

MSTC & AQIP

The accreditation process ensures that the college's processes, offerings, and functions are of consistently high quality. There are two ways that organizations can demonstrate that they meet the Commission's "Criteria for Accreditation": PEAQ (Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality), and AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program). The PEAQ process focuses on documentation of past performance, while AQIP is a continuous improvement model.

In 2002, MSTC was accepted into the AQIP program. As a result, the college moved from a traditional model of accreditation to AQIP, a quality-based, continuous improvement model of accreditation. It used to be that every 10 years, a team of six or more NCA consultant evaluators would read our self-study, make an on-site visit, interview staff and write a report recommending that the college be reaccruited for another 10 years – in the case of a good result. AQIP changes all of that.

AQIP is a "quality-based" accreditation process, meaning that you can use a different set of evaluative criteria than the traditional five criteria used in the past for all colleges. With AQIP, a college conducts its own self-assessment, sets its own goals and measures itself on how well it is making progress toward achieving the goals. There is still a site visit by an outside team, but it occurs once in a seven-year period.

NCA developed the AQIP model to offer an alternative for accreditation. The AQIP model is based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program and incorporates a review process designed to deliver clear, concrete, and efficient feedback to participating institutions. Additionally, it provides assurance of institutional quality to NCA and other audiences and constituencies. As encouraged by NCA, MSTC is customizing the AQIP process to conform to its evolving culture of continuous improvement.

