

GVSU QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

Summary

Facilities Services at Grand Valley State University has implemented a unique “Quality Improvement Initiative” that continues to be successful in enhancing efficiency, lowering costs, and supporting University goals. Our focus is on making continuous small improvements while enjoying the process.

Each year, departments (custodial, grounds, etc.) target two areas of improvement to highlight in informal “walk and talk” presentations. Presenters have included custodians, maintenance personnel, clerical staff, supervisors, student interns, faculty members and colleagues. The topics are as varied as the locations – we have “talked trash” in a dorm, toured utility tunnels and tested mowers.

The Vice President for Finance and Administration actively participates in all sessions, and invited us to report on the initiative at an executive officers’ meeting. Projects have been featured in the student newspaper, and a local TV station interviewed custodians for a story on “Project Donation.”

Tangible results include productivity gains and cost savings. For example, a change in trash removal saved 6 labor hours per day. Using natural materials for erosion control saved \$90,000. Over 9,900 pounds of used goods were donated to a local charity.

The informal nature of the initiative makes it readily adaptable to other institutions.

Innovation, Creativity and Originality

Below is the original document for the initiative.

CONCEPT

- Approach quality improvement from a new perspective.
- Concentrate on making continuous small improvements in quality.
- Provide opportunities to “show off” quality improvements.
- Create opportunities for staff involvement and recognition.
- Develop a manageable process.
- Show relationship between unit goals and strategic planning objectives.
- Have fun with the initiative!

PLAN

- Each supervisor is responsible for the following question: “What are we doing to improve quality in my department?”
 1. Develop and track a few key statistics for overall quality measurement.
 2. Target an area(s) to work on and highlight in a presentation.

- Select one month per semester for quality improvement reports.
 1. Set up one hour per presentation (target area).
 2. Each department will do at least one presentation.
- Location for the presentations will be at the work site whenever possible. For example, if the focus is improving the appearance of recycling areas in Housing, an appropriate location for the presentation may be a living center.

PRESENTATIONS

- The intent is not to do formal presentations, but informal “walk and talk” demonstrations led by people doing the work.
- A supervisor should start each session with a 5-10 minute summary of the level of overall quality measures, and then introduce the staff member(s) who will conduct the presentation.
- The bulk of the presentation will be the “walk and talk” session in the field.
- Encourage “hands on” demonstrations of the work or operation involved. If the subject of the session is floor care, for example, the presentation might include a demonstration of a floor care machine.
- Guests will be invited to attend sessions when appropriate, including executive officers, faculty members, deans, university media and the student newspaper.
- We will feature news about presentations in internal and/or external publicity.

SCHEDULE

- May
- December

Institutional Benefits

One of the university’s values is “to effectively develop and allocate financial resources with which to advance the university mission and respond to change and emerging opportunities.” This program demonstrates that funds invested in Facilities Services are used effectively and efficiently, with an ongoing effort to improve operations.

On a broader scale, many projects support the University-wide sustainability effort. Energy savings, recycling, erosion control and maintenance activities all contribute to reducing environmental impact.

We provide an educational opportunity and practical experience for students joining with facilities staff to complete projects. For example, student volunteers worked with the Arborist on ravine erosion control. Student interns from the Occupational Safety & Health major developed our asbestos management tracking system.

Faculty, contractors and colleagues from other departments have been involved in several of the initiatives, and acted as “co-presenters” at the sessions. These partnerships benefit all involved.

Portability and Sustainability

The flexible, “down to earth” nature of this program makes it very adaptable for use by other institutions. It evolved through our strategic planning process and a discussion about how we define quality. Other facilities professionals can have similar conversations, outline a concept tailored to their operation and develop an implementation plan. There are no costs involved other than creativity and time and the paybacks are huge! Our hourly staff has been enthusiastically involved in the process and actively looks for continuous improvement measures.

The GVSU “Quality Improvement Initiative” is in its third year. At this point we are currently reviewing results and deciding where to take the program in the future. We would be happy to share our experience with any interested institution.

Documentation, Analysis, Customer Input and Benchmarking

The Quality Initiative coordinator attends each session to take notes and photographs and collect copies of materials distributed at the presentations. All information, publicity and correspondence is updated and kept on file.

Since the results of initiatives are shared during the presentation, the analysis has already been done. Productivity increases and cost savings are reported during the sessions. We have been better able to manage the annual facilities operating costs per square foot as a result of a concentration on efficiency. The intent of the program was to minimize the need for maintaining an extensive data gathering system and focus on cumulative gains accruing from small improvements.

Formal customer input is received through a variety of institutional surveys that are monitored by Facilities managers to detect significant changes in the rating for Facilities Services. We consistently receive high ratings despite a rapid growth in square footage. Customer interest is further evidenced by an increasing number of people asking about the program.

The quality improvement program has positively impacted the consideration given our annual budget requests. University administrators better understand our ongoing and serious commitment to developing improved and efficient processes. Consequently, there is greater credibility attached to our requests during the budget cycle.

Management Commitment and Employee Involvement

This initiative was developed with the encouragement of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. He not only made the time to attend each presentation, he was an active participant in all hands-on demonstrations. Further proof of management commitment was an

invitation to report on the initiative for the University President and other executive officers. Other administrators have also chosen to lend support by attending sessions.

Hourly employees are involved in all initiatives, often serving as presenters. There was, of course, initial trepidation at the thought of not only giving a presentation, but doing so for a Vice President. This has been overcome with recognition of and appreciation for their efforts. We have been able to use savings realized as a result of this program to support the purchase of equipment and tools needed to enhance job performance; many of these items were discussed during the sessions. A partial list of presentations is below.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenters</u>
Ice Melt System	Grounds Supervisor
Floor Care Equipment Selection	Custodians, Custodial Supervisor
GIS/GPS	Arborist, Faculty
Signal Monitoring	Maintenance Supervisors
OSH Student Partnership	Safety Supervisor, Faculty, and Student
Mail Users Survey	Mail Supervisor, Mail Handlers
Chiller/Boiler Replacement	Engineer, Energy Technician, and Student
Asbestos Management	Safety Supervisor, Contractor, and Student
Lock Shop Improvements	Maintenance Staff
Recycling Changes	Operations Supervisor, Custodians
Let's Talk Trash	Custodial Supervisor, Custodian
Energy System & Cost Savings	Engineer, Energy Technician
Bank Stabilization	Arborist
Quality Improvement in Utility Tunnels	Maintenance Supervisor
Chemical Hygiene Plan	Safety Supervisor, Chemical Hygiene Officer, and Student Intern from OSH
Accrued Energy Savings	Engineer
Warehouse & Supply Initiatives	Operations Supervisor, Inventory Clerk
Carpet Care at South Housing	Custodial Supervisor
New Fertilization Program	Grounds Supervisor
Web-Based GIS System	Arborist
Toro Groundmaster - Efficiency	Grounds Supervisor
Custodial Staff Orientation	Operations Supervisor
Project Donation	Custodial Supervisors, Custodians, and Women's Center Staff
Power Monitoring	Engineer, Maintenance Supervisors

