NCCI's Story

Margaret Mead once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." With more modest, but nonetheless bold ideas for improvement, a handful of change agents from universities across the nation created NCCI (the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education). After several years of informal, productive networking, NCCI was created in 1999. Now, several years later, NCCI is over 70 institutions strong, and fiscally sound, with a mission focused at the heart of the most critical issues facing higher education. We all know the issues: declining public support, increasing costs, greater public scrutiny, declining federal research funding, international competition, complex technology systems…

Unlike the private sector, our institutions have not historically developed infrastructures nor cultures that regarded institutional effectiveness as a preeminent value. Higher education, in general, has also not traditionally placed great emphasis on leadership development, strategic planning, process improvement, self-assessment, restructuring, project management, performance measurement or continuous improvement. To the extent that we have, it has largely been focused on the administrative side, with only a few institutions embarking across the line to the academic side. But this pattern is changing in response to pressures from external constituencies, and with encouragement from a growing number of individuals within the institutions who have come to recognize that excellence in academics, service and administration are interdependent aims.

Supporting this shift in thinking, and providing new tools to translate this new vision into reality are the members of NCCI. Our members come from various backgrounds and occupy a variety of positions within colleges and universities—in administration, academic affairs, student life, planning, institutional research, continuous improvement. Our members include nationally recognized experts, authors, directors of the most significant infrastructures for planning and improvement that exist in higher education, and winners of national and state quality awards. Our close collaborations with NACUBO and ACE give leverage to our efforts.

What unites us is a shared commitment to advancing our common vision – for NCCI to be the educational association of choice for professionals leading progressive improvement within their institutions of higher learning.

One of our new members, Catherine Lilly from the University of Michigan, was fascinated by NCCI's heterogeneity and observed the common threads that allow us to continue to participate and grow. She noted, NCCI members:

- Are valued for the work that we do (even when others don't quite understand what it is)
- Have measurable impact on the institution
- Work for the greater good of the institution
- Are competent working '"in the white space"
- Are knowledgeable about how to work with people in power (particularly academic roles of power)
- Are capable of managing complex projects

As a growing number of colleges and universities seek new approaches to address their contemporary challenges related to institutional effectiveness, NCCI can help. We are a clearinghouse for best practices on questions of institutional effectiveness: How to create a strategic plan? Where are potential efficiency gains and how to implement them? How do we know which programs are having an impact so we know where to focus our resources? How do we demonstrate the value we are contributing to students and society? How do we manage large, complex projects? How do we know what students need and if our programs are delivering? How do we define and assign these planning and improvement efforts? How do you enhance your leadership development options? What are options for setting up an infrastructure and defining positions to coordinate these efforts?

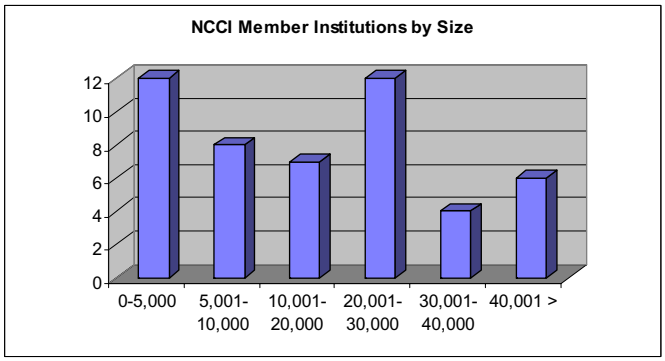
NCCI addresses these issues in a number of ways. We sponsor national conferences and meetings, including one each linked with NACUBO and ACE annually. Our best practices and case studies are on NCCI's web site, www.ncci-cu.org, accessible to members, and soon to be indexed for easy access. We talk to each other regularly, for ideas and, sometimes, for moral support.

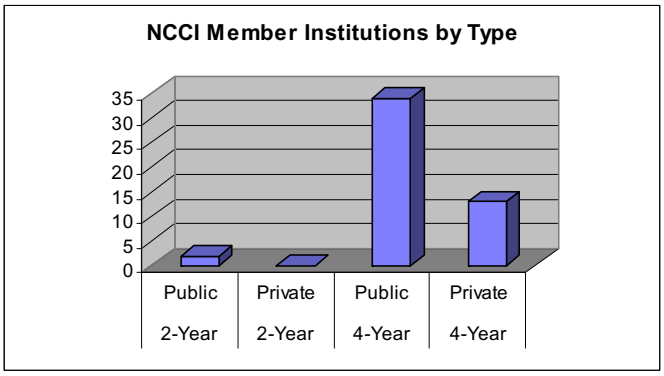
Individually, we come to NCCI to help advance efforts within our respective institutions. Collectively, we have the capacity and desire to advance critical issues for higher education nationally through our expertise and commitment to excellence. Higher education needs that commitment now more than ever. And NCCI is poised to deliver.

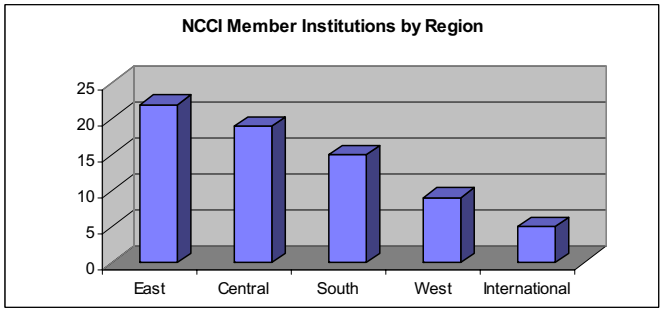
We invite you to consider the possibilities. To propose bold ideas. To engage in ways that can make a difference in the sustainable excellence in higher education.

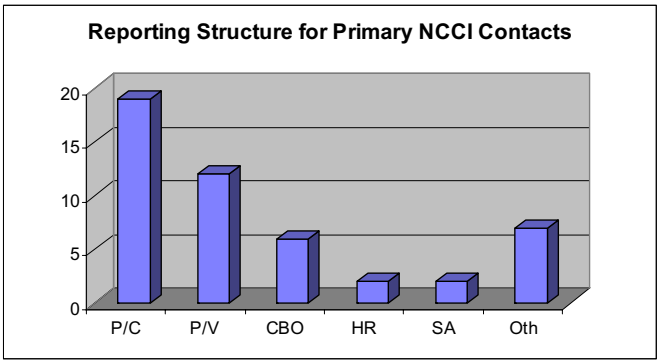
NCCI's Members

NCCI is a volunteer driven association. We have an executive committee consisting of 20 members from as many institutions, with an extra seat each for the American Council on Education and NACUBO. Many other NCCI members are actively engaged in our committees, which include Program (with subcommittees for each major event), Membership, Marketing, Partnerships, Communications/Web, and Finance. Our administrative functions are managed by our headquarters office based in West Hartford, Connecticut.









States by Region

East: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, D.C., West Virginia

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Puerto Rico

Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin

West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

International: Canada, Northern Ireland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates

Functional Areas of Members	Abbreviation	Count
President/Chancellor	P/C	19
Provost/VPAA	P/V	12
Chief Business Officer	CBO	6
Human Resources	HR	2
Student Affairs	SA	2
Other	Oth	7

NCCI is an invaluable link to other professionals working to improve higher education. Working with other NCCI members I have been able to learn lessons from their experience, discover innovations being implemented at other universities, and get invaluable advice. Being a change agent in higher education isn't easy. NCCI helps.

Bob Dale
Director for Continuous Improvement
University of Miami

NCCI's Current Members

American University
Ana G. Mendez University System
Babson College
Baylor University
Belmont University
Binghamton University
California Lutheran University
California State University System
Carleton University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Drexel University
East Carolina University
Eastern Michigan University
Ecole Polytechnique Federale De Lausanne
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Fort Hays State University
Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering
Gateway Technical College
Georgia State University
Iowa State University
Kent State University
Lake Superior College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Miami University
Michigan State University
Northern Kentucky University
Northwest Missouri State University
Ohio University
Pennsylvania State University
Purdue University Calumet
Raritan Valley Community College
Rhodes College
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Samford University
Sheffield Hallam University
South Carolina State University
Southern Oregon University
Stanford University
State University of New York at Buffalo
Texas State University-San Marcos
United Arab Emirates University
University of Alabama
University of Alaska Anchorage
University of Arkansas
University of California, Berkeley
University of Central Florida
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Cincinnati
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of New Mexico Main Campus
University of New Orleans
University of Southern California
University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
University of Toledo
University of Ulster, Northern Ireland
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Stout
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Villanova University
Virginia Tech
Wheaton College
Widener University
Wilkes University

When I look at NCCI-2006, with its impressive list of member institutions, and its rich and diverse array of programs and activities, it's very difficult to believe that this has all happened in just a little over seven years. One can only imagine what the next seven will bring!

Brent Ruben, Ph.D., Executive Director
Center for Organizational Development
and Leadership
Rutgers University
(Founder of NCCI)

NCCI has provided me with a network of people who share my commitment to excellence in higher education and who are actively engaged in promoting efficiency and productivity in institutions of higher education throughout the United States and abroad.

Ron Coley
Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Business
and Administrative Services
University of California, Berkeley

NCCI Members' Quality Awards and Publications

Awards

NCCI members are leaders in advancing excellence in higher education, as is evidenced by these awards and honors.

Belmont University
- RIT/USA Today Quality Cup for Belmont Central initiative – 1997
- RIT/USA Today Quality Cup Finalist for Enrollment Services Team Concept – 1999

Northwest Missouri State
- NIST Baldrige Pilot site visit – 1995
- NACUBO Award recipient – 1996
- Missouri Quality Award recipient 1997, 2001, 2005
- Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award site visit 2003, 2004, 2005
- AASCU Graduation Rate Outcomes Study Campus 2005

University of Central Oklahoma
- Oklahoma Quality Award for Commitment recipient – 2005.

University of Wisconsin-Madison
- RIT/USA Today Quality Cup finalist for Graduate Admissions process 1993

University of Wisconsin-Stout
- Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient – 2001. (First higher education institution recipient)

Books

Dew, J. R., and Nearing, M. M. *Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education.* Westport, CT: American Council on Education and Praeger Press, 2004.

Ruben, B. D. *What Leaders Need to Know: A Leadership Competencies Scorecard.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2006.

Ruben, B. D. *Excellence in Higher Education: An Integrative Approach to Assessment, Planning and Improvement in Colleges and Universities.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2005, 94 pp.

Ruben, B. D. *Excellence in Higher Education: Workbook and Scoring Guides.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2005, 119 pp.

Ruben, B. D. *Excellence in Higher Education: Facilitator's Guide.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2005.

Ruben, B. D. *Pursuing Excellence in Higher Education: Eight Fundamental Principles.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004, 420 pp.

Sorensen, C. W., Furst-Bowe, J. A. and Moen, D. M. *Quality and Performance Excellence in Higher Education: Baldrige on Campus*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2005, 233 pp.

Tromp, S., and Ruben, B. D., *Strategic Planning in Higher Education: A Leader's Guide,* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2004, 117 pp.

Tromp, S., and Ruben, B. D., *Facilitator's Guide to Strategic Planning in Higher Education: A Leader's Guide CD ROM,* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2004.

Chapters

Ruben, B. D., The Center for Organizational Development and Leadership at Rutgers University: A Case Study, "Organization Development and Change in Universities" A special issue of *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7(3), 2005, 368-395.

CD ROMs

Ruben, B. D. *The Leadership Style Preference Inventory (LSPI): Becoming a Strategic Leader.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2006.

Monographs

Dooris, M. J., Kelley, J. M. & Trainer, J. F. (Eds.). *Successful Strategic Planning*, New Directions for Institutional Research, no.123. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Dooris, M. J., Sandmeyer, L. E. *Planning for Improvement in the Academic Department,* Effective Practices for Academic Leaders. Herndon, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2006.

NCCI Members' Publications

Articles

Collie, S. L. & Taylor, A. L. "Improving Teaching Quality and The Learning Organization." *Tertiary Education and Management*, 2004, volume 10 no. 2.

Cotter, M. J. "Systems Thinking in a Knowledge Creating Organization." *Journal for Innovative Management*, 2(1), 15-30. Methuen, MA: GOAL/QPC, 1996.

Cotter, M. J. "Using Systems Thinking to Improve Education." *About Campus*, San Francisco, CA: American College Personnel Association and Jossey-Bass Inc., 9-14, 1998.

Cotter, M., Simmons, J., and Paris, K. A. "*Administering a Department*." Maryville, MO: Prescott Publishing, 1997.

Cunliff, E. "Connecting Systems Thinking and Action." *The Systems Thinker*, Pegasus Communications, Waltham, MA, March 2004, V. 15, N. 2.

Dew, J. R. "TRIZ: A Creative Breeze for Quality Professionals." *Quality Progress Magazine,* January 2006.

Furst-Bowe, J. A. "Profile: Malcolm Baldrige Application Summary." In J. Evans and W. Lindsay (Eds.), *The Management and Control of Quality,* Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western, 2004.

Herrold, C., Furst-Bowe, J. A. & Mooney, C. "Lernen durch Fragen (Learning through Questions)." *Qualitat and Zuverlassigkeit*, 6(5), 31-35, 2005.

Lake, E. "Course Development Cycle Time: A Framework for Continuous Process Improvement." *Journal of Innovative Higher Education*, Fall 2003, Volume 28, Number 1.

Lake, E. "Cost Reduction 101." *Quality Progress Magazine,* October 2003.

Lake, E. and Mogavero, M. A. "A Case Study of Process Improvement at a Pennsylvania University." *Quality Progress Magazine*, July 2000.

Paris, K. A. "Does it Pay to Plan?" *NCCI E-news*, 2006.

Paris, K. A., Ronca, J. M. and Stransky, E. N. "A Study of Strategic Planning on The UW-Madison Campus." *Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education*, University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, 2005.

Paris, K. A. "Useful Measures: Use a Mix of Measures." *Quality in Higher Education*, 7, April 1998.

Paris, K. A. and Cullen, M. J., Sr., "Technology-assisted Meetings." *DESIEN*. [electronic newsletter] Madison, WI: Instructional Communications System, University of Wisconsin-Extension, May 1998.

Paris, K. A. "Verbesserungen in einer Universitat." *Management & Qualitat*, 37-40, February 1998.

Paris, K. A. "Ten Suggestions for Helping a Group Achieve its Aim." *Quality in Higher Education*, 3, December 1977.

Paris, K. A. "Strategic Planning in the Framework of a Campus-wide Vision for the Future." *NCA Quarterly*, 71, 484-489, Spring 1997.

Paris, K. A. "Fewer Meetings, More Accomplished." *Quality in Higher Education,* 6, January 1997.

Paris, K. A. "Fast Cycle Improvement Increases Quality." *Quality in Higher Education,* 6, December 1996.

Paris, K. A. "Scanning and Beyond." *Quality in Higher Education,* 7-8, November 1996.

Paris, K. A. "The Future Is Now." *Quality in Higher Education,* 5-6, October 1996.

Paris, K. A. "Storytelling and Change." *Quality in Higher Education,* 5-6, September 1996.

Paris, K. A. "Implications of Systems Archetypes in Higher Education." *Quality in Higher Education,* 6,8, August 1996.

Paris, K. A. "We Act Like We Already Know Everything." *Quality in Higher Education,* 6-8, June 1996.

Paris, K. A. "Mixing Strategic Planning with Quality." *Quality in Higher Education,* 1-2, May 1996.

Ruben, B. D. and Sandmeyer, L. E. "Matchmaker, Matchmaker: NCCI's Role in Higher Education." *Business Officer,* 35-38, 2001.

Ruben, B. D., Contributors: Sorensen, C. W. and Moen, D. M. "Pursuing Excellence in Higher Education, Eight Fundamental Challenges." 202 - 215.

Sorensen, C. W., Furst-Bowe, J. A. and Moen, D. M. (Eds). *Quality and Performance Excellence in Higher Education.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing, 2005.

Sorensen, C., Furst-Bowe, J. A. & others. "University of Wisconsin-Stout 2001 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award: A Case Study." *Journal of Innovative Management,* 8(2), 41-78, 2002.

NCCI's Partners

NCCI is a "David" organization facing a "Goliath" opportunity. Partnerships are our leverage, and we have been privileged to be able to collaborate with major players.

NACUBO, the National Association for College and University Business Officers, helped launch NCCI in 1999 and provided an organizational foundation for the first few years until NCCI became independently incorporated in 2004. NCCI's annual conference is linked with NACUBO's each summer, providing members of each organization with the benefits of collaborative offerings. NACUBO has engaged NCCI members as presenters in their annual conferences and regional events. In addition, NCCI and NACUBO collaborate in offering webinars and developing publications and guides.

ACE, the American Council on Education, is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions. ACE recognizes the value and need for higher education to be more strategic and to operate effectively. ACE's strategic plan includes focus on "institutional effectiveness" and "leadership development." Toward these shared aims, ACE and NCCI have collaborated on numerous initiatives, including co-sponsoring pre-conferences and concurrent sessions at ACE annual meetings since 2004.

We have memorandums of understanding with both NACUBO and ACE, and they hold ex-officio seats on our Executive Council.

NCCI collaborates with a number of other associations and organizations, including the American Society for Quality, the Baldrige National Quality Program, and the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (a collaboration of the Big Ten universities, plus Chicago).

NCCI sponsors an event focused on collaboration. "Roundtable" is held in Washington, D.C. every two years. Each NCCI member institution is invited to send one member and a top leader. Leaders of higher education associations are invited as well. The focus of this event is on identifying potential collaborations to help address our common issues, opportunities, and approaches. Twenty-five institutions and twenty-three associations attended the most recent Roundtable. Roundtable 2006 will be held in Washington, D.C. on October 27.

Since higher education has come late to the game of institutional effectiveness, we find it is often useful to collaborate with corporations to learn leading-edge strategies and approaches. We then work to adapt those approaches to higher education's culture and needs. We have appreciated the generous sharing of ideas and approaches from a number of corporations, including GE, Cisco, Dow, IBM, and Glaxo SmithKlein.

Our institutions are finding it critical to operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness as they face the challenges of declining funding. NCCI is a valued partner for NACUBO in addressing these challenges

James E. Morley, Jr.
President and CEO, NACUBO (1996-2006)

Higher education institutions must confront challenges of diminishing state support, growing criticism, escalating regulatory burdens, and demands for accountability. To do that, our institutions need to plan strategically, improve programs and services, and turn ideas into action and results. NCCI provides an opportunity to build that expertise for our institutions nationally.

David Ward, President
American Council on Education

NCCI's Programs and Offerings

NCCI is committed to providing a series of programs and offerings in support of its mission to advance sustainable excellence in colleges and universities and to promote best practices across all academic and administrative functions.

NCCI Annual Programs:

Event	Offered	Location
NCCI's Annual Conference	July (immediately prior to NACUBO's annual meeting)	New Orleans, 2007 Chicago, 2008 Boston or Toronto, 2009 San Francisco, 2010
NCCI Sessions at ACE Annual Meeting	February. NCCI holds a meeting in conjunction with ACE's annual meeting and co-sponsors pre-conference workshops and/or concurrent sessions.	Washington, D.C., 2007
Best Practice Symposiums	Fall and Spring	Los Angeles, Spring 2007 Oklahoma, Fall 2007
NCCI Higher Education Roundtable	October in even years. The 2006 Roundtable will focus on major transformative change featuring successful case studies	Washington, D.C., 2006

Recent NCCI Programs:

Event	Topic	Selected Presenters/Speakers
Spring Conference at MIT March 2006	Transformations That Are Working in Higher Education	Executive Vice President at MIT Presenters from MIT, Northeastern University, Harvard Business School, and Olin College
NCCI Sessions at ACE Annual Meeting February 2006	Strategic Alliances and Partnerships in Higher Education	Chancellor, University of Maryland Presenters from MIT, University of Alaska Anchorage, Dow Chemical Co, Executive directors of consortiums: Committee on Institutional Cooperation (Big Ten Consortium), Five Colleges, Inc., The Boston Consortium for Higher Education

Other Offerings:

A Clearinghouse for Best Practice Case Studies – NCCI is becoming a clearinghouse of best practices in higher education. NCCI has links to continuous improvement efforts in over 70 universities. Case studies of major transformative change efforts in higher education are being captured for our Web site and events. These and other improvement efforts at member institutions, including presentations from our events, will be catalogued on the Web site so members can search for specific examples that meet their immediate interests and needs. Contact information will be provided to facilitate dynamic learning and collaboration across institutions. This special feature is offered to NCCI members.

Quality Resources – Members have access to articles, presentations from conferences, books, events, positions and other supportive resources listed on NCCI's Web site. Members also have access to reduced rates for books.

Networking – NCCI facilitates connections through meetings, events, conference call systems, and Web discussion features.

Career Center – Members can post related job openings via NCCI's Web site.

NCCI's Strategic Plan

"Advancing Excellence through Effective Organizational Practices"

Mission

NCCI advances sustainable excellence in higher education by promoting the practice and discipline of continuous improvement across all academic and administrative functions.

Vision

NCCI is widely recognized as the educational association of choice for professionals leading progressive improvement within their institutions of higher learning. It is known for its leadership in nurturing dialogue and disseminating knowledge about promising initiatives and proven practices in continuous improvement. NCCI is identified worldwide as the preeminent source of information about the evolution of excellence in higher education.

Values

- Continuous improvement
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Diversity of perspective
- Embracing the tripartite mission of higher education

Goals

- Build the capacity of our members to enable them to advance sustainable excellence.
- Enable members to be engaged
- Leverage NCCI mission through strategic partnerships.
- Create an operational structure that allows us to achieve our mission and exceed stakeholder expectations.

Action Plans and Implementation

NCCI's plan is not on a shelf. In support of this high level framework, we have an annual action planning system, with plans for each goal, a committee structure designed around our goals, and dynamic action follow up from every NCCI conference call and meeting. We are in the process of developing a performance measurement system.

The cost of education cannot continue to increase at a greater rate than the overall cost of living and the GDP. We must increase our educational productivity while improving the quality of the education we provide.

Paul Peercy, Dean
College of Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Colleges and universities today face the challenge of making fundamental change while hewing to their great traditions. NCCI is the kind of resource that can inform and shape difficult decisions and generate excitement and optimism about the transformation of higher education.

Robert H. Bruininks, President
University of Minnesota

The main focus of my work at MIT for the last decade has been to work primarily within central administration to develop and influence programs that strengthen partnerships with the academy in ways that advance our institutional mission of world-leading research and education. For a generalist like me, NCCI is the best organization I've found for networking, learning, and collaborating with other professionals across many disciplines whose core objective is continuous improvement.

Patricia A. Brady, Senior Project Director
Office of the Executive Vice President
MIT

Membership of the NCCI provides the University with access to a community of best practice academics and practitioners in the field of organisational excellence and continuous improvement. Benefits to the University have included, inter alia, access to resources, methodologies and diagnostic tools developed by members, informal consultancy and a rich source of contributors for workshops and conferences. It is an organisation which truly delivers on its mission whilst providing excellent value for money to its subscribers.

Professor Denise McAlister
Pro Vice-Chancellor
University of Ulster, Northern Ireland