Excellence Canada - improving performance, recognizing excellence

In June 2013, the final report from the Staff Life Cycle project was released. Identified as a next step for Fall 2013, project recommendations were submitted to an Implementation Committee, chaired by Geoff McBoyle, Vice-President, Academic & Provost. The recommendations will assist with the prioritization of projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing excellence at the University of Waterloo. One of these initiatives is to establish a quality assurance framework that would help us to put in place quality standards, procedures and governance that build on the strong traditions of quality and innovation at the University of Waterloo.

The quality assurance framework will be based on the Excellence, Innovation and Wellness (EIW) framework from an organization called “Excellence Canada” (previously called National Quality Institute). Excellence Canada is a Canadian quality and wellness standard and program that aligns with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and other international quality standards. Providing strategic business frameworks, innovative national criteria, and tools/services that support ongoing performance improvement in quality, innovation and wellness, Excellence Canada is focused on helping institutions continuously improve performance and build upon excellence.

The EIW framework is not a quick fix, but will instead allow Waterloo to take a progressive approach to establishing and maintaining excellence over time. The framework for excellence is interactive in nature, and brings together the following areas:

- Planning and Strategy,
- Process and Project Management,
- Customer Experience,
- Partners and Suppliers,
- People Engagement, and
- Leadership and Governance.

As we work to realize the EIW Standard, Waterloo will follow the Progressive Excellence Program (PEP); a progressive implementation model that provides a planned, target-driven approach to sustaining performance, wellness and excellence.

The PEP program is comprised of four levels. Beginning at Bronze (Level 1 – Foundation), organizations satisfy established requirements, working their way up to Silver (Level 2 – Advancement), Gold (Level 3 – Role Model) and Platinum (Level 4 – Sustained World Class Performance). Canada Awards for Excellence (CAE) are available to organizations at the Silver, Gold and Platinum levels.

Over the next 12 months, Waterloo will work towards achieving the Bronze Level, demonstrating a clear commitment to excellence, innovation and wellness. Collectively, the Waterloo community will work to:
• Implement a long-term strategic focus on excellence, innovation and wellness that promotes
good principles and practices as outlined in this Standard.

• Demonstrate and foster a commitment to continuous improvement with awareness and
education on the Standard, and using internal and/or external assessment, either in a pilot
project or across the organization, to assist the process of establishing priorities for
improvement.

Our collaborative approach will result in:

• Broad team support of the vision, mission, and values.

• Recognition of the importance of embedding excellence, innovation and wellness principles in
decision making at all levels of the organization.

• Policy statements related to excellence, innovation and wellness.

Getting started

Establishing an Executive Advisory Team and Task Force
Chaired by Dave Wallace, Chief Information Officer, IST, an Executive Advisory Team will be struck and
will include key leaders from the university community who will provide guidance to the initiative.

Supporting the Executive Advisory Team will be a Task Force, led by Dave Kibble, Director Portfolio
Management, IST. The Task Force will be comprised of representatives from across campus, including
members of the Staff Life Cycle project. Members will help to adapt the EIW framework to meet the
needs of the university.

Membership for these groups will be announced once confirmed.

Assisted by Excellence Canada representatives, the members of the Executive Advisory Team and Task
Force will participate in a kick-off coaching session, focused on planning and implementation. Members
will also receive five additional days of direct coaching and consulting support.

Initials tasks/responsibilities
One of the first tasks of these two groups will be to conduct a pre-assessment of the campus in terms of
the Bronze Level requirements. Following this work, a gap analysis will be done to determine what
action is necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Bronze Level. An action plan for accomplishing this
work will then be developed and implemented.

Communicating progress

Regular progress updates will be shared with the university community as this initiative moves forward.
As we work towards achieving the EIW Standard, excellence will become an innate component of who
we are as an institution. Together we can contribute to making the University of Waterloo a highly
attractive destination for staff, faculty and students alike, while facilitating continuous development and
growth.