remaining question areas in an open and collegial manner. It also provided ample evidence that supported the information presented in the self-study by also opening a window into the extraordinary culture of the College.

The audit panel met with a broad cross-college representation of stakeholders including: the senior management team, Board of Governors representatives, students, graduates, faculty, deans and associate deans, directors and heads of service departments, student services support providers, CAE management and staff, and Program Advisory Committee members. The panel found that there was a very strong level of engagement with and among these various members of the College community, and the participants were very forthcoming and helpful in providing information.

### 2. Results

#### a. Audit Results

Standard	Result		
1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met
6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Met

**Audit Decision:** *(select one)*

- Mature Effort**
- Organized Effort
- Formal Effort



## STIPULATIONS

### 1. 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.

1. The inclusion of external assessors in the Program Review site visits is a commendable practice, as it provides a fresh and unbiased lens for the evaluation of the program.
2. The establishment of the CAE and the substantial investment in continual quality improvement since the last review and the role of the CAE for example in providing a wide range of data to support the work of programs in their Program Review and in leading program mapping process. Over our two days the panel has heard numerous expressions and examples of how the work of the CAE is appreciated and contributes to the QA of the institution, and this is commendable.
3. The new model for KSE mapping “Curriculum Visualization” is commendable, as it seems to be highly authentic and generates substantial buy-in and support from program teams.
4. Another commendable activity is the use of Curriculum Committees, including students, that seems to be at the centre of the program’s ongoing continual quality improvement processes.
5. Although the CEDP runs across the six Western Region colleges, the commitment that Niagara College has made in this program makes it among the most rigorous probationary faculty development process in the system, which builds academic excellence from the ground up.
6. Finally, the panel would like to commend the college on the Day of Reflection. The panel heard from many individuals and groups, how this opportunity has helped them re-align their processes with the strategic goals of the departments and the College

### 2. 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.



In the narrative associated with each Standard in the Self-Study, the College made a number of recommendations. Following an analysis of these and discussion between the audit panel, the OCQAS representative and the College regarding the alignment of the recommendations to the OCQAS Standards and Requirements, the College provided the following areas for further actions that are affirmed by the audit panel.

1. Formalize and document the College's internal academic governance procedure for cancelling and suspending programs and program intakes. (Requirement 1.2)
2. Ensure all necessary consultations with internal departments have taken place, are documented, and have been substantive in nature the support the development of new programs. (Requirement 2.3)
3. Introduce additional forms of divisional and cross-institutional mechanisms for the recognition of teaching excellence, faculty peer mentorship and sharing of teaching innovations to encourage a culture of teaching excellence. (Requirement 4.2)
4. Provide faculty with the supports and resources necessary to ensure effective formative and summative assessment methods for experiential learning opportunities in program curriculum. (Requirement 4.2)
5. Maintain the current momentum and work of the College Policy and Procedure Committee in reviewing policies that are due for renewal and converting them to the policy/procedure format, as well as implementing the regular cycle for updating. (Requirement 5.1)
6. Implement and preserve common standards and procedures for publishing critically important quality assurance and student success information to the web as well as to ensure the accessibility and search-ability of such information. (Requirement 5.6)
7. Formalize and document the procedure for future implementation of formative feedback mechanisms to better capture the extent to which post-probationary faculty execute their professional responsibilities. (Requirement 6.2)
8. Report on the outcomes of the changes made to the student feedback on courses survey platform and the mechanisms developed to communicate the importance of the survey process for program review and continuous improvement at the College. (Requirement 6.2)

### 3. 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.



1. The panel recommends that policy regarding the process and criteria for program cancellation and/or suspension be developed, consistently applied and monitored. (Requirement 1.1)
2. The panel recognizes that the Program Review Policy is a new one. It is recommended that the college continue to implement it to maturity. (Requirement 1.2)
3. The panel recommends that the college develop policy that ensures “prompt and constructive” feedback to students and that this policy is consistently applied and monitored. (Requirement 4.3 and 6.2)
4. The panel recommends that a policy for the evaluation of all full-time non-probationary faculty (including those who work in student support services) be developed, consistently applied and monitored. (Requirements 6.1 and 6.5)