Higher Learning Commission
2016 Comprehensive Quality Review
Madison Area Technical College
Highlights Report

OVERVIEW

Since Madison Area Technical College (henceforth, the College) filed its *2013 Systems Portfolio*, the College has embarked on two broad initiatives that advance principles of continuous quality improvement and, under the new AQIP Categorical construct, most directly align to Categories 3 – Valuing Employees; 4 – Planning and Leading; and 6 – Quality Overview. These initiatives are:

1) Interest-based problem solving and shared governance; and

2) the Academic Strategy and Analysis (ASA) and Center for Operational Excellence (COE) units.

INTEREST-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

History: The context for the interest-based problem solving (IBPS) and shared governance initiatives were shaped by factors external to the College. Prior to the enactment of Wisconsin 2011 Act 10 (Act 10) by the Wisconsin legislature and governor, state law permitted public employees to organize and bargain issues of base-wages, benefits, and working conditions. Since 1968, the College's full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff were represented by labor organizations who bargained with the College District on these matters. The College District's contracts negotiated with its full-time faculty and staff in spring of 2011 prior to enactment of Act 10 expired in March 2014. The College District's final pre-Act 10 contract with its part-time faculty expired June 2012.

The contracts with the full-time faculty and staff that expired in March 2014, negotiated under the leadership of former College president Dr. Bettsey Barhorst, called for the creation of a contract alternative committee (CAC) to be comprised of members of the full-time faculty, staff, and administrators. The CAC would address issues related to employee benefits and working conditions.

In August of 2013, Dr. Jack E. Daniels, III, assumed the presidency of the College. In preparation for the March 2014 expiration of the full-time faculty and staff contracts, Dr. Daniels and the College's executives sought to implement the CAC and include in its participation the part-time faculty. With the exception of annually negotiating base wage adjustments with represented faculty and staff up to the maximum level permitted by the State of Wisconsin, benefits and working conditions would be addressed by the CAC.

However, whereas traditional collective bargaining functioned in an adversarial-style framework, Dr. Daniels sought to introduce the concept and use of IBPS to the CAC's operations.

About IBPS: IBPS is based on concepts, research, and materials developed and advanced by scientists with the Harvard Negotiation Project and Cornell's School of Industry and Labor Relations. IBPS (commonly referred to as interest-based bargaining) is different from collective bargaining as typically practiced since the 1950s by private and public sector unions and employers in the United States.

IBPS involves all parties identifying and agreeing to a problem or issue statement, articulating the interests that they have related to the issue, and then working to develop a solution that addresses as many of the identified interests as possible. Facilitators may be used in this process, but they function differently than in a traditional collective bargaining or mediation process where the facilitator may be an active participant in developing a resolution to the issue. In an IBPS process, the facilitator assists the parties with following the IBPS process, but does not get involved with the content of the subject under discussion and is not an active participant in developing a resolution to the matter.

IBPS at Madison College: After the Cabinet's consultation with the leadership of the unions representing the full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff, it was agreed that IBPS would be a philosophy and process used by the CAC to conduct its activities.[1]

As articulated by the president at the October 2013 Convocation, IBPS was not just to be a practice of the CAC teams, it is to be a way for deans and faculty, administrators and staff, and all college employees to resolve issues at the College to fulfill the mission of the institution. The president recognized that the College was not only shifting into a new relationship with its faculty, staff, and administrators, but, due to other policy changes at the state and federal levels, was also facing new expectations for its performance and limitations on funding.

In order for the CAC to engage in IBPS, its members needed to learn the concepts of IBPS and have support of a facilitator in the practice of IBPS. In the fall of 2013, the College contracted with Cornell University's Schienman Institute for Conflict Resolution to provide training in IBPS to the participants of the CAC. Thirty-four faculty, staff, and administrators participated in the initial two and one-half days of training provided by Cornell, including all 18 members of the CAC teams. The contract with Cornell also included a facilitator to work with the CAC as it began to address issues of benefits and working conditions using an IBPS process.

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[1] The Cabinet is comprised of the College's senior executives and meets regularly with the president.

During the all faculty assembly at the January 2014 Convocation, attendees heard from Mr. Eddie Genna, a faculty member at Maricopa Community College (Arizona), about his institution's experience with IBPS. Mr. Genna also served as the facilitator to the CAC at Madison College and offered his observations on the College's progress with IBPS. To increase the understanding of IBPS at the College, during the January 2014 Convocation and in 20 separate sessions offered at all the College's campuses in early spring 2014, the basics of IBPS were presented in a one-hour format.

Building off the initial 2014 IBPS College-wide training sessions, and to engrain IBPS in the College's culture, an office dedicated to the on-going education and practice of IBPS was created. The office trained individuals to serve as IBPS facilitators and developed a series of training sessions for all College employees regarding the introduction to the IBPS process and the practice of specific parts of the IBPS process. These facilitators work with teams of faculty, staff and administrators using an IBPS process to resolve issues in the workplace such as the assignment of lab and classroom space for teaching.

 To date 69 people (28 faculty, 19 staff, and 22 administrators) have been trained as facilitators of IBPS and lead the practice of IBPS within their unit. The College also has six individuals trained as IBPS fellows. Fellows possess a higher level of skill and knowledge of the IBPS process than a facilitator would possess. The IBPS fellows provide facilitation services to units at any campus in the District that requests this service. Each shared governance council has an assigned IBPS-trained facilitator or fellow. Since the program's inception, the fellows have facilitated 36 projects; these projects exclude facilitation of shared governance meetings.

In the first year of offering introduction to IBPS training, the College provided thirty-two 1-hour sessions that were attended by 86 people (39 faculty, 40 staff, 2 administrators, and 5 students) and twenty-nine 3-hour sessions that were attended by 382 people (171 faculty, 90 staff, and 121 administrators). Additionally, members of the District Board of Trustees participated in a session regarding the concepts of IBPS so that they were familiar with the conceptual organizational transition the College is in the process of making.

Based on feedback from these initial IBPS training participants, beginning in spring 2016, the introduction to IBPS fundamentals was re-designed into a 90-minute session, replacing the high-level 1-hour session and the longer 3-hour session. At three sessions offered in January 2016, 24 people (11 faculty, 12 staff, and 1 administrator) participated in this new IBPS training format. In addition to the sessions on the basics of IBPS, the office has created sessions specific to certain concepts and practices in the IBPS process. Since the inception of the concepts and practices program offerings, 320 people

(duplicated headcount) have participated in 27 of these sessions (126 faculty, 130 staff, 49 administrators, and 15 students).

To assess the College community's understanding of IBPS, a question related to IBPS was included in the 2014 Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) employee survey. The mean score of employee respondents to the statement "The extent to which I have had opportunities to learn the basic principles of interest-based problem solving" was 4.01. It scored in the collaborative range on the PACE evaluation scale—the most advanced level of organizational climate.[2]

Below are links materials that provide an overview of IBPS, a vision statement for it at the College, and examples of the College using IBPS to develop solutions to issues.

[IBPS Overview November 2013](#)

[IBPS Project - School of Applied Science, Engineering, and Technology](#)

[IBPS Project - School of Academic Advancement](#)

Shared Governance Background: The CAC teams were a product of the contracts with the full-time faculty and staff that expired in March 2014. With the introduction of IBPS in the fall of 2013 as a philosophy and practice at the College, it was acknowledged by the CAC and president that there needed to be a more permanent structure to how the College managed its internal affairs. To that end, the CAC created a team of faculty, staff, and administrators to research shared governance practices and structures at other community colleges and to make a recommendation for a structure at the College. The CAC members developed and shared a [vision statement](#) with the College community regarding the need for shared governance in an October 2013 document.

The CAC shared governance team created a [Library Guide](#) in the College's on-line library that was accessible to the entire College community. This guide contained information regarding shared governance structures at other colleges and articles regarding the practice of shared governance.

Shared Governance Structure: At the August 2014 Convocation, the new shared governance structure developed by the CAC and its shared governance team was introduced and explained to the entire College community in a general session and immediately followed-up with specific sessions related to each of the

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[2] PACE survey respondents rate statements on a 5-point scale, with 1 being the lowest score and five the highest score. The mean result for each statement is placed into one of four ranges: Collaborative (4.0-5.0), Consultative (3.0 to 3.99), Competitive (2.0-2.99), and Coercive (1.0-1.99). These ranges describe the climate of the institution related to each of the statements. The PACE survey is administered approximately every two years.

seven shared governance councils. During the fall 2014 semester, the College's shared governance bodies held initial elections, populated councils with additional appointed members, and began the work of collecting issues from the College community, completing work on issues identified by the CAC, and continuing the work of educating shared governance participants on the tenants of IBPS.

Figure 1 - Shared Governance Structure
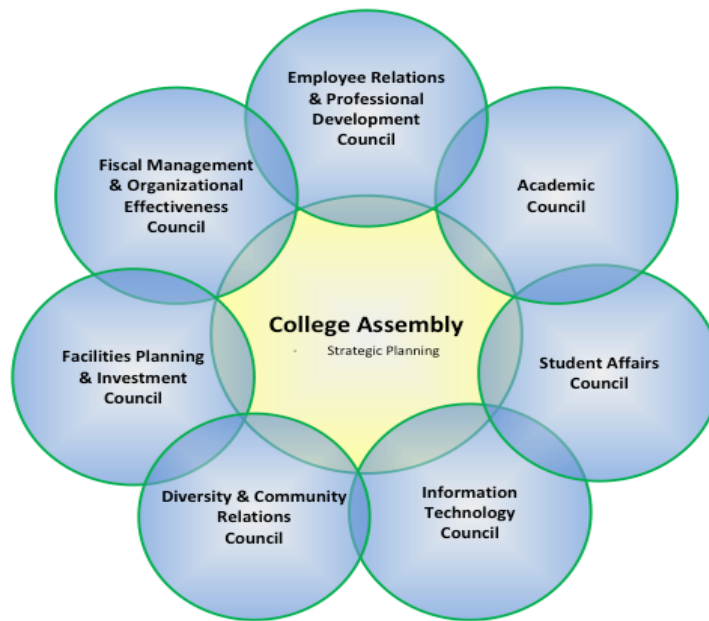
During the summer of 2015, the College Assembly (the broadest shared governance body) created a Process Improvement Team sub-committee to recommend changes to the operations of shared governance based upon lessons that were learned in the first year of practice and the interests that were voiced by shared governance participants and members of the College community. The College Assembly approved those recommendations in the fall of 2015.

Engagement of Shared Governance with the College: To communicate the development and work of shared governance, the College created a specific newsletter for shared governance activities that is connected to the College employee e-newsletter *Madison College Matters*. Published twice-monthly the shared governance newsletter contains synopses of the work of each of the seven councils and the College Assembly. To assess the College community's understanding of shared governance a question related to shared governance was included in the 2014 PACE employee survey. The mean score of employee respondents to the statement "The extent to which I have had opportunities to learn about

shared governance" was 3.91. It scored in the Consultative range on the PACE scale, just missing the Collaborative range, which is the most advanced range of organizational climate.

The shared governance support staff maintain a [shared governance website](#) accessible to the members of the College community. The site contains the agendas and minutes of the councils and College Assembly, permits individuals to submit issues and interests for consideration by shared governance bodies, provides an inventory of shared governance recommendations approved by the president, and lists email addresses to contact each council.

At the January 2016 Convocation, shared governance participants discussed the work of the councils and the College Assembly with the College community. Shared governance participants encouraged College community members to volunteer to serve on the shared governance bodies; elections and appointments for two-year terms beginning in the fall of 2016 will occur later in the spring of 2016. Members of the College Assembly will meet with faculty, staff, and administrators of each unit of the College during the spring of 2016 to inform employees of the role of shared governance at the College; how to get involved with shared governance; and, how to share interests and issues with councils and the College Assembly. The Office of Student Life staff informs the Student Senate members of these same processes.

ACADEMIC STRATEGY & ANALYSIS AND CENTER FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Academic Strategy and Analysis (ASA): Founded in summer 2015, ASA's purpose is to add capacity to gathering, translating and implementing industry and program trend data as the College strives for the most responsive, relevant academic portfolio as possible. ASA is a unit of the Office of the Vice Provost and was created by re-purposing resources and talent from a former unit of the College known as School of Accelerated and Online Learning (SOAL). ASA seeks to improve the College's ability to respond to the evolving needs of students, employers, and policy-makers with regard to the academic programs and training provided by the College. ASA tracks trends in academic innovation in areas such as on-line and accelerated learning, competency-based learning, embedded credentials, and development of career pathways. ASA reports on trends in the labor market, is developing a series of monthly reports on issues identified by faculty and deans, and will manage the program assessment tool that is under development. Analyses developed by ASA are shared with units outside of academic affairs that use the information to serve academic programs and respond to student needs.

With its knowledge of relevant state and federal regulations, ASA provides direct support for the creation of new academic credentials and programs. As of fall 2015, the ASA is working on projects with 18

academic programs and completed work on 14 other projects that were approved by the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board.

Program Assessment Tool and Process: The program assessment tool under development is a data-based process of assessing individual programs at the College. ASA staff will facilitate the tool on a day-to-day basis and support the work of program directors and deans related to translating the data into actions aimed at the improvement and strengthening of programs. The underlying automated IT programming for the assessment tool is expected to be complete by April 2016. Currently, the project is in a pilot phase involving 2-3 programs from each school; data was manually pulled from College IT data systems for the pilot. The complete roll-out for the assessment program, including training for faculty and staff on its use, is expected to begin in fall 2016-17.

The assessment process consists of three phases. Phase I involves an examination of data related to past performance and future market need for program graduates. Based upon that review, programs will be placed into one of four quadrants in the portfolio framework shown below.

Figure 2 - Program Assessment Portfolio Framework

Depending on the outcome of Phase I analysis, some programs will be moved into Phase II of the process which will involve a review of additional data related to student demographics, success, instructional delivery method, time of course offerings and other elements as well as a SWOT analysis performed by program directors and faculty with insights from deans. The results of each subsequent phase will inform future options for that program which may include consolidation, growth, or a path to elimination.

Center for Operational Excellence (COE): Founded in fall 2014, COE is a new unit within the purview of the Office of the Vice President for Institutional Learning and Effectiveness to improve the College's culture of process improvement through consultation with College units on specific projects and through the creation of an ecosystem to support process improvement work across the College. The College allocated one FTE position exclusively to this function and allocated portions of the director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) and an IRE project consultant's time to this effort.

Consulting Projects: In its initial year of operation (2014-15), COE focused exclusively on working with College units on specific process improvement projects. The College's Cabinet identified the projects; a Cabinet member(s) served as executive sponsor(s) for each project. COE began with nine initial projects and completed seven of them.

The goal of the consulting projects is to optimize the performance of College processes in a sustainable manner. Projects begin with a thorough assessment of the current state and mapping of the current process. Key metrics are established to review performance and compare performance to industry standards or peer groups. Projects should create efficiencies for the unit(s) involved and improve outcomes for students or College faculty, staff, and administrators. Participants in the projects should develop an understanding of how to engage systematically in process improvement work, permitting them to engage in future projects without the support of COE consultants.

Process Improvement Community: In an effort to support College-wide efforts with process improvement work, COE launched the process improvement community initiative in the fall of 2015. The College president presented this initiative to the College at the August 2015 Convocation. The solicitation for participation in the process improvement community was made to all members of the College community.

At the initial session of the process improvement community, 32 participants from 20 different units identified two distinct needs. First, individuals with previous process improvement experience wanted to create an opportunity for "learning through sharing". These participants wanted to share their

experiences, learn from others engaged in similar process improvement work, and be kept apprised of the other work of COE. Participation in this will be open to all members of the College community and members will actively guide development of the agenda for its meetings. This community will have its initial meeting in February 2016.

Second, individuals with limited experience in process improvement wanted to learn the basic techniques involved in process improvement work and apply it to projects in their units. This group will function as a cohort and meet one-time per month, two hours per session for six months. These participants will have assignments outside of their meetings in order to advance their process improvement knowledge and the project the member has identified. The initial cohort began meeting in December 2015.

To assess the impact of COE's work, COE will develop instruments to survey the satisfaction and learning of project clients and assess the satisfaction of ecosystem participants with their learning and projects. At an institutional level, the PACE employee survey includes questions related to use of problem solving techniques, cooperation among team members, the extent to which supervisors consider employees ideas. These and other PACE questions assist the College with understanding the evolution of the College's process improvement culture.