

McHenry County College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission via the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). This method of accreditation is focused upon continuous improvement and involves the constant evaluation of college processes. A variety of Action Teams across the campus determine areas for improvement, analyze data and best practices, and implement recommendations for improvement which are tested and engrafted. McHenry County College has just completed its first seven-year cycle of AQIP which included the submission of a Systems Portfolio that provided a detailed snapshot of MCC's programs and services for students and the community. After responding to the corresponding feedback from the Higher Learning Commission, a Quality Check-up was conducted in September, 2011, when two peer reviewers came to MCC for a three-day site visit. Based on the successful completion and documentation of all of our accomplishments, MCC received a letter of Reaffirmation of Accreditation on June 22, 2012.

McHenry County College (MCC) is focused on making “McHenry County College the leading community college in Illinois by focusing on excellence and student success.” This goal has been the driving force for the College over the past two years. Much has changed at MCC since the submission of a Systems Portfolio in November 2009 as the College now emphasizes excellence, quality improvement and comprehensive strategic planning more than ever before.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AT MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE

MCC has been an Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) institution since 2006. In November 2009, the College submitted its first [Systems Portfolio](#) and in February 2010, received the [Systems Appraisal Feedback Report](#). Six “Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies” were specifically outlined: Comprehensive Strategic Planning; Responding Proactively; Comprehensive Metrics, Performance Targets and Systematic Analyses; Leadership Development; Comparison Data; and Continuous Quality Infrastructure and Culture.

On September 28-30, 2011, Dr. Cecilia Wittmayer and Dr. Cathy Anderson completed MCC’s first Quality Checkup visit. Their report to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) stated that, “In the team’s judgment, McHenry County College presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to and schedule for the Quality Checkup visit provided ample opportunity for the review team to examine evidence provided in the Systems Portfolio. No additional clarification or verification is needed. McHenry (County College) complies with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.”

To date, MCC has implemented [56 Action Teams](#). Of those, nine action teams have been reported directly to the HLC:

- Clarify and Improve the Process of General Education Assessment (Fall 2006)
- Develop a Culture of Continuous Improvement (Fall 2006)
- Key Performance Indicator and Balanced Scorecard Development (Fall 2006)
- Curriculum Mapping (Spring 2009)
- Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan (Spring 2009)
- Enterprise Resource Planning (Spring 2009—project put on hold and re-launched Fall 2010)
- Implementing Priority Registration (Spring 2010)
- Student Success (started in Spring 2011)
- Planning for Employee Effectiveness and Success (started in Spring 2011)
- Planning and Measuring Institutional Effectiveness (started in Spring 2011)

MCC’s AQIP Steering Committee consists of members of the Executive Council, administration, faculty, staff, members-at-large as needed, and three ex officio members from Institutional Research, Institutional Effectiveness and the President’s Office.

INITIATIVES SINCE SYSTEMS APPRAISAL AND QUALITY CHECKUP

Educational Master Plan

The [Educational Master Plan](#) was approved by the Board of Trustees in August 2011. This plan was developed to provide direction to the development of programs, support services, and ultimately facilities to meet the higher educational needs of the district. The three areas of emphasis are: 1) increased access for district residents, 2) ensuring excellence in teaching and learning and, 3) cultivating a climate of

student success. This plan serves as the roadmap for the development of the Facility Master Plan, Technology Master Plan, and Fiscal Plan. The Educational Master Plan provides MCC's focus for "Helping Students Learn." Accomplishments in this category include:

a. Excellence in Teaching

An AQIP action team is focusing on the quality of instruction at MCC with the development of a clear definition of excellence in teaching and a faculty enrichment process that reflects those values. On April 26, 2012, MCC's Curriculum and Academic Policy Council (CAPC) approved the definition. Professional enrichment opportunities to enhance the four areas of expertise (subject matter, pedagogy, assessment, and professionalism) will be implemented via Faculty Professional Development Days, the New Faculty Orientation/tenure process, the Adjunct Faculty Orientation, and a stronger professional development web presence.

b. Focus on Student Success and Completion

An increased focus on student success, support and completion resulted in a restructuring of the Student Affairs Division. This was necessary to create three redefined clusters that align with the Educational Master Plan. The new structure includes more efficient student services, increased academic support and tracking, and expanded educational and student development and engagement. The clusters interface and will track quarterly student success, completion and support rates. This data will influence the future structure and support efforts for students.

c. High School Dual-Credit Programming

Through strong partnerships with nine area high schools, MCC has dramatically expanded its three different dual-credit programs to increase from 148 students in 2009 to 1,097 in 2012. The three options provide high school students with the opportunity to earn college credit and increase college readiness skills while attending high school. While it is too early to chart statistics for the current year, of the 118 students enrolled in "Partnerships for College and Career Success" in 2009, 80 (68%) returned to MCC for a college education over the next two years.

d. New Academic Programs

Since 2009, MCC has added a stackable culinary degree in Pastry, Culinary Management and an Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Management. Much of this was made possible through a partnership with Woodstock North High School that allowed use of their newly created space and allowed them to enroll high school students in MCC classes. Renovation at MCC is currently underway to reconfigure space to include a culinary lab on campus and expand on the strong success of this new academic program. An Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program is underway, and a weekend nursing program launched in January 2012 to meet demand. Robotics and Graphic Arts degree programs also have been added, plus a certificate in Medical Billing and Coding.

e. Expanding to Reach Residents in the Far Northwest Corner of Service Area

In an effort to increase access in the far northwest corner of McHenry County, MCC has developed an outreach site in Harvard, IL which will offer eight different classes beginning in the Fall 2012 semester. Residents will take high-demand classes, working toward their degree or certificate—all closer to home, saving time and transportation costs.

Facility Master Plan

In response to the direction of the Education Master Plan to meet the needs of the County, a Facility Master Plan establishes the educational facility space needed for the next 10, 20 and 40 years. The year-long development of the plan obtained public, business, legislative, faculty, board, and student input through focus groups and community-wide presentations. The final plan was presented and adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2012. Input from three AQIP action teams also contributed to the final

designs and information including Campus Signage, Room Usage and MCC's newly adopted Sustainability Strategic Plan.

Professional Development Strategic Plan

In support of the Educational Master Plan's focus on Excellence in Teaching and the College's focus on quality employees, a new Professional Development Strategic Plan was developed. This plan supports the mission of the College through a continuum of strategic professional enrichment opportunities for all faculty, staff and administrators. A strong component of leadership and organizational development is built in. The Professional Development team will use the strategic directions of the plan to design topic specific, year-long curriculums, workshops and courses. In addition, a satisfaction tool and data tracking venue will be used to improve and respond to needs and desires to meet individual employee development plans.

Revising Board Policy Manual

In June 2010, teams of MCC administrators began taking a careful look at the current *Board Policy Manual*. Although many of the policies and procedures within it have been updated, the last major revision was in 2007. Using AQIP principles, each section is benchmarked against other institutions and then rewritten to undergo attorney review before being presented to the Board for their input and final approval.

Community Engagement Efforts

Since 2009, MCC has proactively engaged the community by soliciting input on specific topics/programs to help with planning and development efforts. In 2009, MCC's community engagement effort (*MAP*) brought community members together various times for presentation and discussion. The feedback that resulted from this year-long effort informed the College's new strategic plan and direction. These community engagement efforts continue, during the facility master planning process, the visioning of a manufacturing training center, and the rebranding process. The College has also initiated a Community Outreach Core Team of individuals who will more proactively engage different groups of the community in discussion and feedback.

Brand Identity Initiative

Since early 2011, MCC has been focused on defining the MCC experience, or brand, in order to better describe what the College is committed to in a way that is relevant to the many groups served. Through the delivery of a new brand, the College will consistently use the same language and imagery to describe its strengths and uniqueness so that the community is more aware of how MCC is significant to their needs. After research conducted with employees, students, community members and business partners, three distinctive qualities were established to best define MCC. With the launch of its new brand in August 2012, MCC will demonstrate that anticipating change, building a community of learners, and delivering quality programs are at the heart of what makes this a leading community college in the nation.

Managing College Data

MCC currently is in the midst of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation which will allow for the collection, tracking and measurement of data that has not been accessible in the past. Information on student, employee and financial records and reports will be readily available to drive data-informed decision making and systematically stimulate continuous improvement.

Using Assessment Results to Drive Transformations

Faculty assess student learning relative to MCC's general education goals and record their results and the resulting transformations on a shared network drive. The Assessment Team, composed of faculty, administrators and staff, reviews these assessment reports and categorizes the transformations made in response to assessment results. The typology of transformations includes pedagogical change, curricular

change, modification of assessment tool, etc. In 2011, we began reviewing these results annually to ensure that transformations are meaningful and substantive.

Planning and Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In Spring 2011, in direct response to feedback we received on the Systems Portfolio, MCC launched an AQIP action team to develop operational performance metrics for the non-academic departments of the College. The work of the team is still ongoing and will be developing a tool or template for department leaders to enter their metrics into a central repository, which will allow them to access their metrics as needed and also allow institution-level reports to be run.

As the College moves forward, an emphasis is being placed on utilizing best practices from other institutions. On a more informal basis, employees are encouraged to interact with others through their own professional networking opportunities and conferences, and bring that learning back into the institution. The College also collects data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Personal Assessment of the Collegiate Environment (PACE), the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, and the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP). We are at the early stages of using this data to set performance targets and develop meaningful action plans.

Benchmarking Academic Performance Indicators

An AQIP action team was formed to develop academic performance indicators to measure student learning and success. After investigation and discussion, the team developed indicators in four distinct areas: College Readiness; Assessment Outcomes; Retention, Persistence, and Success; and Goal Completion and Graduation. The *Academic Performance Indicators* book has been developed by Institutional Research, and the College is working to use this information to create a dashboard that will drive data-based decision making regarding the academic enterprise and student learning at MCC.

Planning for Employee Effectiveness and Success

After careful consideration of System Appraisal results in preparation for the Strategy Forum in October 2010, the College focused on “Valuing People.” The topic of communication came up as an area for improvement, and new initiatives were implemented. A monthly Town Hall meeting held the day after Board meetings now encourages employees to meet with the president for information sharing and Q&A. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs regularly hosts an open Q&A session. The executive council team meets with the academic divisions and provides communication and answers questions. To promote the communication of expectations and drive accountability, a new annual employee performance evaluation tool and process has been developed by an AQIP action team with the primary goal of facilitating communication between supervisors and employees. Another action team is implementing an employee classification and compensation analysis to improve job descriptions, appropriate compensation levels and sufficient staffing levels.

THE FUTURE OF AQIP AT MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE

AQIP is now embraced at McHenry County College. A culture and infrastructure of continuous quality improvement is firmly in place. A series of well thought out initiatives and action projects are using metrics, performance targets, systematic analyses and comparison data to strategically plan for the future. The action project process has been streamlined to make AQIP “a way of life” as opposed to a list of action teams. Based on feedback from the Quality Checkup, a student and adjunct faculty member are joining the AQIP Steering Committee. A more comprehensive action project selection and scheduling process will place a strategic focus on priorities and address the opportunities for improvement in the College’s Systems Appraisal.

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

McHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE

February 25, 2010



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Elements of the Feedback Report	3
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	5
Using the Feedback Report	7
Critical Characteristics Analysis	8
Category Feedback	12
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	12
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	19
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	23
<i>Valuing People</i>	28
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	34
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	38
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	43
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	46
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight McHenry County College's (MCC) achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

MCC has made progress in collecting data on student learning in Category 1; however, the institution is still developing systems to analyze these data and use the results as the basis for making decisions that will improve learning and teaching. MCC has common learning objectives, an assessment committee, and assessment liaisons in place to make assessment of student learning an integral part of the college culture.

The institution would benefit from systematically defining overall goals relative to other distinctive objectives (Category 2), establishing performance measures, and collecting and evaluating data relative to these goals. Goals followed by an evaluation process would enable the institution to more concretely demonstrate its contribution to the community as well as the value it receives in return for the non-instructional programming it provides. For example, as part of the discussion of enhanced relationships within the community and region (2R4), MCC might have described the benefits that accrued to the institution after the National Safety Council named the McHenry County College Traffic Safety School as a Best Practice Award Winner.

MCC has not defined measures for each key stakeholder group and collected data on their satisfaction and engagement in Category 3. It appears that there may not be a clear understanding of all the stakeholder groups important to the institution beyond students, nor are there measures in place. In response to the improvement questions, the portfolio describes additional programs but does not address how the culture and infrastructure help to identify, prioritize, and improve processes.

MCC provides very little longitudinal or comparative data relative to employee satisfaction and valuing people. Additionally, MCC does not discuss how processes associated with valuing people are measured, evaluated, or improved. The position of Vice President of Human Resources has been vacant for over five years and the institution may benefit from a review of the credentials and skills required for this position as well as the process currently being used to fill it.

It is difficult to adequately assess results in Category 5, Leading and Communicating because of a lack of performance data; however, it is clear that the College has numerous venues for formal and informal communication within the organization and the community. MCC has started to gather data (such as the PACE survey results) to measure, compare, and improve its efforts. The College has an opportunity to expand leadership through additional training and development and through moving decision-making further throughout organizational levels. Human resource planning, especially leadership succession, is a priority for the College, and reviewing best practices may give MCC an opportunity to adapt or adopt models that are appropriate to its unique culture and goals as a high performance organization.

MCC should consider establishing additional effectiveness and efficiency measures of key support processes (Category 6), and collect and analyze these results to better evaluate performance and optimize resource allocation.

The lack of performance measures noted throughout the portfolio is most evident Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness. Although in the Overview it was stated that a balanced scorecard has recently been developed, it is not mentioned further in the portfolio, indicating that the scorecard is not yet deployed and may not be integrated. Given the necessity of measuring performance, MCC is encouraged to address this lack of measurement data and measurement system as a priority. Much work is still needed relative to this category in driving institutional performance.

The strategic planning process (Category 8), scheduled for 2010 completion, could be a watershed experience for McHenry County College in its efforts to establish a collaborative culture of continuous improvement and high performance. The development of a single, over-arching planning process with intended results that link, inform, support, and resource all planning processes and plans will prove a benefit to the institution. The new process should be comprehensive, inclusive, conducted efficiently within a concise timeframe, and result in strategic direction with corresponding action plans, resources, and an infrastructure to support alignment with and the achievement of the mission, vision and values.

MCC understands its role in the community and the need to build and maintain strong relationships to fulfill the mission and goals as described in Category 9; however, there is significant opportunity for MCC to put more systematic processes in place with

performance goals, metrics of performance to guide improvements, and comparison with other institutions. Such processes will ensure that the investment in building and maintaining collaborative relationships is effective and that these relationships support the institution's on-going and long-term interests.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for McHenry County College are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

ELEMENTS OF McHenry County College's FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary: Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality

characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Critical Characteristics: Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that McHenry County College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the Criteria will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist MCC in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation

that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that MCC will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

Comprehensive Strategic Planning. While MCC is currently completing a planning cycle that started in 2008, it would benefit from demonstrating greater urgency about strategic planning. A comprehensive planning process that is clearly understood can provide a clear blueprint for both the strategic and annual planning processes. The process should show timelines and interconnections between the various plans (annual, technology, human resources, budget, etc.). Identifying goals, objectives, action plans, measurable targets, and comparisons for the plan will help ensure achievement of strategic objectives.

Responding Proactively. MCC is responsive when ideas are brought forward such as by staff, the faculty, and the community, but in a number of categories does not have systematic processes in place to proactively identify needs and address opportunities. Being more proactive may allow MCC to be more innovative and make greater progress towards realizing its vision.

Comprehensive metrics, performance targets, and systematic analyses. There are significant opportunities for MCC to develop more comprehensive metrics of process performance including both effectiveness and efficiency metrics that provide leading information and do not rely solely on lagging perceptual data. Currently the few objective measures of performance consist of activity-based count data that do not provide information about the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Additionally, establishing specific performance targets for all key areas may enhance MCC's ability to demonstrate to stakeholders that its mission and goals are being met. Further, the College needs to concentrate on more *systematic* analyses of data at all levels (institutional, program, and course) and align items such as budget with this data analysis. In so doing, MCC can more quickly become the high performance organization it strives to be.

Leadership Development. As an organization framing itself as continuously improving, MCC can benefit by expanding decision-making authority throughout the teams,

committees, departments, and levels. Doing so will enhance the leadership skills of other staff beyond senior leadership. In addition, a focused effort on leadership development and the establishment of a succession planning process and plan will position MCC to develop leadership capability and capacity and enable it to weather leadership gaps in the future. Creating interim appointments for vacant top administrative positions and ultimately filling these is also essential for maintaining solid academic programs. Addressing these leadership challenges can improve MCC's ability to communicate stability of leadership to stakeholders.

Comparison Data. MCC's evaluation processes can be enhanced with additional external comparative data sources. Use of external comparative data helps ensure that continuous improvement is not strictly inward looking and takes advantage of the success of other organizations with similar processes. McHenry can also take advantage of its participation with peer AQIP institutions and membership in organizations such as the League for Innovation to explore benchmarking opportunities.

Continuous Quality Infrastructure and Culture. McHenry has an opportunity to develop the continuous quality infrastructure to ensure the broadest participation and to communicate how all the pieces of continuous improvement align. Documented processes, measurement and assessment tools, and identification of goals based on student and stakeholder requirements can build MCC's continuous improvement environment. Further development and full deployment of the positive quality mechanisms already in place (i.e. assessment liaisons, Action Project teams) can enhance the culture of continuous improvement.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of MCC, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes MCC

distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a McHenry County College is a public, comprehensive community college located in the Northeastern part of Illinois between Chicago and Milwaukee, primarily in McHenry County, and comprising 600 square miles.
- O1b The main campus of 169 acres is on Crystal Lake and consists of five interconnected buildings of classrooms, computer and learning laboratories, offices, cafeteria, library, bookstore, Children's Learning Center, gymnasium, Fire Center, wetlands, nature area, garden, athletic fields, and parking areas. The Shah Center is a satellite campus located ten miles from the main campus. It is used for non-credit activities such as corporate training, small business development, and community outreach.
- O1c MCC is governed by seven member locally-elected board, including one student member. The president reports to the board.
- O1d The population in the district has increased 22.5% since 2000, with a population of 318,641 projected to grow to nearly half a million in 2030. Eleven percent of residents are Hispanic, the fastest growing segment of the population. Much of the district is used for agriculture with increasing portions used for urban, residential, commercial, and service. Equalized Assessed Value has doubled in the last decade. Unemployment peaked in Jun 2009 at 10.9% but there is a projected increase of more than 63,000 jobs and 68,000 more houses by 2030.
- O1e The vision is to be "The community's first choice for a lifetime of learning." The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community's educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; address the community's workforce development needs.

- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O1g General Education Goals were adopted in 2007 are critical thinking, information literacy, effective communications, ethical awareness, and technological literacy.
- O2a Lifelong Learning is supported throughout the county with Kids and College, Continuing Education, Retired Adults Program (RAP), Trips & Tours, and Adult Education.
- O2b Workforce Development is supported by the Center for Corporate Training, the grant-funded Illinois Small Business Development Center, and short, -term, non-credit programs.
- O2c Community Outreach is supported by Traffic Safety School; Parents, Children, & Divorce; the MCC Conference Center; and the Lou Marchi Recycling Institute.
- O3a Current students intending to transfer require and expect preparation for future education, ability to transfer credits, variety of course offerings, convenient location, and affordability (Table O.2). Students preparing for current or future jobs require skills leading to employment, variety of programs, convenient location, and affordability (Table O.2).
- O3b Other stakeholders are Alumni, Board, business and industry, community, employers, local k-12 districts, and other colleges and universities (Table O.3). Their requirements and expectations include opportunities to remain connected, lifelong learning, fiscal responsibility, adherence to policy, customized training, educated and skilled workforce, affordable access, transfer and articulation agreements, and students prepared for future learning.
- O3c Primary competitors are Columbia College - Missouri, College of Lake Country, DeVry University, Elgin Community College, First Institute, Harper College, Northern Illinois University, and Webster University.
- O4a There are 650 full- and part-time employees and three collective bargaining units. The distribution of employees is depicted in Tables O.4 and O.5. There are 310 full-time and 342 part-time employees; 105 of the 354 faculty are full-time. Sixteen of these have doctorates, 80 Masters, 5 Bachelors, 1 Associate, and 2 have no degree.

- O5a The College Planning Model (Figure O.5) has at its center the stakeholders, surrounded by the Illinois Commitment developed by the Illinois Department of Education. The strategic plan is developed every few years (last in 2005) and aligns with the Mission, Vision, and Goals. Each department is responsible for developing plans that align to the strategic plan.
- O5b Free Adult Education classes are available and students with a learning or physical disability are supported through the Special Needs program. Tutoring is available through the Sage Learning Centers and Development labs free of charge. Career counseling is available to the entire community and professional counseling services are available to students facing personal or psychological challenges.
- O5c The Friends of MCC Foundation provides financial support in areas that emerge through the strategic planning process and scholarships to students both on merit and financial need. Fundraising goals emphasize technology, professional development, and visual and performing arts.
- O6a Cost containment and building a fund balance align support goals to mission and values.
- O7a Data collection and analysis based on requirements of Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), MCC's Program Review process, and Action Project team and employee requests.
- O7b A manual Balanced Scorecard with KPIs has recently been developed. The college is currently implementing ERP.
- O8a Key challenges include: Increased enrollment putting pressure on high-demand laboratory science classes and other services such as parking; lack of funding for capital improvements and declining state funding; strict adherence to storm-water ordinance for any new construction; and, significant turnover due to early retirement incentives resulting in fewer than half of administrators in position for more than a year. The president and one of the three VPs are interim; one VP position is vacant.
- O9a Key partnerships are identified in Table O6 and include high schools, four-year colleges and universities, other community colleges, workforce investment board, County Economic Development Corporation, County Workforce Center, local businesses and industries, community agencies, Advisory Committees, and Friends of MCC Foundation.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these “strengths and opportunities” sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

O1a McHenry County College is a public, comprehensive community college located in the Northeastern part of Illinois between Chicago and Milwaukee, primarily in McHenry County, and comprising 600 square miles.

- O1e The vision is to be “The community’s first choice for a lifetime of learning.” The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community’s educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community’s workforce development needs; O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O1g General Education Goals were adopted in 2007: critical thinking, information literacy, effective communications, ethical awareness, technological literacy.
- O5b Free Adult Education classes are available and students with a learning or physical disability are supported through the Special Needs program. Tutoring is available through the Sage Learning Centers and Development labs free of charge. Career counseling is available to the entire community and professional counseling services are available to students facing personal or psychological challenges.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	S	New and broader inter-disciplinary general education goals (Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Effective Communication, Ethical Awareness and Technological Literacy) were developed in Fall 2007 using an inclusive, iterative review process led by the Curriculum Promotion and Review Committee (CP&R) and approved by the Curriculum and Academic Policy Council (CAPC). These new goals, intended to be reviewed every three years, replaced an earlier set of twelve goals that represented discipline-specific silos. The CP&R

- Committee is cross-functional, comprised of faculty, Executive Dean, and representatives from student services.
- 1P2 S Program learning objectives are determined by faculty following a collaborative input-driven process that involves external experts (advisory committees, regulatory association information) and internal staff (deans, divisional Assessment Liaisons, other faculty). Involvement of CAPC, including its review of measurable program and course objectives, ensures the alignment of learning objectives with general education goals. For occupational and technical disciplines, relevant professional regulatory agency input has been considered. The learning objectives described in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) are reviewed to ensure course transferability. Assessment liaisons work with program faculty, department chairs and deans to help faculty annually review assessment data. All new courses go through an internal and external review process, which also focuses on course learning objectives.
- 1P3 S Faculty consider student interest and demand, student learning needs, and input from advisory committees and community members when they develop new programs and courses. The course development process includes an intensive internal review before the proposal is forwarded to the Illinois Community College Board for review and approval. The program development process includes a similar review process but also requires more thorough documentation, including a feasibility analysis and a curriculum quality and cost analysis.
- 1P4 O Although there is a process in place to design and approve new programs and courses, the process is more reactive than proactive in addressing student career goals and the realities of the employment market. A more proactive approach would ensure that MCC's offerings are competitive with other institutions.
- 1P5 S Discipline faculty determine course and program prerequisites as part of the curriculum development process with subsequent approval required from the Executive Dean, CD&R, CAPC, and the Vice President of

Academic and Student Affairs. Inputs used in this determination include state regulations, prerequisites of equivalent courses at other institutions, successful course completion rates, and licensure and regulatory requirements.

- 1P6 S A variety of methods are used to communicate required preparation, learning, and development objectives to students including the college catalog, course schedules, and academic advising. The system prevents students from registering for courses for which they are not qualified. Course learning objectives are included in the standardized course syllabus, given to all students at the beginning of each course.
- 1P7 S MCC provides students with a variety of career exploration options such as individual counseling and advising through the Advising and Transfer Center or the Counseling Department, a transferable elective course on career decision making, student orientation, and a one-credit "College Experience" course.
- 1P8 S As an open-admissions institution, MCC provides comprehensive support for underprepared students. Placement scores identify students who need pre-college coursework in mathematics, English, reading, and computers. Free tutoring services on a drop-in or appointment basis are provided at the Sage Learning Center, which also provides a variety of tutoring options, small group possibilities, and technology-based learning assistance. Additionally, the College offers ABE, ASE, and ESL adult programs.
- 1P9 O While the Counseling Department offers opportunities for students to explore their own learning styles and faculty are encouraged to use Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT) for daily course feedback, how this information is used and how faculty are trained and encouraged to address different learning styles in the classroom is not addressed.
- 1P10 S High school students can enroll in MCC for college credits through dual enrollment and Running Start programs. Adult students are provided additional support through an Academy for High Performance, Children's

Learning Center childcare, Career Services, and an Adult Recruiter. The Special Needs Department provides services to students with learning, physical, or psychological disabilities or other barriers to learning by providing tutoring, disability accommodations, and assistive equipment and technology.

- 1P11 S Expectations for effective teaching and learning are defined and communicated in several ways. Faculty are evaluated annually in a comprehensive process that includes class visits and a review of student evaluations. MCC also provides a range of professional development options, including faculty action plans that highlight the faculty member's goals for instruction, Teaching Squares that facilitate peer exchange of ideas and strategies, and new faculty mentor programs that help promote high expectations for teaching. The tenure process and teaching awards are also designed to recognize and reward excellence in the classroom.
- 1P12 S MCC offers courses in multiple formats to accommodate various schedules, such as 16 and 8-week segments, day and evening, Monday through Friday, and during the day on Saturday. Courses are offered face-to-face, online, hybrid and as telecourses. MCC uses the ANGEL online learning management system. Additionally, MCC offers learning communities - a unique blended course experience. .
- 1P13, 1P14a S The Illinois Community College Board requires a program review every five years. This process is used by MCC to evaluate whether programs are up to date and effective or may need to be discontinued. The VP of Academic Affairs signs off on the program review prior to submission to the state.
- 1P13, 1P14b O Courses are also reviewed only every five years and it is not clear how the institution has determined that following this frequency for courses as well as programs provides a timely review to ensure course relevance and currency.
- 1P15 S MCC uses AccuTrack software to track demand for tutors and academic advising and adjusts resources accordingly. The Testing Center, Library,

and Computer Labs also monitor student activity to adjust availability of services. Annual student surveys are conducted to determine satisfaction with services. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement is conducted every three years. Student services must also undergo a review every five years.

- 1P16 O It is not clear that MCC has developed a systematic process that ensures alignment of co-curricular goals with curricular learning objectives. Aligning co-curricular goals with educational goals would help engage students in attaining their overall educational objectives.
- 1P17 S MCC has systems in place to determine that students have met requisite learning outcomes specific to general education requirements (e.g. pre- and post-Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency tests plus the use of data on student success rates at transfer institutions). In 2009, the National Occupancy Competency Testing Student Assessment was piloted to measure proficiency and job readiness in the Career and Technical Education Programs.
- 1P18 S The assessment team (made up of assessment liaisons from each division) provides leadership to faculty as they develop course and program learning objectives and student assessments. Faculty review course-level assessment data annually to identify opportunities for improvement. The assessment team also implemented the current general education assessment process.
- 1R1a S MCC uses a variety of measures to track student learning and development. These multiple measures indicate that the College is engaged in collecting student learning outcome assessment.
- 1R1b O The portfolio does not provide details on the comparative analysis of student learning measures or include specifics on general education assessment and program assessment, other than to list the CAAP exam and student GPA's at transfer institutions.
- 1R2 S In general, MCC students "succeed" at a higher rate than students at other Illinois community colleges. CAAP results from Spring 2007 through

Fall 2008 show that MCC students score at or slightly above the national mean in Writing, Math, Reading, and Critical Thinking (Table 1.2). Results associated with first-time, full-time students (graduated, transferred, or still enrolled after three years) show consistent improvement from the Fall 2001 through the Fall 2005 cohort group. Fall 2005 results indicate that 30% of MCC students completed a degree or certificate, compared with 24% statewide; 30% transferred versus 31% statewide.

- 1R3 O MCC has an opportunity to develop a more complete set of measures across the curriculum to analyze program performance. Use of NOCTI exams that were piloted as an end-of-program assessment tool for the administrative office management program in spring 2009 could be extended to other programs.
- 1R4 S MCC tracks the cumulative GPA of students who transfer to 4-year colleges and universities in Illinois. Students who complete occupational programs are surveyed to measure their satisfaction with the program and their ability to find employment. That data indicates that 65% of occupational program graduates are employed full-time with another 20% employed part-time.
- 1R5a S The Sage Learning Center's Spring 2008 statistics indicate that 71% or more of students who received tutoring help at the center succeeded in subsequent college-level math, 81% succeeded in English, and 96% succeeded in chemistry. These rates are higher than the rates of success for all students taking the courses.
- 1R5b O While the portfolio includes the Sage Learning Center data noted above and user ratings for the library, no results are provided for advising, laboratory, or other support services. Relative to the library data, Wi-Fi and e-texts are two of the lowest rated areas for the library. Since these services support the online and hybrid offerings that MCC indicates are important to non-traditional and working students, MCC may want to carefully examine these results.

- 1R6 S Student performance compares favorably with the results of other higher education organizations relative to performance on the CAAP Exam, completion and transfer rates, success at transfer institutions and performance on licensure exams. More students graduate within three years than at ICCB institutions (80.7% compared to 74.8% for the Fall 2005 cohort) (Table 1.1). Students appear to be as successful as other students at four year universities (Table 1.5). Students score near state averages in the NOCTI test (Table 1.3, although below national and above the state average for the Firefighter II Exam (Table 1.4).
- 111a S New general education learning outcomes were established in Fall 2007 and a process for assessment of student performance relative to those goals is now in place. MCC has piloted the NOCTI as an end-of-program assessment tool in administrative office management and plans to use the tool in other occupational programs in the future. The institution has also added a computer lab component to its developmental math courses and will be implementing similar software for chemistry.
- 111b O MCC has an opportunity to use student learning outcome results in a more systemic and comprehensive manner that will allow it to proactively improve its courses and programs.
- 112 O MCC does not discuss the impact that culture and infrastructure have on selecting processes for improvement and/or on setting targets for those improvements, other than to indicate that the CAPC structure provides this culture and infrastructure for the institution. No information is provided on the ways in which CAPC identifies process performance gaps and prioritizes these for improvement. MCC is in the beginning stages of its continuous improvement journey.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill

other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1e The vision is to be "The community's first choice for a lifetime of learning." The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community's educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community's workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O2a Lifelong Learning is supported throughout the county with Kids and College, Continuing Education, Retired Adults Program (RAP), Trips & Tours, and Adult Education.
- O2b Workforce Development is supported by the Center for Corporate Training, the grant-funded Illinois Small Business Development Center, and short-term, non-credit programs.
- O2c Community Outreach is supported by Traffic Safety School; Parents, Children, & Divorce; the MCC Conference Center; and the Lou Marchi Recycling Institute.
- O3b Other stakeholders are Alumni, Board, business and industry, community, employers, local k-12 districts, and other colleges and universities (Table O.3). Their requirements and expectations include opportunities to remain connected, lifelong learning, fiscal

responsibility, adherence to policy, customized training, educated and skilled workforce, affordable access, transfer and articulation agreements, and students prepared for future learning.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as McHenry’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

Item	S/O	Comment
2P1	O	MCC’s mission and goals serve as the primary framework for other distinctive objectives, but the portfolio does not indicate how non-instructional processes (such as athletics, research, community enrichment, etc.) are designed and operated relative to the stakeholder groups. Establishing a process to determine how these non-instructional processes are designed, operated, evaluated, analyzed and improved is an opportunity for MCC.
2P2a	S	MCC employs a variety of feedback mechanisms to identify major non-instructional objectives, including an annual needs assessment, committee and council input, and partnerships with regulating agencies, social service agencies, and court systems. Employees are encouraged to actively participate in community advisory boards and committees (the WIA Board, the Economic Development Committee, various advisory committees, the Joint Advisory Council, the Area Planning Council, and the Judicial Circuit Court) and are empowered to set major non-instructional objectives.
2P2b	O	There is no description of a process for establishing non-instructional objectives and or the prioritization process used to select among and between the competing objectives that might be proposed. The narrative also does not clearly articulate how employee involvement translates into measureable, distinctive objectives for the institution.
2P3	O	The portfolio does not describe ways in which the college’s expectations or objectives are communicated. Instead, it focuses on the communication tools that MCC uses to advertise / announce its

- programming efforts. The institution may want to consider ways in which it can use these same communication vehicles to communicate the expectations and objectives of the institution, in addition to announcing its programming efforts.
- 2P4 O The College uses satisfaction survey data, enrollment data, participation rates, and feedback from advisory councils to measure the public's perception of MCC's outreach efforts, but these feedback tools may not be sufficient to measure the appropriateness and value of other distinctive objectives. The data provided does not address the appropriateness of these objectives, only the programming offered.
- 2P5 S The institution uses its planning and budgeting processes to identify, review and fund programming requests.
- 2P6 O The portfolio does not indicate how the other distinctive objectives and the processes that support those objectives are developed and assessed or how objectives are adjusted as new needs are identified.
- 2R1 O MCC indicates that it uses satisfaction survey data, enrollment data, participation rates, and feedback from advisory councils to measure the success of its programming efforts. However, these measures generally focus on non-credit, instructional programming rather than on the efficacy of the institution's other distinctive objectives. The narrative also does not include a description of any systematic processes for analyzing data and adjusting programming efforts or institutional objectives as a result of that analysis.
- 2R2 S Several measures indicate positive results: MCC serves 23 of the area's 25 largest employers in some capacity; 90% of training participants were satisfied with the training they received and 94% indicated that the material was relevant to their jobs; the McHenry County College Traffic Safety School was awarded a Best Practice Award in 2008; the percent of students completing adult basic education is above the federal target level in three areas; the number of dollars raised by Friends of the MCC Foundation has increased over prior years' amounts and was over \$1

million for 2008-2009; and in 2009, over \$67,000 in scholarships was awarded.

- 2R3 O MCC provides very limited comparable data and recognizes this as an opportunity for improvement. Comparative data from peer institutions and/or from institutions using the same or similar survey instruments would enhance MCC's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its programming efforts and the efficacy of its other distinctive objectives
- 2R4 O Although programming efforts align with the mission and help enhance the institution's image in the community, the narrative does not include a discussion of performance results for processes and the impact those performance results have on institutional strength and/or on enhanced relationships with communities and external constituents.
- 2I1-2I2 O Improvements in this category include the creation of a welding boot camp and a Shifting Gears program to assist participants in their transition to employment. While MCC has demonstrated that it is responsive to community needs, it does not describe the institutional planning and/or evaluation that leads to programming change, other than to indicate that the success of previous programming led to implementation of additional programming. The portfolio does not discuss the ways in which MCC evaluates processes (e.g., the process used to systematically gather feedback from external constituencies and to evaluate new programming options). It also does not discuss the ways in which the culture and infrastructure help it to identify processes that need improvement and to set targets for improved performance relative to its other distinctive objectives.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and

stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1d The population in the district has increased 22.5 percent since 2000, with a population of 318,641 projected to grow to nearly half a million in 2030. Eleven percent of residents are Hispanic, the fastest growing segment of the population. Much of the district is agricultural with increasing portions used for urban, residential, commercial, and service. Equalized Assessed Value has doubled in the last decade. Unemployment peaked in June 2009 at 10.9% but there is a projected increase of more than 63,000 jobs and 68,000 more houses by 2030.
- O3a Current students intending to transfer require and expect preparation for future education, ability to transfer credits, variety of course offerings, convenient location, and affordability. Students preparing for current or future jobs require skills leading to employment, variety of programs, convenient location, and affordability (Table O.2).
- O3b Other stakeholders are Alumni, Board, business and industry, community, employers, local k-12 districts, and other colleges and universities (Table O.3). Their requirements and expectations include opportunities to remain connected, lifelong learning, fiscal responsibility, adherence to policy, customized training, educated and skilled workforce, affordable access, transfer and articulation agreements, and students prepared for future learning.
- O3c Primary competitors are Columbia College - Missouri, College of Lake Country, DeVry University, Elgin Community College, First Institute, Harper College, Northern Illinois University, and Webster University.
- O9a Key partnerships are identified in Table O6 and include high schools, four-year colleges and universities, other community colleges, workforce investment board, County

Economic Development Corporation, County Workforce Center, local businesses and industries, community agencies, Advisory Committees, and Friends of MCC Foundation.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1a	S	MCC generates a “10 th Day Enrollment Report” that includes data on current student demographics and educational objectives. This report is distributed to all employees via an employee newsletter and is posted on the Intranet site.
3P1b	O	MCC collects profiles of various student groups, tracking demographic changes, enrollment patterns, and educational objectives. While these data are defined, it is unclear how the information is systematically managed and prioritized for action. If the College can incorporate analyses into planning processes, more effective actions may be taken.
3P2	S	Relationship building begins with recruiting in high schools twice a year, a High School Plus program (dual enrollment), open houses, and night for parents and prospective students. During the enrollment process, new students participate in two orientation sessions, a one-credit College Experience course, success planning for at-risk students, Student Life Welcome Week, and student organization fair and cross-cultural events. Two departments--Student Life and Multicultural programs--sponsor activities. The College offers an array of programs that foster relationships.
3P2b	O	While many activities are provided to engage and build relationships with traditional students, it is not clear what efforts are focused on other students. For instance, an online orientation is available for the online student, but beyond this, it is not clear whether there are processes to build relationships with these students. This may be particularly important given the level of dissatisfaction with the online orientation (Figure 3.6). In addition, it is not clear what modifications are made to the standard

relationship-building approaches regarding the growing population of diverse students, particularly the 78% increase in Hispanic students and the 220% increase in non-resident alien students who may have English language challenges. The College has an opportunity to consider the active recruitment, enrollment, and retention of diverse adult students, in addition to high school students.

- 3P3-P4 S MCC recently launched a community engagement effort to identify opportunities to update its Strategic Plan; data have been collected and follow-up focus groups and one-on-one interviews are planned. In addition to this recent endeavor, recruiting staff attend monthly meetings with all Directors of Guidance and the College hosts a biennial information sharing breakfast, employs a full-time articulation and transfer coordinator, and utilizes advisory committees for each occupational area. Finally, many faculty and staff serve on various community committees.
- 3P5b O While the College uses feedback from enrolled students to identify new programs for development, there is no evidence of a systematic and proactive process to target new stakeholder groups.
- 3P6a S MCC manages complaints about grades and students through a formal grade appeals process, misconduct policy, Conduct Review Committee, as well as through informal channels to which the administration responds.
- 3P6b O MCC describes a process by which students can file complaints associated with grades and student misconduct. It is not clear, however, how this information is analyzed and the results shared. Additionally, no process is described for managing other complaints from students, such as complaints regarding harassment by non-students, unsatisfactory food services, parking shortages, campus facilities, etc. Without a comprehensive complaint management process that collects, aggregates, analyzes, and responds to complaints, the College may not become aware of dis-satisfiers and will be unable to address these issues systemically.

- 3R1b O Students are surveyed for their engagement every three years, and enrollment and retention information is used as a proxy for satisfaction, but there do not appear to be any measures of satisfaction of other key stakeholders, important to fulfillment of the college's mission and vision. Further, it is not clear how the institution has determined that student engagement results every three years is frequent enough to identify and address emerging issues prior to the next survey period. While MCC reports satisfaction results for occupational graduates, the College has an opportunity to expand measuring satisfaction to other stakeholders such as employers, transfer students, and the community.
- 3R2 O The 2007 CCSSE results show that MCC students are less satisfied than the cohort in 9 of the 11 areas. The College has an opportunity to explore reasons for the scores and address the concerns.
- 3R3 O MCC does not provide longitudinal data for CCSSE results on building relationships and does not discuss what it has done to improve results. MCC ratings are generally below those of the CCSSE cohort, but it does not provide any information on statistical significance. It reports persistence data for Fall 2006, Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 in Table 3.4. However, it does not include any discussion of the drop in persistence rates over those three years or the drop in retention rates over that same time period.
- 3R4 O No results are provided for stakeholder satisfaction or for building relationships with stakeholders. The College has an opportunity to collect and examine data related to other stakeholder satisfaction and performance results, possibly through the strategic planning processes currently underway, including the community survey.
- 3R5 O The College enrolls a significant percentage of high school graduates and uses these numbers as a performance results. However, no comparisons are provided to other institutions, nor are there results for other than student stakeholder groups. The College has an opportunity to compare data regarding the success of its high school enrollees to the record at

- other institutions. This means of assessing performance could inform its planning processes.
- 3R6 O The portfolio does not provide performance results relative to other comparison groups and does not provide results of the effectiveness of processes for measuring and understanding student and other stakeholder needs. For example, it does not include a discussion of the methods used to collect performance data and how those methods might have changed over time because of data collection issues, etc.
- 3I1 S MCC has instituted three improvements to strengthen relationships with students: a Foundations of Excellence program, implementation of a required 1-credit college experience course for all first-time/full-time students, and a “just-in-time” follow up orientation session the week before classes start. It has also launched a formal community engagement project to solicit input and feedback from the community, informing the next strategic plan.
- 3I2 O The College recognizes that it has an opportunity to improve processes as measured by the CCSSE and to make other improvements that result in systematic and comprehensive processes and positive results for students and other stakeholders. It also recognizes that the culture and infrastructure provide an opportunity for similar improvements and is using the strategic planning process as a basis for establishing a culture of continuous improvement throughout MCC.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution’s commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation

factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1e The vision is to be “The community’s first choice for a lifetime of learning.” The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community’s educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community’s workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O4a There are 650 full- and part-time employees and three collective bargaining units. The distribution of employees is depicted in Tables O.4 and O.5. There are 310 full-time and 342 part-time employees; 105 of the 354 faculty are full-time. Sixteen of these have doctorates, 80 Masters, 5 Bachelors, 1 Associate, and 2 have no degree.
- O8a Key challenges include: Increased enrollment putting pressure on high-demand laboratory science classes and other services such as parking; lack of funding for capital improvements and declining state funding; strict adherence to storm-water ordinance for any new construction; and, significant turnover due to early retirement incentives resulting in fewer than half of administrators in position for more than a year. The president and one of the three VPs are interim; one VP position is vacant.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4, Valuing People.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1	S	The specific credentials, skills, and values required for all faculty, staff, and administrators are identified through position descriptions. Faculty Deans and Department Chairs identify the skills and credentials required for faculty positions while Departmental Supervisors identify skills and credential for staff and administrative positions. All position descriptions are reviewed by the AVP of HR with all new full-time positions requiring the review and approval of the Board of Trustees.
4P2	S	There is a standard and comprehensive process for filling open positions which includes the following: pre-screening by Human Resources and the search and screen committee. Successful candidates then participate in a face-to-face interview; faculty positions require a teaching demonstration. The search and screen committee then makes hiring recommendation to the hiring supervisor. Criminal background checks are conducted on all new employees.
4P3	S	The College appears to use processes for recruitment and hiring that are standard in higher education. It recruits both internally and externally and when necessary employs a search firm to find potential candidates for employment. MCC retains its employees through the benefits package, opportunities for advanced placement, salary adjustments, tuition waivers / reimbursements and through various employee recognition programs.
4P4	S	All new employees are introduced to the history, mission and values through a series of orientation activities: first-day orientation, Journey for Success (2-hour workshop that introduces MCC resources, benefits and services), breakfast/lunch with the president (where mission and values are discussed), and 5 professional development workshops / training events. Finally, newly hired full-time faculty is required to participate in a year-long orientation program.

- 4P5 O A very large (28 member) committee reviewed the structure of the Learning and Student Support Services area as a result of early retirements and made numerous changes in positions. However, the process and criteria used to evaluate the structure and revise positions is not described. An Operations Overview Program is available to select employees, but the criteria for selecting the employees and the purpose and outcome of the program are not described. While the institution experienced significant turnover that has presented a strategic challenge and has developed some responses, there does not appear to be a strategic and systematic approach to retaining employees nor a plan for transition.
- 4P6 O Work processes and activities are designed at the departmental level, and departmental supervisors are responsible for maximizing both organizational productivity and employee satisfaction, but there does not appear to be a systematic approach in place to ensure that this happens. Additionally, there does not appear to be a process in place to ensure that systematic optimization of identified improvements occurs across the institution.
- 4P7 O It is not clear that the College has established a process by which it can ensure the ethical practices of all employees. Although there is a designated ethics Officer, it is not clear that there is a process by which complaints can be rendered. Without processes in place to ensure that all transactions with all stakeholders are conducted in an ethical manner, MCC may not be able to ensure the ethical practices of all employees.
- 4P8 O As is evident throughout the portfolio, MCC reacts appropriately to input, (in this case, suggestions for training and development), but there is no proactive process in place to address the issue. In this case, it is not clear how employee training is aligned with short- and long-range organizational plans, nor is it clear what processes are in place to strengthen instructional and non-instructional programs and services.

- 4P9 O Although numerous training workshops are offered (some with very low attendance), no systematic process is described for training and developing faculty and staff to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers. While training workshops are likely to comprise a component of this, a systematic and systemic approach to developing faculty and staff will be comprehensive and will extend beyond training.
- 4P10 S A performance evaluation process is in place for each of employee group (faculty, staff and administrators). For faculty and staff, the performance evaluation process was established through the collective bargaining process. Staff members are required to develop and submit annual professional goals and a development plan.
- 4P11 S The compensation and benefit package for full-time staff and faculty are collectively bargained. MCC recognizes employees with service, STAR, NISOD Excellence, and annual awards.
- 4P12 O A grievance processes is in place for identifying and addressing issues of concern to employees under collective bargaining agreements, but does not provide details on the processes. The College has an opportunity to (1) identify key issues, not necessarily just as a result of grievances, that may motivate employees and employee groups, (2) address those key issues, (3) determine and implement courses of action to address them, and (4) measure the success of those actions and improve their effectiveness based on those results.
- 4P13 S Concerns about safety are the primary responsibility of the Department of Campus Safety. A Safety Officer, trained in CPR and basic first aid, is present on the main campus 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. A campus response team has also been trained to direct employees to safe locations in hazardous weather or fires. A safety committee meets regularly to discuss campus safety concerns and forwards recommendations for action to the vice president of administrative services / treasurer.

- 4R1 O While employees are surveyed for their engagement every three years and satisfaction with professional day and faculty workshop is collected, there do not appear to be any measures of the effectiveness of training, staff and faculty dissatisfaction (grievances, complaints, absences, and turnover), productivity, or health and wellness. Further, it is not clear how the institution has determined that engagement results every three years is frequent enough to identify and address emerging issues prior to the next survey period.
- 4R2 O Limited data and comparative performance results associated with valuing people are reported. There may be an opportunity for a more systematic assessment of activities designed and employed specific to valuing people.
- 4R3 OO The College does not collect measures of productivity or effectiveness.
- 4R4 O MCC discusses performance results from the PACE survey but does not discuss results relative to evaluation of processes. Without evaluation of the institutional processes it may be difficult for MCC to systematically identify opportunities for improvement.
- 4R4 S Employees feel safe and satisfied with the opportunity to be creative and for professional development, and this level of satisfaction is at or above the norm (Table 4.5).
- 4I1 OO Although Human Resources employees have made efforts to improve services to employees, evidence of systematic and comprehensive processes and performance results are not addressed in the narrative. Additionally, the College has been unsuccessful in filling the position of VP of Human Resources since 2004; it is unclear what is at the root of this issue. Finally, the portfolio does not discuss the systemic and comprehensive nature of processes and performance results.
- 4I2 OO Item 4I2 is not addressed and offers a significant opportunity to the college to consider culture and infrastructure as a basis for new processes and improvements in valuing people.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1c MCC is governed by a seven member, locally-elected board, including one student member. The president reports to the Board.
- O1e The vision is to be "The community's first choice for a lifetime of learning." The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community's educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community's workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O5a The College Planning Model (Figure O.5) has at its center the stakeholders, surrounded by the Illinois Commitment developed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The strategic plan is developed every few years (last in 2005) and aligns with the Mission,

Vision and Goals. Each department is responsible for developing plans that align to the strategic plan.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1		No information is reported for this item.
5P2	O	(MCC reports this as 5P1) MCC does not address how leaders set directions that are in line with the College’s guiding documents and conducive to high performance. MCC has an opportunity to strengthen leadership by filling four top positions currently vacant or held by interim appointments (see Figure O.4).
5P3		No information is reported for this item.
5P4	O	(MCC number 5P2) Figure 5.1 indicates that future opportunities are initiated by external stakeholders or by employees. The College does not address how leaders guide the college to seek future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning. Leaders rely on and are responsive to external requests and faculty input to identify future opportunities, but there is no process presented that describes how leaders guide the College in seeking future opportunities and building and sustaining the learning environment, other than providing resources for professional development.
5P5	S	(MCC number 5P3) The portfolio presents a clear picture of the decision-making process in Figure 5.2 that presents a multi-level process: (1) departmental or divisional; (2) Administrative Services, Learning and Student Support Services, and (3) Executive Council, (4) the president, and (5) the Board of Trustees. In addition, the College describes other structures in place that support decision-making: (1) the Continuous Improvement Steering Committee, along with the Action Teams that report to it, and (2) the CAPC, itself, which is responsible for curriculum,

related policies and academic planning. Each of these project-focused groups is charged with making recommendations (accompanied by supporting data) for expedited action that feed into decision-making at the lowest appropriate level. College administrators are empowered to make decisions in their respective jurisdictions. If the decision is determined to be beyond the administrator's responsibility, it is remanded to the next level in the decision-making process. Responsibility and authority for college-level decisions rests with the president and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees.

- 5P6 O (MCC number 5P4) MCC is in the early stages of using data and information for decision-making and to inform the KPIs and balanced scorecard. The College has an opportunity to continue to develop and integrate processes for appropriately collecting, analyzing and disseminating internal and relevant external data that will inform college decision-making and lead to continuous quality improvement.
- 5P7 S (MCC number 5P5) MCC has a variety of formal and informal communication venues and channels to facilitate communications, including print and electronic communication tools, regularly scheduled meetings with minutes posted on the Intranet, informal Coffee with Colleagues, "harmony" and other events to encourage informal communication and information-sharing. Table 5.1 delineates a full-range of communication systems.
- 5P8 S (MCC number 5P6) The College uses appropriate venues to communicate the institution's mission, vision, and values to employees and other key stakeholders. The mission is posted in numerous locations on the campus, recited at various events and venues, utilized in performance reviews, and is included in various reports, newsletters and emails to the internal and external communities.
- 5P9, 5P10 OO (MCC numbers 5P7, 5P8) While the Community College Operations Overview has been developed in to provide opportunities for staff and professional development, there is no process described to develop

leadership abilities and share best practices in leadership, knowledge, and skills throughout the institution. Plans to fill current vacancies within the top administration, other vacancies, and plans for leadership succession are not addressed. The College has a prime opportunity to develop and disseminate these plans and processes to ensure that its mission, vision and values are passed on during leadership succession and to establish programs geared toward leadership development while broadly modeling and sharing best practices across the institution.

- 5R1 O The PACE Survey (Figure 5.3) was administered once, in spring 2008, as a means of measuring the effectiveness of leading and communicating at MCC. The College has an opportunity to continue its efforts to collect, analyze and share data on this performance measure and other data related to institutional effectiveness to inform its continuous improvement efforts.
- 5R2 O While the College presents the results of the PACE college environment survey from spring 2008 indicating that the institution has a “consultative” environment, MCC does not provide performance results for the processes and systems that are a part of leading and communicating. There is an opportunity to document processes related to leading and communicating, determine ways to quantify and analyze their effectiveness, and make improvements a result of thorough analysis.
- 5R3 O Results of the PACE survey indicated that the college is at the norm on three of the four categories and below the norm on the teamwork category. This level of performance presents an opportunity for MCC, dedicated to continuous improvement, to raise performance targets in “teamwork” and to establish performance expectations in all categories that are higher than the norm, leading to excellence. (Figure 5.4).
- 5I1a S The College has established several continuous improvement Action Teams to address improvements in communication and institutional decision-making, develop KPIs, and increase awareness of employee roles and responsibilities.

- 511b O The College has an opportunity to develop and implement processes and performance results targets to be certain continuous improvement efforts are effective in Leading and Communicating and to ensure that, across the entire institution, they are systematic and comprehensive.
- 512 OO Recent results from the PACE Survey and other activities provide an outstanding opportunity for the College to examine, develop and implement ways to improve leading and communication processes and systems based on data, student success indicators, and employee performance objectives as well as institutional expectations for a high performing culture and infrastructure. In addition, MCC may find information among “best practices” that can assist it in strengthening its culture and infrastructure to assure the strongest possible support for improved processes and performance results.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b The main campus of 169 acres is on Crystal Lake and consists of five interconnected buildings of classrooms, computer and learning laboratories, offices, cafeteria, library, bookstore, Children's Learning Center, gymnasium, Fire Center, wetlands, nature area, garden, athletic fields, and parking areas.

- O1e The vision is to be “The community’s first choice for a lifetime of learning.” The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community’s educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community’s workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O5b Free Adult Education classes are available and students with a learning or physical disability are supported through the Special Needs program. Tutoring is available through the Sage Learning Centers and Development labs free of charge. Career counseling is available to the entire community and professional counseling services are available to students facing personal or psychological challenges.
- O5c The Friends of MCC Foundation provides financial support in areas that emerge through the strategic planning process and scholarships to students both on merit and financial need. Fundraising goals emphasize technology, professional development, and visual and performing arts.
- O6a Cost containment and building a fund balance align support goals to mission and values.
- O7a Data collection and analysis based on requirements of Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), MCC’s Program Review process, and Action Project team and employee requests.
- O7b A manually Balanced Scorecard with KPIs has recently been developed. The College is currently implementing ERP.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as McHenry ’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.

Item	S/O	Comment
6P1	S	Student support services are informed via data collected on student enrollments, student characteristics, student success rates, and student retention. Additionally, the Curriculum and Academic Policy Council has established Standing Committees to assist in informing support services. Finally, annual needs assessments are sent to various industry and business groups, and the Board of Trustees is able to provide input via a standing Agenda item. The support services areas conduct regular program reviews to evaluate effectiveness.
6P2a	S	MCC uses its annual budgetary process to identify the administrative support service needs of employees. During the budget process, administrators and department chairs are invited to submit and justify additional budget requests.
6P2b	O	MCC has an opportunity to more strategically identify needs through strategic and annual planning and to make data driven decisions that prioritize these needs. These needs could then be resourced through the budget planning process.
6P3	S	The Department of Campus Safety, with a full time director and officers, is responsible for the key processes that contribute to safety and security. A number of action projects and improvement initiatives have been implemented in the last two years, including implementation of the Campus Alert system and period emergency drills with local responders. MCC's Department of Campus Safety is predominantly responsible for physical safety and security and is on Campus 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Campus Safety relies on patrols, call boxes, surveillance systems, safety brochures, an emergency notification system and LCD Monitors. MCC has also developed an Emergency Response Plan in collaboration with the Local Police Department.
6P4	O	Administrators rely on satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services and lagging indicators that are conducted every three years; this does not provide timely information with which to make improvements before

dissatisfaction occurs. There appear to be no routine process management techniques in place, nor objective measures of performance, for supervisors and employees to monitor day to day performance and take timely corrective action.

- 6P5a S The College uses Action Project teams to identify opportunities for improvements regarding support services; any employee may submit recommendations for action projects. An Action Project team has developed process maps of support services and a Business Requirements Review process to facilitate implementing the new Enterprise Resource Planning system.
- 6P5b O The College has an opportunity to document supporting institutional operations processes as it does in the Action Projects team process and then share that information with all faculty and staff.
- 6R1 O While retention of, and successful course completion by, students with special needs is one measure of support process performance, the other measures identified are activity measures and not measures of support process effectiveness and efficiency.
- 6R2a S MCC monitors the following performance indicators relative to student support services: retention and graduation rates for underrepresented groups, persistence and course completion rates for students with disabilities, financial aid awards, student traffic in its advising and tutoring center, attendance at new student orientation and parent orientation, student and graduate satisfaction data, etc.
- 6R2b O The College has an opportunity to collect data on all students who receive student support services, the service they receive, their satisfaction with that service and analyze that information looking for ways to improve the service. This could assist in developing processes, and making resource allocation decisions, to improve retention and graduation rates for the institution.

- 6R3a S MCC has received a clean audit report for 12 consecutive years and has been awarded a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting.
- 6R3b O Except for possibly textbook sales per employee, the results reported in Table 6.6 are of activity but not measures of effectiveness, efficiency, or productivity. Without measuring these factors, it is unclear how MCC is able to evaluate the performance of these processes or prioritize resource allocation. This lack of information leading to possibly over- or under-resourcing is apparent in Table 6.7, which shows that MCC has significant opportunity in using resources compared to other community colleges, particularly in the areas of Testing, Counseling and Advising, Recruitment and Admissions, and Financial Aid.
- 6R4 O Performance results associated with administrative support and institutional support are lacking, limited quantitative data has been made available. The College has an opportunity to collect, share, analyze and use the results to improve key student administrative and organizational support areas.
- 6R5 O MCC does not provide comparative data, with the exception of bookstore comparison reports, although these data may be available from state or national sources. The institution did participate in the National Community College Benchmarking Project in 2009 as the first step in collecting and analyzing comparative data.
- 6I1 S MCC has engaged in activities in its efforts to move from a traditional college culture to a culture of continuous improvement. Through the AQIP Steering Committee, the Action Projects and corresponding Action Teams, specific processes have been addressed that may improve organizational operations (Table 6.8 describes these Action Projects).
- 6I2 O While the portfolio cites the continuous improvement process and teams and committee structure as the infrastructure that supports improving support services, the lack of measurable data with which to evaluate performance and address gaps may prove inadequate in assisting the

institution to improve performance results associated with Supporting Institutional Operations.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of McHenry County College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1e The vision is to be “The community’s first choice for a lifetime of learning.” The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community’s educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community’s workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.

- O3c Primary competitors are Columbia College - Missouri, College of Lake Country, DeVry University, Elgin Community College, First Institute, Harper College, Northern Illinois University, and Webster University.
- O5a The College Planning Model (Figure O.5) has at its center the stakeholders, surrounded by the Illinois Commitment developed by the Illinois Department of Education. The strategic plan is developed every few years (last in 2005) and aligns with the Mission, Vision, and Goals. Each department is responsible for developing plans that align to the strategic plan.
- O6a Cost containment and building a fund balance align support goals to mission and values.
- O7a Data collection and analysis based on requirements of Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), MCC's Program Review process, and Action Project team and employee requests.
- O7b A manual Balanced Scorecard with KPIs has recently been developed. The college is currently implementing ERP.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	OO	The establishment of KPIs and a Balanced Scorecard discussed elsewhere in the portfolio are not referenced here, indicating a lack of alignment between that effort and measuring overall institutional performance on a routine and timely basis. Without consistent standards, expectations, and process, it may be difficult to target specific institutional needs and improvements associated with instructional and non-instructional improvement efforts.
7P2	OO	Information from action projects and from participating for the first time in the National Community College Benchmarking Project appears to be the only data and performance information that supports planning and improvements. This is supported by the lack of objective measures of process performance and corresponding results noted in other

categories. It is not clear how the College has determined that data from these two sources (action projects and the NCCBP) will sustain forward progress. Additionally, it is not clear how data are selected, managed, and distributed among employees so that it can be used to support planning and improvement efforts.

- 7P3 O It is not evident that there is a systematic process by which to determine the needs of the various departments specific to data collection, analysis, storage and accessibility. No process is described for proactively determining the needs of the various departments.
- 7P4 O The College is in the early stages of interpreting and communicating recent results from the National Community College Benchmarking Project. No process is described for analyzing overall institutional data and sharing the results of the analyses with the organization.
- 7P5, 7P6 O Although the institution is in the process of developing and selecting comparative data and information within and outside the higher education community, It is not clear that there is a systematic process in place to ensure that department and unit analysis of data aligns with the institutional goals for instructional and non-instructional programs, nor is it clear how this information is shared.
- 7P7 S There are protocols in place to help ensure security of its information systems, including a requirement for strong passwords and assignment of data stewards.
- 7R1 O The single measure of performance and effectiveness of its systems is the ability to submit all required reports to the ICCB. With such limited measures of effectiveness it may prove difficult for MCC to improve performance in this area.
- 7R2 O Apart from the mandated reporting to ICCB, there is limited reportable information with regard to evidence of process improvement efforts in this category. Additionally there is no explanation of how the data reported to ICCB has been utilized to improve campus processes in support of its mission and goals.

- 7R3 OO No reportable information from the institution at this time.
- 711 O Although the College is in the process of implementing a new ERP, it is not evident that there is a systematic and comprehensive process in place that permeates all facets of the institution and would lead to systematic and comprehensive improvements. There is limited reportable data at this time.
- 712 O No information is provided as to how the culture and infrastructure support this category and help select processes for improvement. Based on the lack of measures throughout the portfolio, an effective measurement system, and analyses and review of institutional performance, evidence of a culture or infrastructure that supports management by fact is weak.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1d The population in the district has increased 22.5% since 2000, with a population of 318,641 projected to grow to nearly half a million in 2030. Eleven per cent of residents are Hispanic, the fastest-growing segment of the population. Much of the district is used for agriculture with increasing portions used for urban, residential, commercial, and service. Equalized Assessed Value has doubled in the last decade. Unemployment

peaked in June 2009 at 10.9 per cent but there is a projected increase of more than 63,000 jobs and 68,000 houses by 2030.

- O1e The vision is to be “The community’s first choice for a lifetime of learning.” The Mission is valuing learning; putting the interests of students and community first; providing high quality, affordable, and accessible learning; and supporting the community’s educational, social, cultural, and economic vitality. Goals are to: prepare students to transfer successfully to colleges and universities; prepare students to enter and advance in their careers; prepare students with the literacy and basic skills to succeed and grow as learners, workers, and members of society; promote personal development and lifelong learning for all students; enrich the educational, social, and cultural life of the community; and, address the community’s workforce development needs.
- O1f MCC has a policy of open admissions, comprehensive educational offerings, and an informal student-oriented learning environment. It offers seven Associate degrees and 48 certificate programs.
- O3b Other stakeholders are Alumni, Board, business and industry, community, employers, local K-12 districts, and other colleges and universities (Table O.3). Their requirements and expectations include opportunities to remain connected, lifelong learning, fiscal responsibility, adherence to policy, customized training, educated and skilled workforce, affordable access, transfer and articulation agreements, and students prepared for future learning.
- O3c Primary competitors are Columbia College-Missouri, College of Lake County, DeVry University, Elgin Community College, First Institute, Harper College, Northern Illinois University and Webster University.
- O5a The College Planning Model (Figure O.5) has at its center the stakeholders, surrounded by the Illinois Commitment developed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The strategic plan is developed every few years (last in 2005) and aligns with the Mission, Vision and Goals. Each department is responsible for developing plans that align to the strategic plan.
- O5c The Friends of MCC Foundation provides financial support in areas that emerge through the strategic planning process and scholarships to students both on merit and financial

need. Fundraising goals emphasize technology, professional development, and visual and performing arts.

O7b A manual Balanced Scorecard with KPIs has recently been developed. The college is currently implementing ERP.

O8a Key challenges include: Increased enrollment putting pressure on high-demand laboratory science classes and other services such as parking; lack of funding for capital improvements and declining state funding; strict adherence to storm-water ordinance for any new construction; and, significant turnover due to early retirement incentives resulting in fewer than half of administrators in position for more than a year. The president and one of the three VPs are interim; one VP position is vacant.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1	O	While MCC seems to have the right components of the strategic planning process in place, it does not demonstrate urgency about completion of the strategic plan and its importance in guiding all college planning and resourcing. The current Strategic Planning Process was initiated in 2008 and includes a SWOT, focus groups, interviews and surveys as well as community engagement sessions. The College projects completion of the plan sometime in 2010; however, by that time, information identified in 2008 may be outdated. The College also identifies other key planning processes, each with a long-range (3 – 5 years) plan and supporting annual plans. MCC has an opportunity to improve the implementation process for strategic planning by establishing a solid “plan to plan,” with an efficient time frame for completion of all components and the Strategic Plan, itself. The College also has an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the planning process while continuously reviewing and evaluating the new plan.
8P2	O	Each administrator is responsible for developing goals, strategies and measureable objectives. Progress is part of the annual evaluation and

Program Review; however, there appears to be no process to ensure alignment between these reviews and the overarching strategic plan. In addition, there is no evidence presented that describes the processes for developing long- or short-term strategies, apart from the strategic planning process. The College recognizes an opportunity to more explicitly align department plans with the Strategic Plan and has an opportunity to develop processes for short- and long-term strategy selection.

- 8P3 O Action Teams are formed in response to a challenge or to follow up on an opportunity for improvement, which is presented by a staff member in the form of a proposal that is approved by the AQIP Steering Committee. Commendably, the college allocates \$100,000 annually to support Action Projects. However, there is no evidence that Action Projects are intentionally aligned with organizational strategies nor is there a systematic, consistently-employed process in place for turning a business opportunity into an Action Project. MCC has an opportunity to implement intentionally-developed action plans that support organizational strategies.
- 8P4 OO MCC describes its intent to interconnect and align planning processes but recognizes that this has not occurred in a systematic way. The College further recognizes its opportunity to connect the budget planning process with other college planning processes. This presents a significant opportunity for the college to establish a single, over-arching planning process through which all planning occurs in a connected, resourceful way with each planning process informing, resourcing, and supporting the others. For example, within the Annual Planning Process and cycle the Budget Plan may resource the Enrollment Management Plan, the Technology Plan, and others through deliberative, data-based decision making.
- 8P5 O The College record of establishing performance targets has been incremental, based on state-wide or other averages rather than focused on the accomplishment of the vision to be “the community’s first choice” in

higher education, which implies targets based on best performance rather than on state or local averages. In addition, there is no process to ensure that performance measures will be linked to the strategic initiatives in the next iteration of the Strategic Plan. MCC recognizes an opportunity to develop a more robust process for establishing performance targets linked to strategies supported by intentional, well-conceived, and measurable Action Projects.

- 8P6 OO The College states that the process of developing budget requests or plans is not aligned with the processes for strategy selection or action plans. Given the new Strategic Planning Process currently underway, MCC has an opportunity to improve these linkages and the linkage of other college plans with current resources and future needs. Item 8P, above, also addresses the immediate significance of such linkages to the overall performance of the organization.
- 8P7 O The College recognizes that it does not assess or address risk in its planning process and understands this as an opportunity for improvement.
- 8P8 S The College has established and funded a Professional Development Department charged with providing training for faculty and staff in order to support the development of the capabilities needed by the institution in the future.
- 8R1 O Current KPIs focus on Helping Students Learn (retention, graduation rates, etc.) and Stewarding Financial Resources (fund balance ratio, tuition and other revenue, etc.). While these are two critical aspects of the institution, MCC needs a comprehensive set of measures to facilitate evaluation of overall institutional performance. Though performance indicators have been identified for other areas, such as Valuing People, or Other Stakeholder Needs, the legacy system is incapable of extracting data relative to those performance indicators. MCC has an opportunity to identify both a short-term solution and a long-term strategic goal to address this issue while awaiting conversion to a new ERP.

- 8R2, 8R3 O Performance results compared to targets are provided in Tables 8.3 and 8.4; however, targets are based on historical averages. This is inconsistent with continuous improvement and high performance within an organization. The College has an opportunity to establish high performance-based targets consistent with its mission and vision, collect and analyze resulting data, and utilize the results for continued improvements in performance.
- 8R4 O The College states that it does not collect or use comparative data relative to performance processes and recognizes that this presents an opportunity to do so.
- 8R5 OO MCC does not measure or evaluate its process for Planning Continuous Improvement and does not have evidence that the system is effective. The College recognizes this as an opportunity for improvement. Engagement in a new strategic planning process provides a significant outstanding opportunity to address this.
- 8I1, 8I2 O The College has recognized the need to develop a new Strategic Plan. While the 2005 Strategic Plan, as described earlier in this section, was developed through a collaborative, inclusive approach, the current strategic planning process appears (at this point) to be driven from the top-down, with the Board of Trustees having completed the SWOT and developed the strategic questions upon which community engagement was launched. MCC has an opportunity to improve the strategic planning process, in the spirit of a continuous improvement culture, following best practices of high performance organizations. Engaging college staff and community members in open, collaborative dialogue about the institution, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and its future directions will benefit the institution.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of MCC that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O2a Lifelong Learning is supported throughout the county with Kids and College, Continuing Education, Retired Adults Program (RAP), Trips & Tours, and Adult Education.
- O2b Workforce Development is supported by the Center for Corporate Training, the grant-funded Illinois Small Business Development Center, and short-term, non-credit programs.
- O2c Community Outreach is supported by Traffic Safety School; Parents, Children, & Divorce; the MCC Conference Center; and the Lou Marchi Recycling Institute.
- O3a Current students intending to transfer require and expect preparation for future education, ability to transfer credits, variety of course offerings, convenient location, and affordability (Table O.2). Students preparing for current or future jobs require skills leading to employment, variety of programs, convenient location, and affordability (Table O.2).
- O3b Other stakeholders are Alumni, Board, business and industry, community, employers, local k-12 districts, and other colleges and universities (Table O.3). Their requirements and expectations include opportunities to remain connected, lifelong learning, fiscal responsibility, adherence to policy, customized training, educated and skilled workforce, affordable access, transfer and articulation agreements, and students prepared for future learning.

O9a Key partnerships are identified in Table O6 and include high schools, four-year colleges and universities, other community colleges, workforce investment board, County Economic Development Corporation, County Workforce Center, local businesses and industries, community agencies, Advisory Committees, and Friends of MCC Foundation.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as MCC’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	S	MCC focuses K-12 partnership efforts on the public schools within its district boundaries, the home-schooling organizations, and the private Catholic high school located within the district. It uses a variety of methods for developing those relationships: recruitment visits to schools, articulation agreements, committee memberships, leadership efforts by the president, etc. MCC also works to develop relationships with those organizations that can help guide returning adults to the institution, primarily workforce centers such as the WIA one-stop service area.
9P2	S	MCC focuses higher education partnership efforts on those institutions that accept the majority of MCC’s transferring students. MCC participates in a number of initiatives intended to build and maintain relationships with these institutions, including program and course articulation agreements, formal partnership agreements, program transfer guides, transfer credit evaluation systems and college fairs on the MCC campus. MCC participates in a number of county-wide initiatives and programs to identify and understand the needs of area employers, including its membership on the workforce investment board and economic development corporation, use of advisory committee for its occupational programs and operation of a center for corporate training.
9P3	S	MCC provides the majority of services offered to its students and operates its own cafeteria, bookstore and IT department although area organizations (such as the McHenry County Crisis Program) provide

- assistance for students with behavioral health emergencies or ADA and rehab issues.
- 9P4 O MCC is a member of several purchasing consortia. The business procedures detailed in the narrative (bidding requirements and purchase approval practices, for example) contribute to the effectiveness of these purchasing relationships. However, it is not clear how these policies were developed and how the established practices provide the appropriate balance between control and effective and efficient purchasing.
- 9P5 S Efforts to establish and build relationships with educational associations, etc. are prioritized based on the potential value of those associations to MCC and its students. Relationships are established when the relationship will support the institution's advocacy efforts or when the partnership will further the credibility and quality of MCC programs.
- 9P6 O The narrative indicates that college employees are responsible for monitoring and evaluating relationships in their respective areas, but the portfolio does not provide any indication of how and how often that evaluation occurs and which performance indicators are used to measure the effectiveness of these relationships.
- 9P7 O Table 9.2 identifies 21 key leadership groups at MCC, along with meeting frequency and group composition. These groups use publication of meeting minutes as the primary tool for communicating the group's activities / actions to other entities within MCC. However, the narrative does not outline opportunities for interaction between and among the groups or indicate the overlap of group memberships, which could provide additional opportunities for interaction and the exchange of information. In addition, Table 9.2 does not identify the individuals who chair these groups and does not indicate how these group chairs relay information to other administrative levels (either up or down) within the institution. In fact, the complexity of the infrastructure described in Table 9.2 highlights the importance of building and maintaining collaborative relationships within the organization and the importance of monitoring

communication effectiveness among and between departments, units and operational groups. A more intentional, systematic analysis of relationship building and communication effectiveness could be beneficial to the institution's continuous improvement efforts.

- 9R1-9R2 O The four performance measures identified in the narrative (high school students enrolling at MCC, formal transfer agreements, top transfer destinations for MCC students, and companies participating in purchasing consortia) may not be adequate to measure the success of MCC's external and internal partnerships or to measure the results and mutual benefits derived from these partnerships. Satisfaction with relationships, dollars saved by purchasing consortia, and other measures would provide a more comprehensive review of these relationships. MCC has an opportunity to expand its measurement efforts -- collecting and examining a more formal set of data that is directly tied to key performance goals relative to these relationships – and then take improvement actions based on that analysis. MCC is encouraged to explore ways to document the effectiveness of its external relationships and to examine both historical trend data and comparative data.
- 9R3 O The portfolio does not include any institutional data or any comparative data on the performance of processes developed to build and sustain collaborative relationships.
- 9I1a S MCC actively seeks out partnerships that will benefit both MCC and the external partner. Recent examples include joining the Energy Network Operations Center and the weTRain network.
- 9I1b O It is not clear that there are systematic and comprehensive processes in place for evaluating current partnerships and for identifying new partnership opportunities.
- 9I2 O MCC does not describe how the culture and infrastructure help the institution select specific processes for improvement and set targets for improved performance relative to its collaborative relationships. The institution does acknowledge this opportunity for improvement.