

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
American Indian Opp Ind Center**

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Review Dates: 04/28/2010 - 04/30/2010



North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In April 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help schools be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the school.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

School Preparation. To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school community engages in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities. The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school. The team reviews the findings of the school's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school improve.

The Quality Assurance Review Team Report. Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the school. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the NCA CASI Postsecondary Office (NCA-CASI-PS), a division of AdvancED, visited the American Indian Opp Ind Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States on 04/28/2010 - 04/30/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 4 members of the administrative team, 8 students, 2 parents, and 15 teachers. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics of a quality school.

Through its examination of the school's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following commendations and required actions.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the school for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **The mission statement is inclusive of an holistic approach to student development and the environment of the school, the curriculum and the activities support that notion.**

Students are viewed holistically in terms of their total development and the school offers much beyond a strict academic approach to learning.

This approach enriches every educational opportunity for students.

- **The staff at American Indian OIC is dedicated to the success of every student and enthusiastic to provide exceptional learning opportunities.**

The faculty and staff of the school are rewarded by student success and are equally committed to that end.

Faculty members are rewarded by professional development opportunities subsidized by the school to keep them current and engaged. Staff members are equally engaged to remove barriers that keep students on task and on track.

- **The Governing Board and Leadership is experienced, committed, supportive and involved in planning and guiding the school.**

Meeting with the school governance board and the leadership indicated a sincere enthusiasm for the school, its leadership and support for student achievement.

The governance board is instrumental in setting the policy for productive management and student success.

- **A sound mission guides the school.**

The mission statement and beliefs abound throughout the school, the faculty, staff and students.

The culture of the school is rich in the heritage and history of the American Indian and is reflected in the mission and school environment.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall school effectiveness. The school will be held accountable for addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

- **Document accountability through evaluation and feedback.**

Surveys were noted through recorded summaries during the review; however, it was unclear as to the use of the results.

It is important that stakeholders are aware that their input is “heard” and is utilized in the continuous improvement of the school. Therefore, feedback mechanisms are important in keeping stakeholders engaged in processes critical to school improvement.

- **Develop and implement a consistent process to document and record all meetings (safety, steering, advisory, etc.)**

Committee records were contained on a variety of forms and in a variety of formats and stored in a variety of ways.

It is important for the AIOIC to be consistent in a standard form or template used to record the minutes of proceedings for all meetings as a way to convey a professional image of the school and standardize the information gleaned from these critical stakeholders.

- **Establish a formal, secure process for access to student and personnel files.**

During the visit, it the team had direct access to student information in a filing cabinet in which the lock was missing.

Student files are confidential and have critical and personal information contained within them. It is vitally important that all student and personnel records be secured through safe, fireproof storage methods.

- **Implement a management system to preserve, store and retrieve files.**

Currently, files are stored in a variety of ways including notebooks, locked and unlocked file cabinets and boxes with a system dependent upon the office in which the files are stored.

For security and long term storage of critical files including financial and student and faculty records, a management system is necessary and a master file containing the locations of such documents is important to retrieval and consistency in the entire management process.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools: The team reviewed the school's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork, provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help schools with their improvement efforts. Available any where, any time, the network can be queried for information on a variety of school improvement subjects. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides research, handbooks, and tools to assist schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for more information on the range of

resources available to you.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The NCA-CASI-PS accreditation seals are available at www.advanced.org/communicationskit for accredited schools and districts to post on their website and to use in school communications. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and lapel pins are also available and can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

Summary

The accreditation process engages the school in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the strengths and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the American Indian Opp Ind Center demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

Standard: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

The American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) was created in 1979 in response to high unemployment and poverty rates in the Minneapolis American Indian community. The organization has gained respect from the American Indian population, the community and government partners as well as local employers. AIOIC has successfully fused education and training with Native culture and the world of employment.

Since its founding, AIOIC has built a workforce of over almost 20,000 people by helping them improve employment credentials that result in a stable and satisfying future. Each year, approximately 1,500 people from the Phillips area of Minneapolis or from reservations in the surrounding area receive training and/or services. Although the AIOIC primarily serves American Indian people, the school's resources and programs are available to all persons regardless of race, creed, color, age, or gender.

The AIOIC School of Business and Office Technology is licensed as a private career school with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, sections 141.21 to 141.32. Licensure is not an endorsement of the institution. Credits earned at the institution may not transfer to all other institutions.

The American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) is a non-profit organization with a mission to empower American Indians to pursue career opportunities by providing individualized education, training, and employment services in a culturally rich environment.

AIOIC is designed to positively change lives through opportunities to become independent, self-sufficient, and productive. AIOIC programs give adults access to a stable and meaningful future. The AIOIC mission is "to empower American Indians to pursue career opportunities by providing individualized education, training, and employment services in a culturally rich environment."

The vision and purpose are evolving as the school's population is changing to a more diverse student base. Although the school has traditionally been based on the American Indian population; however, the demographics of the student body are changing rapidly to a multi-cultural student base. The integration of African-American and Somali is causing the administration to reflect on the mission and intent of the school although the broadly stated mission and vision statements still support the basic tenants of respect for individual beliefs and cultures.

The vision and purpose are included in the 2009-2010 school catalog on page 3 and are posted throughout the building. The poster includes an impressive logo for the school that was developed and painted by a former AIOIC student. The mission statement is included in the student handbook on page 3.

The beliefs and core values while not specifically located in text are prevalent in the interviews with faculty, staff and students. The school is based on the culture, traditions and history of American Indian tribes that surround the Minneapolis area. The facilities reflect the culture in artifacts throughout the building including photographs, art, the school logo and the interior elements of the building.

The most recent filing date for state and federal reporting dated February 2009 indicated 83 students enrolled in full time programs and 50 in part time programs for 133 total enrollment. Professional staff was 6.125. Overall completion rate was 76.2%, adult job placement rate was 78.4% and the state licensing rate was 90.2%.

There are three goals with supporting interventions (i.e. strategies) activities and assessments listed in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The three goals are academic related and are " Responsibility: Students will develop knowledge of, and take responsibility for, the personal and professional obligations they have placed upon themselves and obligations that have been placed upon them by others to improve job readiness and workplace performance. Functional Reading: All students will improve functional reading skills in order to access and process information across the curriculum. Math Computations: All students will improve functional mathematic and basic computation skills in order to successfully complete the course of study, as well as to be able to process and apply these skill sets within their chosen work environment."

Each of the stated goals in the SIP includes measurable assessments. The responsibility goal uses an Aspirations Index, a Survey and Portfolio, and a Career Retention Inventory. Functional Reading is measured by TABE Reading Comprehension Test, Cloze testing by subjects, and Survey of Reading Habits and math computation: TABE Mathematics Tests, Internal AIOIC Mathematics Performance Pre- and Post-Test and Personal Math Evaluation. While the assessments are detailed in the SIP, the narrative does not include baseline measurements and targeted levels of improvement.

Labor market information reflects the employment outlook for 2010 for the Twin Cities area and the region. Current programs at the school focus on occupations requiring short term on the job training or moderate term on the job training identified as some of the Twin Cities Area Top 50 Occupations such as those in health care as aides, customer service and medical office and human service personnel. A profile of the economic health of the area was found in the Technology Plan on pages 4-6. This narrative noted the employment situation of the area and described the barriers students have. The identified barriers included gang violence, domestic abuse, homelessness, and chronic substance use.

The school's faculty provides quality instruction to achieve academic, technical and personal enhancement, giving students the tools they need to keep pace with a changing world in fast-growing occupational areas. These include green industries, health care in hospitals, clinics and nursing homes or home health care, and any setting where personal health services, human services or administrative support services are needed; a learning environment that will instill self-respect and self-esteem and will inspire students to strive for excellence in a competitive world; and individual attention and encouragement to allow students to master marketable skills, exceed their expectations and achieve their visions. The school embodies an atmosphere that supports the values and beliefs of American Indian students, and all others, while building on the individual strengths of each student.

A thorough and detailed school profile is contained in the Self Study for the Business School. The profile includes accreditation information and a history of the evolution of the school as it is today.

The most recent strategic plan for the school is dated for the 2008-2009 fiscal year and was approved by the Board on 6/26/08. The plan focuses on internal and external goals for existing programs and services, new programs and services, staff training and recruitment, fiscal services, policies and procedures, fundraising, board recruitment, outreach and social services, outreach to employers, community relations and school expansion. Each area has objectives with specific goals.

The strategic planning agenda was represented by the Steering Committee agenda and minutes that focused on the NCA self report and documentation for the review team visit in late April. Agendas and minutes reflected intermittent meetings with no consistency to the design. A schedule of meetings was identified for December 2007 but no regular or routine schedules went beyond that month.

The School encourages its students to be involved in creating and maintaining a student council. The council has its own charter, elected officers and a representative to the Board of Directors of AIOIC. Student participation in professional associations, community organizations and events, and citizenship duties such as voting and the Census are strongly encouraged and supported. "The Spirit" is the school community newsletter that is published quarterly with issues going back to 2006. The Spring 2010, Vol 27 No 2 issue was available for review. Each issue includes the names of all students enrolled in classes at the school.

"Providing Opportunities. Changing Lives." is the tag line used at the school.

The AIOIC has a policy and procedure guide approved by the Board on 7/3/08 that states "The policies and procedures contained in this manual have been adopted by the AIOIC Board of Directors for use by management as they supervise OIC employees and administer the day-to-day operations of the organization. Employees may review the policies and practices contained in this manual. However, the manual is not an offer of an employment contract to any employee. The Board of Directors reserves the right to revise or terminate, without notice, any of the policies contained herein. Further, both AIOIC and its employees have the right to terminate their employment relationship at any time for any reason at all." The mission statement is not part of this document.

The webpage is skillfully and artfully designed and is easy to navigate. Tabs include those for education, vocational education, job placement and employment. Noted on the website was an opportunity for the general public to comment on the NCA visit. Advisory Committees were documented for the School of Business Health and Human Services, the Small Business, Administrative Assistant and Customer Service Representative programs. The goal established at the December 10, 2009 meeting was "to have the Advisory Committee meet four times a year and be active in alerting us to program development and quality of graduates, as well as encouraging individual involvement in programs if desired. The main purpose is to invite and encourage individual members to be more involved in our training, externships or job placement."

The strategic planning committee consisted of internal faculty and staff and students. In artifacts reviewed, no Board, community members or employers were part of the visioning and mission development.

Although a formal process was not evidenced at AIOIC, interviews indicated that discussions surrounding the vision and mission are constantly evolving in light of an emerging diversity of the student population. These discussions are also taking place with the Governing Board. A Steering Committee review of the mission and vision statements and SIP goals was noted in the minutes Dec. 3, 2009. The format for

committees is unclear. Minutes from the Nov. 28, 2007 Steering Committee indicated a number of committees in place in the school. "We looked at the roles of the other committees and decided that the facilitating committee could be incorporated into the steering committee, leaving Steering, Research and Survey, Criteria, and Editorial Committees. Members are asked to volunteer or recommend others to serve. The next important committee to become active is the Research and Survey committee, which can ask for data collection and analysis at any time in the five-year cycle ending we assume in 2009."

"Quality instruction in academic, technical and personal enhancement, giving students the tools they will need to keep pace with a changing world." is cited as one of the provisions of the mission statement. Data and information regarding the general student population at the school in terms of abilities indicates that the curriculum and structure of the AIOIC is appropriate. Students receive services, program placement, financial aid and quick success in short term program achievement. Interviews with the director indicate that much time has been spent to research appropriate androgogy for this population. The Community of Learning is a methodology that enhances student achievement at the AIOIC.

Distance learning was addressed in Steering Committee minutes dated March 6, 2010 as a future "challenge" to reach an additional population of students. A survey of technology access in student homes was recently conducted and it was determined that students and their families have very limited access.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The vision and mission statements reflect the culture, intent and history associated with the American Indian population.
- A School Improvement Plan is in place and has been vetted with the faculty and Governing Board.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Include baseline measurements and target levels of improvement for assessments detailed in the SIP narrative.
- Formalize the structure and role of committees involved in the school and its governance.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

Standard: The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

American Indian OIC School of Business and Office Technology is licensed as a private career school with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, sections 141.21 to 141.32. The school is affiliated with the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits for technical, administrative and operational assistance.

Evidence presented demonstrates that the AIOIC meets the requirement of the standard for governance and leadership. Committee reports, minutes and policies support the criteria for this standard. For example, faculty licensure is current with an expiration date of October 2010. The school's financial audit reports show that the finances were fairly reported for fiscal year 08/09. Articles of Incorporation for the operation of the school are present.

The organizational chart is current and was last dated 08/19/2008. The chart outlines the AIOC structure that includes a President/CEO, a CFO and COO with all staff included therein. Since the staff is small, all have multi-functional roles to serve students. All administrators are visible and engaged in the daily operations and are accessible to faculty and staff. Each has office space with appropriate technology for serving students. Communication is easily achieved among faculty and staff.

A detailed succession plan to replace the school's president is in place. The policy was updated approved and implemented November 2006. Policies and notices that need to be publicly posted are in place. They are primarily available through the staff materials, the student handbook, and the website.

A policy for financial aid is included in the student handbook on page 9, AIOIC provides financial aid counseling to prospective and enrolled students through the Financial Aid Officer. As indicated in materials, "The financial aid program is designed to provide financial assistance to eligible students to meet expenses of attending AIOIC. Federal and State financial aid forms are filed electronically and may take as little as two weeks to process. However, other funding may take longer. Students are encouraged to apply early for assistance. All financial aid recipients must be making satisfactory progress (cumulative grade point average of 2.0) to have their financial aid continued in subsequent quarters." The financial aid policy is also part of the course catalog.

A Board of Directors includes community leaders, persons from the public and private sectors, and representatives from post-secondary educational training institutions. These governing board members and their information are posted online on the school's website and each member follows a Code of Ethics to guide interactions with the school and community.

Discrimination is not apparent at the AIOIC. The non-discrimination policy is posted on the website, printed in the catalog, is part of Quick Look and the vision statement. The student handbook covers sexual harassment in detail with identified policies, procedures and reporting documents. The Personnel and Policies Manual covers non-discrimination in policy document #1 with the following statement concerning Equal Opportunity for Employment, Training, and Services: "As a federal contractor, AIOIC is subject to federal regulations regarding equal opportunity in employment, training, promotion and services. Further, AIOIC believes that it is vital to the success of the organization, designated service areas and community to promote equal opportunity for all. Therefore, in furtherance of the principle of equal opportunity, it is the policy of AIOIC to provide employment, training, promotions and services without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation. Each manager has the responsibility to ensure that this policy is enforced at AIOIC. NOTE: Contracts and grants intended solely for American Indians may have requirements that differ from the general policy."

The use and reporting of data are apparent. Assessments and results are evident through Cloze and student interest surveys. It is further evident that these results are reported to and discussed with the Governing Board. The AIOIC Profile contains data for assessment, demographics and strategies. The School Improvement Plan includes three student performance goals for responsibility, reading and computation. Each is accompanied by intervention strategies.

Personnel policies are clear and concise. The board minutes reflect hiring decisions in the President's Report as well as under by-laws which showed the restructuring of two positions. The Personnel and Policies Manual is very complete as it includes sections explaining the purpose of this manual; equal opportunity for employment, training, and services; general practices and guides; Internet / email usage; wages and benefits; wages; holidays; retirement ; Medical, dental / life; flexible spending; cafeteria plan; optional supplemental plans; paid time off (PTO); garnishment of wages; bereavement leave; leave of absence; military leave; Family Medical Leave Act; conflict of interest; jury or witness duty leave; hiring or placement of convicted felons; sexual harassment policy; personnel, medical and staffing files, drug free workplace and smoke free facility. This manual is hosted on an AIOIC computer system drive, was approved in 2008 and appears to be a draft document.

A Leadership Succession Plan is in place for both planned and unexpected leadership change. The AIOIC student council is in place to give students a voice in school affairs. According to page 8 of the Student Handbook, "The Student Council is a representative body, chartered through the school, whose officers are elected from among the current students. Council meetings are held regularly. Students also organize various special events including pot lucks, open houses, and fund-raising events. Students represent the school when participating in these activities." A newsletter, the Spirit, is published quarterly by students and staff to describe school, AIOIC, and community events. Graduates are members of the Alumni Association and can participate in its social and other activities.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The relationships with the community are a definite strength.
- AIOIC has countless relationships and long-term partnerships with education, training, and employment institutions as well as those committed to social service and American Indian causes.
- Staff collaborates with a variety of organizations from the local, state, and national regions and the surrounding American Indian tribes.
- Data collection methods are strong. An example of this is the comprehensive and descriptive School Profile.
Job descriptions are thorough and up to date.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Condense Board agendas and minutes into a consistent format to archive.
- Formalize personnel policies, ensure employee access and implement a process to verify employee receipt/acknowledgement of the policies.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

Standard: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Training programs at the AIOIC primarily focus in areas of allied health but include Small Business Ownership, Human Services Technician, Admin Assistant, Admin Medical Assistant, Customer Service Representative, Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aide (Extended), Health Occupations, Trained Medication Aide, Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, Patient Feeding Assistant, Acute Care Nursing, and First Aid/CPR. Programs are short to give students a quick start to success and future educational opportunities.

Program/course information is available and accessible on the AIOIC website and in the student handbook to include a description of the program, requirements in terms of courses and credit hours and placement and career path information. Since AIOIC has about 30 individuals on staff at the current time, personnel functions are handled by program managers. The school recently received a grant from the Department of Labor that will allow the school to expand personnel and grow. The intent is to centralize personnel functions by reviewing and developing consistent school-wide policies and follow the Minnesota Salary Schedule for Non-Profits.

The accounting office uses Peachtree accounting software to track the many grants used to fund the school. AIOIC data are tracked via a customized Access database. According to the accounting office, a new database is being constructed to track student progress in response to specific grant requirements.

The admission and enrollment process is included in the School of Business catalog. "Full-time students will apply through the Student Service/Financial Aid Office, which has established the following procedure for becoming a fully enrolled student. Each student will: Take and successfully complete the AIOIC placement test, complete the AIOIC School application, apply for financial aid if eligible, complete an interview with a Student Service Representative, provide a copy of a high school diploma or GED, provide immunization record if were born after 1956, request official transcripts from previously attended postsecondary institutions. Once a potential student has completed all the necessary steps outlined and decided which program to which he or she is seeking admission, each may be formally admitted to the School. All students must complete a registration form and pay a one-time \$35 registration fee and a \$35 lab each quarter."

Page 6 of the School of Technology catalog states, "Transfers to Other Schools: AIOIC credits may transfer to other schools, depending on the other school's determination of the relevance to their curriculum in the areas of study the student chooses there. AIOIC will send copies of transcripts of courses enrolled in and completed and of the syllabuses as requested to facilitate this process. There is no charge for AIOIC transcripts. Any AIOIC course a student enrolled in will appear on the transcript." Articulation agreements are in place with the University of Phoenix through Prior Learning Assessments for many of the courses at the AIOIC. Credits range from 2-5.33.

The budget for the AIOIC is approximately \$1million a year with major funding sources United Way 12%,

government grants and contracts 30%, foundations/corporations 2.2%, tuition 40.7%, Summit Academy/DOL grant 14.5% and miscellaneous 0.6%. The school is dependent upon grants and fundraising for continued support which makes planning year to year a challenge. Regardless, the school has demonstrated success in budgeting and prioritizing. 1.2% of the total budget is spent on equipment. Interviews with the Director of Curriculum explained that the computers were being replaced with new models but to stretch dollars, the used monitors are not being replaced.

The School of Business of Technology Profile is a comprehensive resource that actually serves as an annual report for the work of the school faculty and staff. This report is misnamed and should be an annual product of the school. Two day student orientations are documented by agendas. Agenda topics cover the catalog, the student handbook, schedules, orientation tools and planning materials, reading inventory, note taking and memorization, the history and culture of the school, goal planning and motivation, class schedules and externships, AIOIC programs, the University of Phoenix/St. Louis Park Campus, job readiness and workplace professionalism, and the TABE assessment.

The sample Professional Portfolio contained student contact information, ample cover letters, resume, references, reference letter, recommendations, thank you letters, class schedule, transcript, course descriptions, certificates and work samples. The School Improvement Plan Goals, Interventions and Assessments, revised November-December 2009, includes goals, interventions and assessments. An Aspirations Index, a measure of intrinsic and extrinsic life goals and aspirations, is given to all new students during orientation. Students are also asked to respond to a series of survey questions regarding personal and professional challenges and barriers that might impede their success. Students are also given a Career Retention Inventory during the admission process to measure job retention in determining the need for further involvement and/or intervention after completion and/or job placement. TABE testing measures reading comprehension and is administered before intake and at the start of the second or third quarter. Cloze tests are administered to individual students near the beginning of the first personal quarter and at the start of the final quarter. The ACER Higher Test for Language is given at the start of programs for those 6-month or longer.

The school has approval from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to operate as a Private Career School through October 2010.

The student handbook is comprehensive and includes all program Costs and other Costs including basic school supplies for which the student is responsible, the Cancellation and Refund Policy, Financial Aid availability for students who qualify, Academic and Financial Aid Petition Process, Appeals of Suspension, Quarterly Grade Resolution, General Grievance Procedures, and Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy are found in the Student Handbook.

The Career Immersion High School offers academic study to fulfill graduation requirements. We operate with a focus on career planning general employability skills. Our school has a unique, small class environment and our education style supports students that have not advanced through mainstream public schools. As part of the American Indian OIC, we work to fuse Native culture with our academic studies.

The American Indian OIC's employment services include career exploration, work readiness, job placement, and ongoing support. All of our programs offer a connection to support services that include child care, transportation, and housing. Employment services can also help access uniforms, work clothes, or equipment needed for a job.

The Career Decision-making Inventory tool is used at high school and post-secondary levels to identify career interest areas and abilities. Community resources are engaged to provide job placement services

through the Minneapolis Employment Training Program, Workforce Investment Act Program and the Minnesota Family Investment Program as well as the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The American Indian OIC offers options and opportunities for all students in terms of work toward a high school diploma from Minneapolis Public Schools, additional credits through extra coursework, post-high school credits through PSEO (Post Secondary Enrollment Options) if in the 11th or 12th grade, and/or option of attending class in the morning and working in the afternoon.
- All students are encouraged to participate in job training and employment.
- Academic and technical content is taught within the context of the Native American culture.
- Faculty and staff by dedication and enthusiasm for student achievement are positive role models for all students.
- The school and staff demonstrate a commitment to students to discuss academic expectations, overall progress, and identify support needs to ensure that students complete school and transition to employment.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Investigate student competitions to integrate into classroom content. While there is extracurricular student activity, there is not evidence of student skill events through such venues as the Career and Technical Student Organizations. With AIOIC's strong business and health related classes, DECA and HOSA are avenues that may help provide competition strategies.
- Condense financial aid process, resources and award letters into an organized manual to print and/or post online.
- Establish an annual performance report and distribute to stakeholders.
- Formalize and provide a consistent format or template for lesson plans, syllabi, and course of study for all programs to follow. Program syllabi were noted during the onsite review; however, they are in different formats. The Human Services Technology Assistant is a good model to follow and could be used as the AIOIC standardized format.
- Research and review course of study formats with faculty to determine the appropriate format and model for AIOIC faculty to use. This provides consistency to all courses of study.
- Provide feedback to stakeholders when surveys are summarized and responded to. A fall quarter student evaluation survey completed by 15 students summarized by this descriptor "Asked if the school is preparing them to find employment at \$13 an hour or more, eleven marked "yes" and three marked "maybe." One marked "no."
- Incorporate project based learning in classrooms. Only one example of project-based learning was provided as evidence. This project was a collaborative writing sample for two students to work together to produce a written document, a website or a major speech. The pair then needed to analyze the process of working together to achieve a final product.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

Standard: The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

According to the school's requirement to document Campus Security Report Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 (PL 101-226), that includes statistics on on-campus criminal incidence indicated no incidence of offenses and no arrests for crimes occurring on campus during the reporting period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. This information was confirmed in the Student Handbook on page 33. Police are immediately available to assist in any situation if necessary as the station is across the street.

The American Indian OIC demonstrated and provided the necessary evidence on the collection and use of data as an institution. The OIC reports performance annually to its Board of Directors. The data collected is captured in a report titled "PROFILE OF AMERICAN INDIAN OIC SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND OFFICE TECHNOLOGY". The following outcomes are included in this report:

- General Demographics
- Program Choice and Retention Rates
- Completion Rates
- Dropout Rates by Quarter
- Educational Level and Retention
- Age and Retention
- Residency Retention
- Family Status and Retention
- Test Levels and Retention
- Gender and Success
- Individual with Multiple Barriers
- Overview of Employment of Completers

The data captured is used by the senior management team, community, faculty, staff and students. These outcomes are reviewed annually so strategies can be developed or enhanced to meet OIC's objectives.

The American Indian OIC also provides data analysis for assessing student readiness. TABE assessments along with the Cloze Assessment are the assessment tools used by OIC to score and produce results from the various program certification and licensure examinations. Students are assessed prior to enrolling to assess core competence before being accepted in the program. These data are captured and used to measure student growth, successful completion and the validation of certifications in various program disciplines.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- OIC has a data collection system that provides analysis and reports on their performance.
- OIC has invested the necessary resources to ensure data are collected in an established process and managed by a committed staff.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Develop a strategic plan to include performance measures to be tracked against goals.
- Develop and implement a scorecard process to review performance against goals throughout the year to determine progress toward meeting school objectives.
- Develop improvement strategies on key measures of actual performance results

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

Standard: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

The American Indian OIC has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and mission and to ensure achievement for all students. Recruiting and retention of OIC associates is crucial to their continued success in serving a high at risk population. It is quite evident all associates have the passion and commitment of the success of each student at the American Indian OIC. Their hiring process is a centered around a team approach that may include the CEO, COO, CFO, instructional staff and other key personnel. There is a 1-3 day orientation and training process for all new employees.

OIC supports its staff members in many ways. Employees are provided a comprehensive benefit package competitive aligned with the Minneapolis City School District benefit package. Professional Development is supported by OIC. The American Indian OIC's managers work with staff to develop their individual professional development plans. Budget permitting OIC will pay for CEU's required for certification renewals or degree seekers. The CEU's or degree being sought must be relevant to their area of expertise along with the approval of the professional staff's manager.

Emphasis is placed upon the needs of staff to succeed in the classroom. The use of technology is emphasized to improve classroom and laboratory efficiency. Planning for the allocation of financial resources starts in March for the next year. The emphasis is to provide programs that meet the mission and vision of OIC. Every cost center has its own budget which is included in the overall agency budget.

Every new student meets with the either the OIC Career Counselor or Financial Aid Coordinator prior to enrolling so that each student is aware of expectations. Students are scheduled into the assessment process prior to be admitted into the program. All full-time students attend a two day orientation process to prepare them for their course of study.

The American Indian OIC just received a \$5 million health careers grant from the US Department of Labor. This grant will provide the resources to substantially increase their capacity in serving high at risk adult learners for jobs in medical facilities throughout the metro area. The OIC has a variety of funding resources to include:

- Workforce Investment Act
- United Way
- Several Foundations
- ABE Grant
- Other Government Grants

The OIC leadership has invested a great deal of resources to ensure a safe and orderly environment for student and staff. All students and staff have security badges that allow access to specific areas. The OIC has a Safety Committee that meets quarterly.

Several staff members have First Aid and CPR certifications. In case of serious injury an immediate call is made to an EMS station less than a quarter of a mile away.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The facilities at the OIC are in good condition. The laboratories and classrooms are well equipped.
- Support services provided to students are outstanding.
- The passion and commitment of the entire staff for the success of all students is second to none.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Develop a written procedure for access to staff records.
- Develop a comprehensive description of the orientation of new employees to indicate what is included in the orientation and the process used for instructional staff.
- Secure all personnel files and student files in a locked secure filing cabinet. The secured cabinet should be fireproof.
- Secure and maintain all personnel and student files according to government regulations.
- Schedule monthly safety meetings with agendas and minutes.
- Establish a template for Individual Professional Development Plans. Track and record the results of professional development each year to measure improvements in teaching-learning.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

Standard: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Stakeholder meetings are documented by minutes. Advisory Minutes are on file although meetings do not appear to be held on a regularly scheduled basis. The minutes from the Schoolwide Steering Committee were in evidence.

Staff meeting minutes were provided; however, the minutes did not always reference these meetings as

“staff meetings” by sometimes referring to them as training meetings etc. Community Stakeholder input was requested in a 2006 Open House survey. Conversation with the PR Specialist provided evidence that various online input was gathered utilizing technology (i.e. Survey Monkey).

Public relations personnel are in place to promote the school and assist in raising the necessary funds to support operations. Marketing efforts to raise funds and to promote visibility and volunteerism are documented through surveys and plans. The fundraising plan identifies target businesses and includes an action plan. Reviewers noted an excellent marketing survey, however it was dated 2006. A follow up survey is warranted as well as an impact survey of AIOIC.

A marketing plan for public relations is available through the PR External Relations personnel. The plan is workable but should identify target audiences, have more than one goal and include an evaluation or accountability methods. A public relations plan is in place. Most PR is related to fundraising; however, volunteer recruitment, visibility, and business partnerships are included as well. PR person mentioned research as a need. Publications and Website promotions are in place for recruitment, visibility and relationship building for volunteerism.

The "Spirit" is a well-done newsletter. I understand keeping it hard copy due to your clientele, but you may add to your readership by creating an e-newsletter edition of the "Spirit." The "quick guide" is an informational brochure used for recruitment, and there is an up to date web site.

Stakeholder Partnerships are in place and nurtured. It is evident that there are many partnerships with agencies, businesses and other educational institutions in an attempt to serve the AIOIC population. There are partnerships with Summit Academy, Park Nicollet Hospital, various clinical sites and externship sites.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- In conversation with staff, AIOIC have two of the greatest marketing and visibility tools of all. The staff believe in what they are doing and have a contagious passion for it. That kind of sincerity is great promotion in and of itself.
- The website is well done and information is easy to access.
- Many stakeholder groups have been identified and are being addressed.
- The “Quick Guide” is an effective informational piece.
- The “Spirit” is a good, informative newsletter.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- The marketing plan is definitely present and effective; however, it could be more strategic. There are many online guides to writing a plan that helps identify stakeholders such as founders, advisory committee members, and business representatives.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Standard: The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

A specific annual report was not in evidence; however, the evidence cited the school catalog, page 4 that indicated "In a survey covering summer 2008 through spring 2009, students completing School programs found employment at an average starting salary of \$11.25 per hour. The completion rate on our last annual report was 76% and the placement rate was 78%."

There was no evidence of a quality, continuous improvement strategy in place at AIOIC. The School Improvement Plan is the artifact to document continuous improvement; however, the document focuses on learning goals for the school and not the broader improvement of the total school operation.

A student feedback form was noted to collect student satisfaction information, course evaluation, alternative evaluation for classes. A student feedback summary was dated Fall 2009 and reflected 15 student evaluations from the preceding quarter. The directions requested written responses from faculty; however, there was no indication of implementation of the students' recommendations. The Profile for the School of Technology included data analysis for the community, the school and student breakdowns by performance, enrollment, retention, and student and family demographics.

There is no distance learning program although the concept is being discussed. Minneapolis has a wireless system throughout the city; however, many student homes do not have computers so a blended concept for AIOIC students may be an appropriate learning strategy. The President/COO prefers that students use the AIOIC computer lab for distance learning classes.

A database system is in place to record student coursework, demographic information and grades. Faculty peer evaluations are held in the President/COO office. Individual staff plans were noted during the visit. Plans were single page and typically addressed four although not consistent areas that included professional affiliation and certification, pedagogy, cultural, organizational.

The week of April 19-23, 2010 was designated as Professional Development Week for the school. Throughout the week students were assisted with resume development and practicing and preparing for mock interviews. Personnel from area agencies and employers were onsite throughout the week to interview and provide constructive feedback to students. Feedback forms measuring attitude, appearance, job qualification, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, listening skills, and enthusiasm were evaluated.

There was no evidence of a school-wide plan for professional development for faculty and staff. An example of Archiving in Groupwise was the in-house workshop listed as professional development for teachers. While this is a continuous education strategy, there was no evidence of a planned series of professional development or the needs assessment on which it was developed. The individual staff development plans incorporated additional certifications and training for staff. Most involved additional reading and research in content areas that were connected to job duties.

Currently, there are no teacher externships; however, the faculty and staff regularly interface with the employer community.

The Technology coordinator provides some software training and serves as network support for the school. Staff are involved in the School Improvement Plan however there was no documentation to support the use of data in the Profile of the School of Technology.

A document called the Faculty Annual Report and Self Evaluation Form provided a series of questions for faculty to reflect and respond plus an evaluation rating scale. There was no date on the form, directions for completing the form or a summary of faculty responses related to a professional development plan.

A detailed Peer Review Evaluation process is in place with a thorough rating sheet and area for feedback. Instructors must score a minimum of 175 on the quarterly observation/rating or develop a continuous improvement plan. According to the process, the "Vice-President/Chief Operating Officer will reserve discretionary powers to properly contend with any dramatic outlying scores or point anomalies that may occur during the Peer Review process."

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Staff are involved in writing the continuous improvement plan.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Implement a broader continuous improvement strategy with faculty, staff, students and stakeholders.
- Recommend developing a consistent form for individualized staff plans.
- There was no evidence of a school-wide plan for professional development for faculty and staff.
- Compile an annual report each year to document successes, challenges and future plans based on data. Use trend reports and data to support the report.

Finding: American Indian Opp Ind Center has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and school effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school. The strength of this report lies in the school's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school will need to address. Following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through NCA-CASI-PS accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Ms. Barbara Nicol, Chair (Ohio Board of Regents)
- Mr. Robert Scarborough, Team Member (Great Oaks Institute of Technology)
- Lynn Strang, Team Member (East Valley Institute of Technology)

AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As schools reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose

The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Governance and Leadership

The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning

The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Documenting and Using Results

The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Resource and Support Systems

The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.