

COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS (CQAAP)

AUDIT REPORT

SENECA COLLEGE

DATE OF SITE VISIT: March 6 & 7, 2017

PREPARATION DATE: March 9, 2017

SUBMISSION DATE: March 31, 2017

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APPROVAL OF THE AUDIT REPORT


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


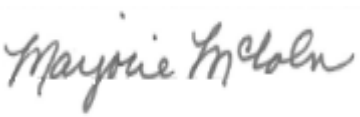

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Signature: 	Date: May 18, 2017
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CHAIR- OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Signature: 	Date: May 16, 2017
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AUDIT PANEL MEMBERS

<i>Chair</i> Signature: 	Date: April 25, 2017
<i>Panelist</i> Signature: 	Date: April 25, 2017
<i>Panelist</i> Signature: 	Date: April 25, 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Conclusions

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

Seneca College has a strong, well-developed and mature approach to quality assurance. The overall results of the audit are very positive, which reflects both the depth and breadth of the college's significant commitment to quality. A large college has the challenge of implementing and supporting the quality of delivery across many programs on multiple campuses as well as providing student services to a large and varied group of students and Seneca appears to have been successful to achieving this to a commendable extent. It is obvious that it has taken sustained effort and significant resources over a considerable period of time to achieve the current level of quality processes and mechanisms.

Seneca College has in place a number of central elements critical to the delivery of quality programs: the program development processes, the program review processes, quality feedback mechanisms from stakeholders, well executed plans for improvement based on the feedback, and strong college-wide resource allocation processes to support systematic execution of the plans. It has also achieved the creation of an institutional culture around continuous improvement to a remarkable extent.

Seneca College provided an extensive, well-presented Self-Study report that represented commitment to the audit process. In addition, the college provided useful follow up information when requested by the audit panel. The site visit by the audit panel strongly supported the evidence in the Self-Study and, in some instances, provided additional positive evidence that had not been spoken to as fully in the Self-Study. During the site visit, the audit panel met with a range of groups: students, graduates, faculty, front-line service staff, program advisory committee members, deans and more. The groups were engaging and consistently validating of good quality effort on the part of the college regarding its work and achievements in the quality assurance of the programs it offers.

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)*



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

- 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 college has a very strong program development process. This is a robust three-stage process that provides for very comprehensive input to ensure that relevant resources and support from across the college is taken into account. As with the program review process, there are comprehensive templates that ensure that a wide range of relevant factors are considered and analyzed in the stages of new program approval and development. The process also involves significant input from industry through the involvement of Program Advisory Committees.
2. The college has a very strong program review process. The combination of regular formative and summative reviews provide a continuous cycle for quality improvement. Comments from Program Advisory Committee members at the site visit indicated strong industry involvement in these review cycles. A significant strength of the program review process is that the components of formative and summative reviews are clearly set out through document templates that are required for each. Because of the centrality of the program review process in the overall quality of program delivery, this strength is very valuable to the college.
3. Program Advisory Committees are very involved and engaged. As already mentioned above, the PACs are given significant roles in program development and program reviews. In the site visit, the audit panel was impressed with the engagement and dedication of the PAC members. They spoke about how much they had been involved in program review and providing input on program content and were strong proponents of the programs with which they were associated.
4. There is strong support for professional development. During the site visit, the panel heard numerous examples of the college's support for external professional development. These comments came from across the spectrum of departments and levels of positions. In addition to the external PD opportunities, the documentation submitted cited numerous examples internal PD that is offered by the college. Participation is tracked and noted as part of the performance review process.



5. The Board of Governors is committed to the quality of the college activities. At the site visit, members of the Board of Governors displayed a well-developed understanding of its role in quality assurance, consciousness of the appropriate level of involvement in college affairs and strong commitment to the college. The sub-committee structure of the Board is utilized to support the Board's oversight of main areas of college activity. In addition, the Board leads by example through implementing its own quality assurance mechanisms for Board processes.
6. The Integrated Planning Process is well-designed to allocate college resources appropriately. It provides a bottom-up process to provide for identification and presentation of needs and gaps in program delivery, student support, and infrastructure and then take a prioritization approach to allocating resources to meet those. It provides for broad involvement and transparency to the allocation processes.
7. Concern for quality is embedded in the culture of the college. At the site visit, the panel noted many examples from across areas in the college where individuals or units at their own initiative utilized a variety of means to gain feedback from students and make improvements based on the feedback. Student feedback was viewed positively as an opportunity rather than as a potential threat because it might involve criticism.

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.

Affirmation #1 (Standard 1)

Seneca is implementing, as part of the summative review process, a follow-up phase that includes items identified in the Recommended Action Plan (RAP) one year following the end of the summative review. This will be followed by the continuation of the integration of outstanding RAP items, such as developing additional pathways for graduates and/or expand events with industry experts to network with students, into the formative review two years after the summative review. Program Quality is the body that will manage the process, in collaboration with the academic programs.

Panel comment: Although the panel heard evidence to suggest that program review recommendations were followed up on, it also noted lack of a formal mechanism for follow up. This implementation of the RAP and further follow up provides an appropriate mechanism.



Affirmation #2 (Standard 2)

To further enhance the program development process, a Program Planning Costing Tool is currently being developed that includes the cost of curriculum development. This tool will provide additional financial information to develop a business case for a new program proposal. This Program Planning Costing Tool complements the financial framework that accompanies the program proposal in its final stage.

Panel comment: This will strengthen an already robust program development process.

Affirmation #3 (Standard 3)

Seneca has implemented a college-wide English and Liberal Studies Committee that comprises administrators and faculty from the Schools of English and Liberal Studies, as well as the vocational programming schools, and the Program Quality unit and Centre for Teaching and Learning. This body will oversee the development and delivery of non-vocational curriculum to ensure consistency and high quality programming. A course development process is currently being developed that can be scaled to college-wide implementation.

Panel comment: The development and quality assurance of non-vocational courses can sometimes lag behind since the vocational courses are so central in programs. It is commendable that the college is putting focused effort into maintaining the quality consistency of the non-vocational curriculum college-wide.

Affirmation #4 (Standard 4)

Academic Quality and Seneca Libraries are collaborating to leverage this database to increase the repository to include an e-site for student work. This will provide an electronic means for programs to store student work electronically and centrally to work more efficiently to ensure that students' capabilities are aligned with course learning outcomes, and graduates' capabilities are meeting program learning outcomes. To further facilitate this, Seneca is exploring other technologies to map assessments to course learning outcomes, and map course learning outcomes to program learning outcomes.

Panel comment: This is an innovative approach to reviewing the alignment of student work as produced with the objectives of courses as stated through the learning outcomes. It takes the quality assurance processes for teaching and assessment methods to a higher level.

Affirmation #5 (Standard 5)

The Strategic Planning and Public Affairs Office (SPPA) is establishing a renewed review process for all policies, and will determine effective communication and dissemination of the policies to key stakeholders. The process will bring consistency to policy documentation, tone and structure, and all policies are scheduled for conversion into the new policy template by the end of fall 2017.

Panel comment: See comments below in Recommendation # 3.



Affirmation #6 (Standard 6)

A revised Chair Development Program (CDP) is in the planning stages for implementation in 2017. The CDP will strengthen Chair training by providing a program that integrates key knowledge areas in both the academic and management realms (e.g., teaching and learning activities, program development and quality mechanisms, Program Advisory Committee composition and activities, navigating difficult conversations, coaching for high performance). This initiative will increase capacity for Chairs to address the multiple, and competing tasks that they need to address in their roles at Seneca.

Panel comment: In the site visit, the panel noted that the Chairs are an engaged group who are central to the actual delivery of curriculum and to program operation. Providing the group with further professional development support is a worthy initiative as long as care is taken that this does not create more than reasonable expectations of a group that is already bearing a considerable load of responsibility.

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. Provision for review and evaluation of significant new teaching/learning methods or initiatives. As mentioned above, the college provides good opportunities for experimentation with teaching and learning. However, the panel did not hear of examples of systematic review/evaluation of particular new teaching methods or learning initiatives. The college may be leaving itself at risk of having the implementation of significant new teaching and learning initiatives not have the positive impact expected. It is recommended that the college ensure that appropriate review and evaluation of significant new teaching and learning initiatives is undertaken before broader adoption and implementation to ensure that the initiative results in the improvement expected and that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. This would strengthen the college's quality assurance related to Requirement 4.2.
2. Creation of a student assessment policy. Although student assessment practices at the college appear to be going well, it is prudent to support good practice through a formal policy that provides college-wide direction. The policy should identify general expectations for assessment practices (assignments and tests) such as relative weighting of assessments, assessment methods reflecting the skills required of employees in the field, variety of assessment methods, adequate assessment and feedback by certain points of the course (e.g. before the withdrawal deadline), promptness of communicating assessment marks, provision of constructive, developmental feedback. This would enhance measures related to Requirement 4.3.
3. Regular Policy Review and Updating: As noted in the comments for Standard 5, the panel did not find evidence that the college has systematically tracked its policy reviews or that substantive reviews of all academic-related policy have been undertaken in recent years. As stated in Seneca College's Affirmation #5, there is an initiative by the



Strategic Planning and Public Affairs Office that should go some way in addressing these matters. The panel recommends that the following be undertaken as well:

- A systematic and comprehensive tracking mechanism be created to document the history of policy reviews and updates, as well as provide a schedule for reviews going forward.
- A responsible administrator be identified as the one who has accountability for monitoring policy reviews and the tracking mechanism mentioned above.
- Seneca College ensure that its policies are reviewed and updated as required by its Academic Policy Review and Development Policy

These measures should enable Seneca College to fully meet the expectations of Requirement 5.7 in the future.