

Executive Summary

MSU Quality Scorecard Report 2015-2018

The Goal

To determine the strengths and weaknesses of *MSU Online*, to address quality, program/course improvement and strategic planning. *MSU Online* refers to the processes, support, resources, strategic initiatives, programs and courses associated with online teaching and learning at Mayville State University.

The Challenge

MSU's online programs were originally structured and developed as part of a Title III grant. These programs were collectively named *MSU Online* as of the summer of 2015. *MSU Online* has never been evaluated for quality of its integration within the institution.

MSU Online Self Study

The Title III grant stimulated rapid growth of online programs at MSU. Although a proactive, innovative approach to quality was addressed during and after the grant period (2007 - 2012), attention was focused on course design rather than infrastructure and integration at an institutional level. Discussions of the need for an overarching evaluation tool led to research of available tools to address the challenge. In September 2014, the Office of Instructional Design and Technology, with approval from the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) and the Office of Extended Learning (ExL), purchased a membership to the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) which included the *2014 Quality Scorecard*.

The *Quality Scorecard* is a nationally recognized self-assessment tool that contains 75 unique "quality indicators." These indicators are metrics which were developed using evidence-based research in strategic planning of distance education programs. The *Quality Scorecard Handbook*, which is distributed with the *Scorecard*, makes recommendations and describes best practices for each indicator. In addition, a detailed, in-depth rubric with four levels of achievement possibilities is also included with the membership. These materials are meant to be used by institutional evaluation teams to score an institution's success at meeting each indicator. The *Handbook* states, "The results of this tool identify program weaknesses that can be used to support program improvement and strategic planning initiatives. The *Quality Scorecard* could also be used to demonstrate to accrediting bodies, elements of quality with the program as well as an overall level of quality." In the body of research surrounding the *Scorecard*, the indicators have been aligned with both the Higher Learning Commission's five criteria, as well as the C-RAC Guidelines for Distance Education. The MSU HLC Team Leaders were sent the *Scorecard* results in April 2015 to be used as needed to meet the five HLC criteria.

Scorecard Evaluation Process

MSU's Online Learning Committee (MSU OLC) was designated as the *Scorecard* institutional evaluation team due to its responsibilities stated in policy M380 to "continuously examine and improve guiding principles for online

education by creating an infrastructure of policies and procedures that support online course quality, student authentication and integrity, course design, instructional technologies, creative pedagogy, intellectual property, accessibility, retention, innovation, strategic growth, academic freedom and faculty training and development.” Members of the MSU OLC were oriented and trained by the Online Learning Consortium’s Membership Manager. Training consisted of a tour of the *Scorecard Handbook*, discussion of the *Rubric*, and introduction to the recommended scoring process and other features of the *Scorecard*.

The *Scorecard* evaluation process began in December 2014. Each indicator in each section was scored based on the knowledge and experience on the Committee as well as others at MSU who contributed to the process. Committee Members are:

- Chair: Christine Gonnella, Director of Instructional Design and Interim Director of Academic Assessment
- Member: Misti Wuori, Director of Admissions and Extended Learning
- Member: Gene Levitt, Professor and Chair of the Business and CIS Division
- Member: Tom Gonnella, Professor of Science and Math Division
- During the last stage of the process, the Committee welcomed Tami Such, Director of Nursing, as an *ad hoc* member of the Committee.

Initial Evaluation

All *Scorecard* indicators were initially evaluated and scored by individual committee members using the *Quality Scorecard Handbook* and the *Criteria for Excellence Rubric*. Based upon the *Rubric* and the *Handbook*, four scoring levels were used; 0 = Deficient; 1 = Developing, 2 = Accomplished and 3 = Exemplary.

The *Scorecard* contains nine categories, each of which include one to sixteen indicators. Indicators are outcome statements describing actions that support best practices of online education. Example: “Evaluation and Assessment Indicator #7: Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc).”

Indicators were assigned by category to each Committee member as follows:

1. Institutional Support (IS) 9 indicators – Tom Gonnella
2. Technology Support (TS) 7 indicators – Gene Levitt
3. Course Development/Instructional Design (CDID) 12 indicators – Chris Gonnella
4. Course Structure (CS) 8 indicators – Chris Gonnella
5. Teaching and Learning (TL) 5 indicators – Chris Gonnella
6. Social and Student Engagement (SSE) 1 indicator – Misti Wuori
7. Faculty Support (FS) 6 indicators – Chris Gonnella
8. Student Support (SS) 16 indicators – Misti Wuori
9. Evaluation and Assessment (EA) 11 indicators – Gene Levitt

Each committee member gathered information about the indicator and consulted institution experts as needed. Committee members then presented their initial impressions and tentative scores to the rest of the committee. Each *Scorecard* Indicator and its strengths and areas for improvement were discussed in depth and recorded in the **Initial Scorecard Analysis** (Appendix A). Final indicator scores were determined by the membership as a whole and recorded in the **MSU Quality Scorecard Results** (Appendix B).

Scorecard Results

Results by Scorecard Category

In *Table 1* below, the categories are organized by the order in which they appear in the *Scorecard*. Category totals were calculated by adding the scores for each indicator within the category. *MSU Online's* Total Score for the *Quality Scorecard* was 143/225 or sixty-four percent (64%).

Scorecard Category	Score	Percent
Institutional Support	16/27	59%
Technology Support	17/21	81%
Course Development/Instructional Design	19/36	53%
Course Structure	19/24	79%
Teaching and Learning	13/15	87%
Social and Student Engagement	2/3	67%
Faculty Support	10/18	56%
Student Support	35/48	73%
Evaluation and Assessment	14/33	42%

Table 1: Scorecard Categories and their scores organized by appearance in the Scorecard

The Online Learning Consortium does not currently publish national averages for the *Scorecard*, therefore it is difficult to assign meaning to or make comparisons with the numbers produced by the Self Study. However, the *Quality Scorecard Handbook* offers the following levels to be applied to overall *Scorecard* results: Exemplary 90-100% (202-225 points), Acceptable 80-89% (180-201 points), Marginal 70-79% (157-179 points), Inadequate 60-69% (134-156 points), and Unacceptable is considered less than 59% (< 133 points).

Since we intend to use the *Scorecard* in the coming years to guide continuous quality improvement for *MSU Online*, our current scores can be considered a baseline against which to compare future results. With a score of “Inadequate” as labeled above, we can conclude that there are several opportunities for improvement upon which we can focus our efforts within the next three years.

Results by Theme

When the initial discussion and scoring of each indicator was complete, the team re-organized the *Scorecard* indicators into themes relevant to MSU. The Committee chose themes based on the topics interwoven throughout the *Scorecard* categories. Use of the themes helped the Committee hone in on a topic as it related to all areas of the institution. These themes are listed below.

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| Accessibility | Faculty Training |
| Compliance | Strategic Planning |
| Course Quality | Student Support |
| Evaluation Processes | Technology |

Theme scores were calculated by adding the scores of all indicators within the theme. For example, the Accessibility theme in *Table 2* contains five indicators from four different *Scorecard* categories. Each of these indicators addresses some aspect of accessibility for students with disabilities. In this example, there are potentially twenty-five points for the theme; *MSU Online* scored eighteen out of twenty-five points (53%).

Theme	Category and Indicator Number	Initial Score
Accessibility	Course Development/Instructional Design Indicator #11	1 Developing
	Course Structure Indicator #5	3 Exemplary
	Course Structure Indicator #6	1 Developing
	Student Support Indicator #10	2 Accomplished
	Evaluation and Assessment Indicator #7	1 Developing

Table 2: Example of a theme with the indicators related to it and their Self Study scores

In the *Table 3*, themes are ordered by score, highest to lowest. This order does not represent level of urgency, nor does it reflect the order in which improvements will be addressed.

Theme	Score	Percent
Course Quality	38/48	79%
Student Support	34/48	70%
Compliance	2/3	67%
Strategic Planning	15/24	62%
Faculty Training	11/18	61%
Technology	14/24	58%
Accessibility	8/15	53%
Evaluation Processes	23/48	48%

Table 3: MSU scores by theme

Summary of Findings

In summary, the *Quality Scorecard* Total Score for *MSU Online* was 143/225 or sixty-four percent. For more detail regarding the findings for each category, see the **MSU Quality Scorecard Report Findings Details–Draft** (Appendix C). In this document, the *Scorecard* categories are presented from most to least accomplished, as indicated below.

- Teaching and Learning 87%
- Technology Support 81%
- Course Structure 79%
- Student Support 73%
- Social and Student Engagement 67%
- Institutional Support 59%
- Faculty Support 56%
- Course Development and Instructional Design 53%
- Evaluation and Assessment 42%

Recommended Plan of Action

In response to the results, the indicators that were scored as Deficient (0) and Developing (1) were set apart from the indicators that were scored as Accomplished (2) and Exemplary (3). Indicators that were scored as Deficient and Developing were the focus for development of a continuous plan for quality improvement. In alignment with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria, Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines, North Dakota University System (NDUS) Goals, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Standards, the **Continuous Quality Improvement Plan 2014-2018 (CQIP)** (Appendix D) for *MSU Online* was developed in an action format as follows:

1. Outcomes derived from the *Scorecard Rubric*
2. Recommendations of the Online Learning Committee (OLC)
3. Objective(s)
4. Action Steps, Responsible Parties, Target Dates

Development of the CQIP and the **CQIP Timeline** (Appendix E) was concluded in January 2016 for incorporation into the 2016-2021 MSU Strategic Plan. Upon approval of VPAA, CQIP implementation, with OLC facilitation, will proceed as written. The Implementation Plan, included within the CQIP, outlines a four year implementation cycle with formal re-evaluation in year four. At that time, MSU OLC will re-evaluate *MSU Online* using the most current version of the *Scorecard* and adjust the CQIP accordingly.

Conclusion

Implementation of the *Quality Scorecard Self Study* provided great insight related to several important opportunities for improvement of *MSU Online*. The MSU OLC recommends alignment of the institution's Strategic Plan for 2016-2021 with the identified CQIP 2015-2018 objectives. Because the implementation of the CQIP will require collaboration in several departments and may demand scrutiny of areas not previously examined, it is clear that *MSU Online* needs across-the-board support to be successful and effective. Substantial support from upper administration such as VPAA and VPSA will be required, along with consistent tracking and ongoing evaluation by the OLC.