

Theme 3:

Impact of QA and the effects of external and internal QA: regional perspectives to a shared issue.

Abstract

In 2006 the Ontario colleges undertook a bold new foray into the world of external quality assurance with the implementation of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit. Now into the 7th year of quality audits the impacts on the colleges is being seen and measured. As quality assurance and continuous improvement remain at the forefront of this process, the college system, building on the positive results of the audits, is transitioning to a full accreditation system for the colleges: a first in Canada. In this session, participants will hear from college personnel the impact this process is having on their institutions and the development of quality culture within.

Proposal

Canada is unique in that it does not have a federal, centralized education body as the responsibility for structure, development and implementation of education is a provincial responsibility. As a result there are numerous and varied approaches to quality assurance processes found throughout the provinces and territories, with no over-arching guiding body at the national level. One of the most progressive and effective systems found in Canada is the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service.

Ontario's public colleges have developed and implemented an institutionally-focused academic audit process through which colleges become recognized as quality institutions and move from anecdotal-based positions of, "We think we are pretty good", to a documented, evidence-based position of an institution with quality systems throughout. The Ontario public college system, through the development and implementation of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA) model has, since 2005, demonstrated its commitment to an evidence-based quality assurance and continuous improvement model of sustainable quality assurance for its 24 member colleges.

Following a brief description of the system and the quality assurance service, the session will present the institutional academic audit model, its implementation and operation across the system. Participants will hear from a college President who led his college through the preparation for, and conducting of the academic audit process and all that was entailed. Also, the perspective of an audit panel member will be shared with the session. The development, structure and function of the OCQAS will be described in detail, and the results of the external review and evaluation of the OCQAS that was conducted in June 2010 will be shared.

Following on the receipt of INQAAHE's recognition, the OCQAS continued to develop its quality assurance process and, in May of 2012, received approval from its constituent members (the Presidents of the 24 colleges) to move from a quality audit process to an accreditation process: again a first in Canada.

There will be time allowed at the end for discussion and questions from the session participants.

This session, through presentation and discussion, will document the innovative changes that the OCQAS represents for the public college system in Ontario. It will seek to provide information about the lessons learned and guidance for other interested jurisdictions based on our experiences of needing to innovate in order to remain current, relevant, and at the cutting edge of quality assurance in Canada and on par with similar agencies globally.

A projector and screen will be required. The presenters will provide their own laptop computer.