

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Action Project Report:

Graduate Studies Division Governance and Oversight September, 2008

1. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

A major accomplishment of this year was the first Augsburg College Graduate Catalog which represents an effort to unify policies and procedures across programs. This process was overseen by the Graduate Council and curricular policies (consistent across all graduate programs) were approved by the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee.

The Augsburg for Adults office was established to focus on services to adult learners (both graduate and undergraduate). A director, coordinator, and administrative assistant were hired for this program and the office was given a prominent location in the new Oren Gateway Center building. The Augsburg for Adults Commission was created to provide direction for this new office. Goals of the Commission included: an assessment of current programs; an analysis of the external marketplace; and making recommendations for future growth. This strategic analysis revealed strengths and areas for development for our graduate programs. Based on this analysis the Commission recommended that our graduate programs increase enrollment in the next two years and add at least two programs and offsite cohorts by 2012 and expand enrollment and retention in existing programs through a variety of tactics.

2. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The Graduate Council includes all graduate program directors, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Director of Augsburg for Adults and advisory members (the VP for Enrollment, the VP for Student Affairs, the Registrar, the Director of our Rochester Campus, and the Coordinator for Augsburg for Adults).

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies and includes a member from each of the graduate programs and a graduate student representative. Advisory members include the Assistant Vice President for International Programs, Registrar, Director of Library Services, and Director of Augsburg for Adults Admissions.

The Augsburg for Adults Commission included representatives from Information Technology, Enrollment Management, Student Senate (Augsburg for Adults), Academic Affairs Division, Augsburg for Adults, Student Affairs Division, Board of Regents, Faculty Senate, Office of the President, Enrollment Management, Graduate Council, Student Services, Office of International Programs, Marketing and Communication, Rochester Campus, and the external community.

3. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

Although this Action Project is complete, the next steps for Graduate Governance include: reviewing enrollment projections monthly, in order to develop initiatives to maintain and exceed projections; developing a collaborative guide to accreditation planning; gaining profession specific accreditation for the MBA (already achieved for MSW, MAN, PA, and MAE); expanding international partnerships; creating alumni and employer panels and fostering new "career connections" for our students; developing new sources of student enrollment, including building new programs, expanding our off site locations and institutional affiliation agreements. The Graduate Council is also refining a number of policies, including a joint review of student services, such as financial aid, career and mental health counseling services, available to graduate students.

4. Describe any “effective practices” that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

This project has resulted in several effective practices. First, two independent graduate committees were developed for oversight. The Graduate Council focuses on policies while the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC) focuses on curricular issues. In addition, curricular issues are now the focus of two separate committees--one for graduate education (GAAC) and one for undergraduate education (Academic Affairs Committee--AAC). This has been beneficial for the graduate programs as those making the decisions have experience in graduate education which was not necessarily the case when graduate curriculum issues were decided by the AAC. Second, a graduate catalog, separate from the undergraduate catalog, was developed. The development of the catalog allowed for conversations and decisions regarding the consistency of policies across programs. Third, the Augsburg for Adults office was established under this action project. This office focuses on the specific needs and issues of our adult learners. This office not only focuses on graduate students but also undergraduate students as these two populations share some commonalities.

5. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

Augsburg College's graduate programs function within a traditional liberal arts environment. Sometimes this context raises the challenge of explaining and celebrating the growth of graduate education to traditionalists who see a changing identity for the College. 51% of our students are adult learners and 60% of our full-time faculty teach in the adult “Weekend College” or in the graduate programs. This means that the College is adjusting to a new institutional identity--a “College of Lifelong Learning.” This commitment was fully espoused by the Board of Regents and by the President and his Cabinet. The challenge remains however, that 40% of our faculty are not yet participating in our adult or graduate programs and some feel that that resources are taken from the day school population when they see graduate programs growing. The reality is that the graduate programs contribute to the College general fund and their presence brings vitality to the campus, but the debate continues. The College has recognized that it now has many of the features of a modern university and in 2008-2009 a new Commission will address the challenge of identity for the future: whether we are a College with “university-like” characteristics or becoming a university.