Towards TQM at MCHE

International regulations require maritime training vendors to be quality certified. Efforts are already underway to certify CMS to ISO9001:2000. The trend in many countries is to seek quality certification for Government Offices and other agencies. How can the College exploit the quality movement to enhance efficiency and qualtiy of its services? Here is a primer of quality management.

Quality is often regarded as the highest or finest standard. It may refer to products or services. Quality in the College context can refer to both. Our students are products of the higher education and training system we manage and lead; and quality may refer to them as products of the system. But, since the College is mainly a service oriented institution, quality is more generally associated with the services we render to our customers, both internal and external. Internal customers include our colleagues who seek services of us. External customers are prospective students, parents and others who seek services such as advice and information of us.

Total quality management (TQM) is a term initially coined by the US Naval Air Systems Command to describe its Japanese style management approach to quality improvement. Since then, TQM has taken on many meanings. Simply put, it is a management approach to long-term success through customer satisfaction. TQM is based on the participation of all members of an organization in improving processes, products, services and the culture in which they work. The methods for implementing this approach are found in the teachings of such quality leaders as Philip B. Crosby, W. Edwards Deming, Armand V. Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa and Joseph M. Juran.

The ISO9001 management quality system has put a new life into TQM. Both are similar in its approach. The 2000 revision of ISO9000 series embodies most of the principles of TQM, namely, that quality can be managed and that it is a process. In TQM, the word total signifies that quality involves everyone, from the watcher to the dean, irrespective of their designation. Quality refers to the conformance to the requirements of the internal and external customers. TQM then is a process for managing quality. It is a continuous way of the institution; a philosophy of continuous improvement in everything we do.

ISO 9000 is a Quality System Management Standard. TQM is a philosophy of perpetual improvement. The ISO Quality Standard sets in place a system to deploy policy and verifiable objectives. An ISO implementation is a basis for a Total Quality Management implementation. Where there is an ISO system, about 75 percent of the steps are in place for TQM. The requirements for TQM can be considered ISO plus. The changes in 2000 revision of ISO9000 contain customer satisfaction and measurement requirements. In short, implementing both 1SO 9001 and TQM is being proactive concerning quality rather than reactive.

The first step for a centre or faculty to move towards TQM or even ISO9001 is to recognize the veracity of the TQM principles. Quality improvement can take place only if the centre/faculty community believes in these principles.

1. Quality can and must be managed.
2. Everyone has a customer and is a supplier.
3. Processes, not people are the problem.
4. Every employee is responsible for quality.
5. Problems must be prevented, not just fixed.
6. Quality must be measured.
7. Quality improvements must be continuous.
8. The quality standard is defect free.
9. Goals are based on requirements, not negotiated.
10. Life cycle costs, not front end costs.
11. Management must be involved and lead.
12. Plan and organize for quality improvement.

Quality educators have identified certain steps that they view as fundamental to the achievement of TQM. Some of these steps are as follows:

1. Pursue new strategic thinking.
2. Know your customers.
3. Set true customer requirements.
4. Concentrate on prevention, not correction.
5. Reduce chronic waste.
6. Pursue a continuous improvement strategy.
7. Use a structured methodology for process improvement.
8. Reduce variation.
9. Use a balanced approach.
10. Apply to all functions.

— *the Rector*