

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

March 28, 2005



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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INTRODUCTION

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, significant issues for your institution, and an Appraisal Rubric score for each Category. These are presented in four sections of the Feedback Report: *Critical Characteristics Analysis*, *Category Feedback*, *Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis* and the *Appraisal Summary*. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

Each member of the Systems Appraisal Team devoted many hours to analyzing and reacting to your *Systems Portfolio*, first individually and then via a consensus process designed to ensure that all feedback you receive is the agreed-upon conclusion of an entire group of intelligent, trained peers. There are no one-person opinions here, no idiosyncratic, subjective opinions. Most of the team's members have had executive responsibilities in colleges and universities, but the team also included at least one person whose work and experience lie outside of higher education, and who could help the team maintain perspective on the work higher educators still have to do to bring quality principles into all areas of the Academy. All team members are committed to promoting continuous quality improvement in higher education and have received training in quality processes. Many team members have also had experience with Baldrige-type quality award programs. We know that you and your colleagues will find the astuteness of their perceptions, as embodied in this report, useful in your commitment for continuous quality learning.

Good as the team was, however, it is important to remember that they 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, in fact, 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 it was unsure about an area, we urged the team 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.

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. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements 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 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 (as it is for most) 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, and can serve as an "executive summary" of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Appraisal Summary: The compilation of the nine rubrics that capture the team's appraisal of the organization's Portfolio description of each of the nine AQIP Categories. The summary indicates the team's consensus on the developmental maturity of each Category description.

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, if addressed, will yield greatest benefit. 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*. Rubrics should be used to understand where the opportunities for ongoing systems improvement are greatest, not as scores indicating success or failure. 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, in turn, can be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future *Systems Appraisals* will reflect the progress an institution has made.

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 Wayne State College's identity, 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 to you, when you study *the Feedback Report*,

that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Wayne State College 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.

- O1a WSC is a regional public, open admission college geographically positioned to serve rural NE.
- O1 WSC underwent extensive internal review in 2001 and moved to a four college structure directed by Deans.
- O1c Mission: WSC is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development.
- O1 Vision: to make a notable difference to rural and community life through learning excellence, students success, and regional service; a regional college of national distinction
- O1 Philosophy: the highest form of services is the disciplined pursuit of knowledge. All other forms of service (to students stakeholders, region, etc.) are subordinate to this form of service.
- O2 WSC is primarily an undergraduate institution (150 programs), however a few graduate programs (14 programs) are offered in education and business.
- O2 WSC enrolled 3,351 students in Fall 2003 (student to faculty ratio of 15.8 to 1). Students are segmented by freshmen, all undergraduates, graduate students, and continuing /non-degree seeking students.
- O3 WSC draws students from a 47 county service area in northeast NE and northwest IA.
- O3 83% are Nebraskans and 12% are from Iowa. 94% of undergraduates are considered full-time. 61% are first-generation college students. 70% of students are under 24. 41% are eligible for Pell grants.

- O3c Stakeholder groups identified include parents, alumni supporters, Foundation, employers, local government agencies, Nebraska State College Board, Coordinating Commission, Legislature, other 4-year institutions, Nebraska citizens (especially northeast region)
- O4 WSC has about 250 collaborative relationships, with 34 key relationships.
- O5 WSC employs 339, of which there are 212 faculty members (126 fulltime, 86 part-time and GA). 80% hold the terminal degree, 89 professional staff, and 10 administrators. The typical teaching load is 5 classes per semester and student advising is required of faculty.
- O5 Governance: Board of Trustees of the four Nebraska State Colleges, President, 3 Vice Presidents, 4 Deans, 14 Department Chairs and Programs Directors, Faculty, Professional Staff, Support Staff Council, Academic Council, President's Cabinet
- O6 WSC has excellent "top rung" technological support with 1,200 student computers, wired dorms, and 1,100 networked faculty/staff computers.
- O6 Infrastructure includes 22 buildings on a 128 acre attractive campus with capacity for 4,000 students.
- O7a WSC is squeezed on one side by research universities in NE and SD and on the other side by nearby community colleges.
- O8a WSC has experienced an 11% enrollment decline in the last six years.
- O8b State budget deficit mandated cuts in the operating budget.
- O8c In the last five years WSC has initiated a campus-wide assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning/mission building process.
- O8d Past marketing efforts at WSC have been "fragmented and ineffective".
- O8 WSC has low name recognition in its service region.

- O8f WSC has become overly insular; programs do not reach out to neighboring communities to demonstrate the College's worth.
- O8 WSC actively recruits a diverse spectrum of faculty and students. The total percent of minority students at WSC has increased slightly from 5% to 6% in the last three years.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

- O1c Mission: WSC is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development.
- O2a WSC is primarily an undergraduate institution (150 programs); however a few graduate programs (14 programs) are offered in education and business.
- O5a WSC employs 339, of which there are 212 faculty members (126 full-time, 86 part-time and GA). 80% hold the terminal degree, 89 professional staff, and 10 administrators. The typical teaching load is 5 classes per semester and student advising is required of faculty.
- O6a WSC has excellent “top rung” technological support with 1200 student computers, wired dorms and 1100 networked faculty/staff computers.

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

- 1C1 S Student learning objectives have been developed for general education, pre-professional, professional education and graduate programs.
- 1C2 S Student learning expectations, practices and developmental objectives are aligned with the mission, vision and philosophy of the institution.
- 1C3 S WSC uses technology as a supplement to traditional-face-to-face instruction. All faculty members have web pages and nearly one third of the faculty have course-related web pages. Student access to technology resources also appears to be enabled, and dedicated facilities for distance learning are in place. In addition, WSC faculty take into account different students learning styles when teaching, using all modes of instruction.
- 1C4 S The multi-cultural center tangibly demonstrates that Wayne State College takes seriously the importance of multi-cultural understanding and preparing its students to live successfully in a diverse world.
- 1I2 OO The Assessment Committee has identified some fundamental barriers to effective assessment practices. Access to departmental assessment is limited and that assessment is not now tied to specific learning objectives. Data is lacking related to success of graduates in professional and graduate programs. Assessment needs to be tied more closely to specific learning

objectives of the program or course. However, the Assessment Committee is vigorously pursuing improvements throughout all schools.

- 1P1 O An ad hoc General Education Committee set common student learning objectives based on General Education requirements; faculty as a whole provide input regarding their recommendation with ultimate decisions made by the Vice President for Academic Instruction or the President. Specific learning outcomes are set by departments and faculty within those departments; many are based upon standards set by outside bodies; for example, the Nebraska State Board of Education sets standards for teacher education programs. However, there does not appear to be an established ongoing process for review of either general education or program outcomes. The General Education Committee, established to review courses and establish assessment procedures, is in the early stages of development.
- 1P2 OO Unstructured process for evaluating market for degrees and programs will limit ability to address enrollment concerns with new program development.
- 1P5 S The organization uses the advising process provided through the Advising and Counseling Center and Office of Career Services to help students select programs of study that match their needs, interest, and abilities. The Learning Center is available to assist students who lack the preparation. Academic advisors are assigned to students with a major and who are notified if students' performance is low at midterm and can thus intervene to help students with problems.
- 1P6 O Course evaluations provide documentation of teaching effectiveness as well as portfolios that are required for faculty who request promotion or tenure. However, it is unclear how pervasive or systematic these practices are as parts of the organizational culture.
- 1P8 S The effectiveness of programs is determined through assessment to determine if students are achieving proficiency goals. Programs are reviewed based upon Program Review Practices of the Nebraska State College Board of Trustees as well as external review. Decisions to drop a course or curriculum are initiated at the department level and are subject to the Academic Policies Committee. However, details of the "Program Review Practices" mandated by the Board of Trustees are not sufficiently described to

know whether they include mechanisms for evaluating currency and effectiveness of academic programs. Feedback from recent graduates could strengthen this process.

- 1P9 O College supports professional development with travel funds, but there does not appear to be a program to support faculty development on campus in regards to promoting teaching and learning. A “suggestion box” in the administration building appears to be the only formal process for soliciting input regarding faculty support needs.
- 1P1 OO
1 To oversee the entire student assessment process, a campus-wide committee has been assembled. With its guidance, student assessment will become standardized across campus. Major assessment is the responsibility of the delivering department. Each department is responsible for developing course goals and objectives and determining the methods required to measure these objectives. While WSC appears to be assessing departmentally, no process is evident for general education and other institutional student learning outcomes. The massive undertaking of developing an institution-wide student assessment program will likely require more administrative focus and oversight than a committee can provide.
- 1P1 O
2 Only a few programs have processes for determining the level of preparation of graduates. No process for graduate-school readiness or success was indicated. The alumni survey was discontinued due to costs issues, but electronic data collection might make this affordable.
- 1P1 O
3 Although the organization identifies a variety of student performance measures to demonstrate growth and development such as capstone courses, internships, presentations, etc., none of these measures have results presented in the document.
- 1R1 OO Data on the direct measure of student learning outcomes is not available in this report. Examples of what the departments are actually doing in terms of assessment is necessary to be able to have a complete understanding of what is happening in this area. Table 2 that provides College Achievement Data for three years 1999-2000 through 2001-02 reflect mixed results for four measures (student retention after 1 year, student retention with low ACT scores who successfully completed Succeeding in College, student retention

with low ACT scores who did not complete the Success course, and Percent of students who left in poor standing after one year) and decreases in performance for two measures (Percent of graduates employer or continuing education or percent who are unemployed). Mean student grade point (Table 3) also provides mixed results for the past five semesters (fluctuation between 2.99 and 3.03). In addition, no results are provided for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years.

- 1R2 O Assessment data at the department level do not appear to be analyzed and reported to the institution. The Business Department takes a standardized subject field test, but the results are not shown. There appears to be no process in place for comparison of assessment results with other institutional or national norms. There is no indication that the drop in self-rating of academic ability of WSU graduates for three consecutive years was noticed. Trend analysis and comparative results are a fundamental component of quality improvement.
- 1R3 OO No results were presented for processes associated with Helping Students Learn.
- 1R4 OO It is not apparent that WSC has a systematic assessment process using comparative measures of similar organizations. Without a systematic process and comparatives, the organization may be limiting its effectiveness in assessing students and setting appropriate goals for improvement.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

- 01a WSC is a regional public, open admission college geographically positioned to serve rural NE
- 01c Mission: WSC is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development.
- 01d Vision: to make a notable difference to rural and community life through learning excellence, students success, and regional service; a regional college of national distinction
- 03c Stakeholder groups identified include parents, alumni supporters, Foundation, employers, local government agencies, Nebraska State College Board, Coordinating Commission, Legislature, other 4-year institutions, Nebraska citizens (especially northeast region).
- 04a WSC has about 250 collaborative relationships, with 34 key relationships.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Wayne State College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*:

- 2C1 S WSC has identified five distinctive objectives in 2C1 that emerge as a result of collaboration and partnership.
- 2C2 S Two campus initiatives—American Democracy Project and Service Learning—support the mission and vision of student learning and regional development.

- 2P1 00 WSC does not identify any formal process for determining and establishing other distinctive objectives or who is involved in setting these objectives. Without a formal process, WSC may have difficulty differentiating itself from other community colleges and research universities in competition with the college.
- 2P2 S The organization communicates its expectations regarding its distinctive objectives through the Campus Bulletin and Wayne State Magazine. Strategic Planning Steering Team members communicate the distinctive objectives that are part of the long-term goals at meetings within each of the four schools. Short-term goals and/or action plans are communicated at the department/unit level.
- 2P3 S WSC uses a variety of methods to assess needs relating to the distinctive objectives. For example, individual professional and support staff needs are assessed as part of the annual performance evaluation, and the Professional Staff Senate and Support Staff Senate are instrumental in bringing training opportunities
- 2P4 OO Although WSC is in the process of collecting baseline data during the current academic year for each of the areas identified in the Strategic Plan, members of the campus community are not systematically involved in assessing and reviewing the distinctive objectives at the institutional level.
- 2P5 O Although the organization indicates that it collects data at the program and service level and maintains an institutional data book, no specific measures are identified that are collected and analyzed regularly that relate to other distinctive objectives.
- 2R1 S The college presents several results relating to Experiential Learning; for example, Figure 2R1 reflects enrollment in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP); it appears that the peak growth occurred in 2001. The Mid-American Rural Health Occupations Program (MARHOP) reflects an upward enrollment from 1999 through 2003. This type of tracking and monitoring would be helpful to the organization if replicated for other measures.

- 2R2 O No comparative data are provided to support the results related to the distinctive objectives which fosters an insular self-view of the organization. It does not appear that there is a plan for systematic comparison to peer institutions, other higher education institutions, or organizations outside education.
- 2I2 OO It is unclear how the organization sets targets for improvement, what improvement priorities are being targeted, how they will be addressed and communicated, or if there is a system of accountability to carry out planned improvements.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

- 02b WSC enrolled 3351 students in Fall 2003 (student to faculty ratio of 15.8 to 1). Students were segmented by freshmen, all undergraduates, graduate students, and continuing/non-degree seeking students.
- 03a WSC draws students from a 47-county service area in northeast NE and northwest IA.
- 03b 83% are Nebraskans and 12% are from Iowa. 94% of undergraduates are considered full-time. 61% are first-generation college students. 70% of students are under 24. 41% are eligible for Pell grants.
- 03c Stakeholder groups identified include parents, alumni supporters, Foundation, employers, local government agencies, Nebraska State College Board, Coordinating Commission, Legislature, other 4-year institutions, Nebraska citizens (especially northeast region).
- 08d Past marketing efforts at WSC have been fragmented and ineffective.
- 08f WSC has become overly insular; programs do not reach out to neighboring communities to demonstrate the College's worth.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Wayne State College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs*:

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 3C1&2 | S | Stakeholders important to the college have been identified. |
| 3P1 | O | WSC has a good array of instruments it uses to collect data. However, the process for how it uses this information is not clear. |
| 3P2 & 4 | S | The organization uses a variety of methods to build and maintain relationships with students and stakeholders. |
| 3P3 | O | The system for using data and stakeholder interaction for purposeful response to changing needs is unclear. A cycle that includes reporting, follow-up and publishing requirements allows all stakeholders to see the value of such communication and the institution's responsiveness. |
| 3P4 | S | The organization uses a variety of methods to build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders including publications, electronic media, student internships and by providing cultural and artistic programming for the region. |

- 3R1 S WSC is able to demonstrate student satisfaction related to active and collaborative learning and with instructional effectiveness. WSC also shows improvement from the freshman to senior years in four of five categories on the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- 3I1 O WSC indicates that it is lacking a systematic process to contact stakeholders and to determine their level of satisfaction or need.
- 3I2 O While a variety of data is presented, there is no discussion about how the data is coordinated, trended, or used to guide planning and decision making.
- 3R3 O WSC is beginning to assess stakeholder satisfaction, but its process for using the information in a positive and constructive fashion is not effective.
- 3P5 O Given the institutional concern over declining enrollments, the lack of a campus-wide process for identifying new stakeholder groups is a concern. If the current student market is shrinking, growth or sustaining enrollment will need to come from new opportunities.
- 3R3 S For one of its stakeholder groups (WSC alumni), a degree of satisfaction is shown in that 88% would attend WSC again.
- 3R5 O While WSC reports making comparisons, it does not elaborate or explain how they are used.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators since the efforts of all 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 Wayne State College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems

***Portfolio* section covering Category 4, *Valuing People*:**

- 05a WSC employs 339, of which there are 212 faculty (126 full-time, 86 part-time and GA). 80% hold the terminal degree, 89 professional staff, and 10 administrators. Teaching load is five classes per semester and student advising is required of faculty.
- 05b Governance: Board of Trustees of the four Nebraska State Colleges, President, three Vice Presidents, four Deans, 14 Department Chairs and Program Directors, Faculty, Professional Staff, Support Staff Council, Academic Council, President's Cabinet.

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

- 4C1 S WSC has developed professional and staff senates to serve as vehicles for fostering a positive work environment. In addition, a new Human Resources Department was created and a new director appointed to strengthen HR processes throughout the college.
- 4C2 O Despite the presence of a growing Hispanic minority and presence of native American communities, it is unclear how WSC addresses these communities as employees or how the college is addressing faculty succession.
- 4C3/4 O Demographic trends and plans for continuous improvement are not yet addressed in the college's strategic plan.

- 4C4 O Although WSC has recently hired a Human Resources director, it is unclear what key faculty, staff and administrative training initiatives WSC is currently undertaking or planning to implement.
- 4P2 O Although the organization has a process to recruit, hire and orient employees, no formal mentoring program exists, and it is unclear if there is a systematic process to plan for changes in personnel.
- 4P3 O While organizational communication occurs at the departmental level (a relatively easy and natural process), institutional learning should not be constrained to the departmental level.
- 4P4 O The organization is beginning to provide for training and development for faculty, staff and administration. However, there does not appear to be a system in place to reinforce training throughout an employee's career.
- 4P5 OO WSC does not currently have a program in place to identify training needs.
- 4P6 O Although the organization has a systematic annual evaluation process for all employee groups based on job descriptions that appear to be aligned with Criterion 1, it is unclear how systematically results are shared.
- 4P7 S The institution attempts to provide recognition and awards at all levels of employment. Examples include the Wildcat Well-done Award, foundation awards and teacher excellence awards.
- 4P8/9 OO As an institution, WSC does not determine key issues important to the motivation of faculty, staff and administration. The institution does not regularly collect, analyze or track data on how well it succeeds in its efforts to value people.
- 4R1 O While WSC has established limited baseline survey results which can be used as a starting point for measurement, it has not yet tracked or trended data related to valuing people.
- 4I1 O A sizable percentage (42%) of employees believes the process of annual performance evaluations needs improvement.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

- O1b WSC underwent extensive internal review in 2001 and moved to a four-college structure directed by Deans.
- O1e Philosophy: The highest form of services is the disciplined pursuit of knowledge. All other forms of service (to students, stakeholders, region, etc.) are subordinate to this form of service.
- O5b Governance: Board of Trustees of the four Nebraska State Colleges, President, three Vice Presidents, four Deans, 14 Department Chairs and Program Directors, Faculty, Professional Staff, Support Staff Council, Academic Council, President's Cabinet.
- O8c In the last five years WSC has initiated a campus-wide assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning/mission building process.

- O8d Past marketing efforts at WSC have been “fragmented and ineffective”.
- O8e WSC has low name recognition in its service region.
- O8f WSC has become overly insular; programs do not reach out to neighboring communities to demonstrate the College’s worth.

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

- 5C1 O WSC leadership structures are articulated, but not at all levels. There are some departments with formal internal organizational structures, while others have not such form internal organization. Organizational structure is hierarchical, and lines of communication follow the organizational structure.

- 5C3 S WSC has developed a new strategic plan which can serve as a guide for the new leadership structures that are now taking hold in the college. At the core of the plan are six central themes or values. Two of the six themes are explicitly related to continuous quality improvement. The shared vision that these themes provide are foundational to the successful transition of WSC to a quality culture. The primary values statement is very strong, and it reflects a greater scope than the mission statement and philosophy. WSC primary values and expectations are clearly articulated.

- 5P1 O Communication structures are crucial to forming a common consensus on direction and shared vision. Wayne State College, while having numerous current communication vehicles, has an opportunity within the context of a new organizational structure and new senior administrators to institute a campus-wide leadership communication system that cuts across departmental boundaries and facilitates the sharing of best leadership practices within the organization to set directions in alignment with mission, vision and values.

- 5P3 S Input from Administrative Council, Dean's Council and other advisory groups is often sought before final decisions are made. The organization makes decisions based upon its line and staff organization which guides decisions made at all organizational levels beginning with the Board of Trustees directives. Teams, task forces, and groups or committees to recommend or to make decisions are built into the process as well as ad hoc committees and task forces to provide input into non-routine decisions.
- 5P5 O There seems to be a contradiction in this area. While the communications survey indicated that communication with administration and supervisors seems to be effective, but "improving communication is a great concern." It may be that certain types of information are communicated effectively while other types are not. This is something that could be articulated in greater depth.
- 5P6 S Wayne State College's recent development of new leadership and communication structures demonstrates a nimbleness that can be tapped to make system-wide improvements. The inclusion of support and professional staff as well as students in college decision making processes are very positive steps for including more stakeholders in key processes. The leadership communicates a shared vision, mission, values, and high performance objectives through a variety of mechanisms such as the Board of Trustees Policy and Procedural Manual, Student Handbook, and General and Graduate Catalogs.
- 5P7 S The creation of a Professional Development Committee is a positive action to take in addition to the new HR Director. Fall and spring General Meetings for all campus employees are held to bring everyone up to date about the institution, to recognize individual accomplishments, and to introduce and welcome new employees. The organization encourages development and strengthening leadership abilities among faculty and administrators through mechanisms such as being voted into higher positions by their peers and participation in professional development activities. However, there appears to be minimal opportunities for some employees including Support Staff to attend off-campus seminars and conferences to develop leadership potential. WSC subscribes to an open-door access policy at most academic and administrative levels.

- 5P8 O The organization indicates that it has no formal leadership succession plan which may hinder its effectiveness in achieving its mission. WSC has no formal leadership succession plan.
- 5P9 O Although the organization indicates what reports the Board reviews, it is unclear what specific leading and communicating measures are collected and analyzed. Formal evaluation processes do not exist at all levels. There is no direct reference to criteria for retention, promotion and tenure of faculty.
- 5R1 O Wayne State College's top-down leadership and communication structures may be a contributing factor to the perception of "inadequate communication downward." No results are reported for leading and communicating processes and systems. Without this information, it may be difficult for the organization to assess its leadership effectiveness. Roles and duties of Deans and Department Chairs do not appear to be clearly defined.
- 5R2 O Wayne State College has begun a process of determining a set of institutions it can reference for comparison of measures. However, no comparative results are provided.
- 5I1 O This is a very actionable list of items for improvement. However, there does not appear to be a systematic process to evaluate performance, target improvements, and communicate results and improvements to faculty, staff, administration, and appropriate stakeholders.
- 5I2 OO Wayne State College currently does not use its AQIP structure as an opportunity to drive change (with the exception of the AQIP mandated vital projects). Quality institutions integrate and rely on quality measures to drive change. The commitment for continuous quality improvement and the understanding of how the pursuit of quality drives institutional decision making must be appreciated and effectively utilized starting at the highest levels of any organization. Quality programs cannot survive as tack-on appendages. Quality committees and councils should oversee, structure, and train in how to do quality work, but all areas of the college must do quality work. What is missing here is a vision of what improvement that the college is working towards. What is the vision for the college in FIVE years? 10 years? Beyond?

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:**

- O2a WSC is primarily an undergraduate institution (150 programs); however a few graduate programs (14 programs) are offered in education and business.
- O6a WSC has excellent technological support with 1200 student computers, wired dorms, and 1100 networked faculty/staff computers.
- O6b Infrastructure includes 22 buildings on a 128-acre attractive campus with capacity for 4000 students.
- O8b State budget deficit mandated cuts in the operating budget.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Wayne State College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, *Supporting Institutional Operations*:

- 6C2 S The development of guidelines for departmental annual reports is a strong foundation for insuring systematic review of operations and identification of opportunities for improvement. To improve tracking of how campus units reinforce these and other AQIP criteria, guidelines have been developed to systematize departmental annual reports, specifically to determine how each department measures user satisfaction for stakeholders and identifies support service needs from stakeholders. WSC has systematized departmental annual reports.
- 6P1 O Fourteen of 30 departments have some type of process to determine how well support operations are working. The uneven quality of the efforts can be an opportunity to share best institutional practices at Wayne State College with other less able or effective departments. There does not appear to be a systematic process for departments to identify student support service needs nor does it appear that all student support unit needs are addressed in the table on page 56 compared to the list of student support services described on page 55. Processes by which student needs are identified are uneven across departments.
- 6P3 O Although the University manages its key student and administrative support service processes on a day-to-day basis in a variety of ways, it unclear how it documents its processes, uses feedback to change processes, and encourages knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment.
- 6P4 O Fourteen of 30departments have some type of process to determine how well support operations are working. The uneven quality of the efforts can be an opportunity to share best institutional practices at Wayne State College with other less able or effective departments. Departments do not have ongoing mechanisms for measuring stakeholder satisfaction. There does not appear to be a systematic process for key student and administrative support areas to use information and results to improve services. Analyzing and evaluation of feedback regarding operational excellence is uneven across departments.

- 6P5 OO It is clear that there is no institutional requirement or standard that mandates the systematic assessment of support operations. Quality is measurement-based planning and improvement. Quality-driven institutions develop measures that show effectiveness of processes and trends related to improvement or emerging needs. Departments do not have ongoing mechanisms for responding to gaps in stakeholder satisfaction. There does not appear to be any systematic process to collect and analyze the effectiveness of student and administrative support services nor are any specific measures identified. Analyzing and evaluation of feedback regarding operational excellence is uneven across departments.
- 6R1 O Although the University indicates that most student support service offices have processes in place to respond to students' needs that include new procedures and budgeting allocations as well as more effective scheduling and operating procedures, no quantifiable results are provided.
- 6R2 O Departments that do not have adequate processes can learn from others that do. Anytime there are different levels of performance, the lower performing department can learn from the experience of higher performing departments. Although the University indicates that some administrative support offices have adequate processes, no quantifiable results are provided.
- 6R3 O National surveys such as Noel-Levitz and National Survey of Student Engagement can provide comparative data in this context. No comparative data or internal trend data are provided. It is unclear how the University communicates its current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders.
- 6I1 O Although the University indicates that comments, suggestions, and recommendations by committees, students, employees, and community members are brought to the attention of department heads, directors, and higher levels of college administration, it is unclear how it uses this feedback to make improvements.

- 612 O The systems portfolio correctly identifies the need to have organizational expectations related to measurement of support processes. It remains the responsibility of the college administration to utilize findings in the systems portfolio and take the lead in developing institutional expectations, training and accountability to foster an institution-wide understanding of quality and its requirements. It is unclear who will act upon the recommendation made to require annual reports from all directors and department heads.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State 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*:

- O1c Mission: WSC is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development.

- O1d Vision: to make a notable difference to rural and community life through learning excellence, students success, and regional service; a regional college of national distinction
- O2a WSC is primarily an undergraduate institution (150 programs); however a few graduate programs (14 programs) are offered in education and business.
- O6a WSC has excellent "top rung" technological support with 1200 student computers, wired dorms, and 1100 networked faculty/staff computers.
- O8c In the last five years WSC has initiated a campus-wide assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning/mission building process.

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

- 7C1 S WSC uses a variety of information systems to support data collection, processing, storage, and information reporting. The four major systems used include the Student Information System, Nebraska Information System, Alumni Development System, and Financial Records System. NSSE and the Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey also provide comparative data for WSC.
- 7C1 S WSC produces an Institutional Data Book (IDB) annually and reports information on a regular basis to various external entities, including: Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), Nebraska State College System (NSCS), Nebraska Educational Data System (NEEDS), the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).
- 7C2 S The effectiveness measures fit into one or more of five categories: financial, non-monetary quantitative, qualitative, satisfaction, and other types.
- 7C2 OO Key institutional measures for tracking effectiveness in nine focus areas are listed in Figure 7c. However, few results are reported throughout the Portfolio as indications or measures of performance. Lacking this information, it may be difficult for the organization to track its effectiveness.
- 7P1 S The framework WSC has developed to guide the process of selecting, managing, and using data and information as determined by: the purpose for

managing, and using data and information as determined by: the purpose for which it is intended; the nature of the data and information; the source of the data and information; the organizational level(s) that will collect, manage, and/or use it; the amount and type of processing, storage, maintenance, access, and communication required. This initiative affirms the importance of a data-driven improvement process, especially with respect to assessing academic programs.

- 7P1 O Success with the assessment processes for academic programs is uneven across campus. Develop continuous and consistent assessment for all academic programs and include measures that validate improvements due to changes driven by assessment data.
- 7P2 O A process for determining and serving the data information needs of departments and units has been established. Missing from this response, however, is a clear indication of support services that are available to assist departments with assessment methodology. Departments may lack the skill essential for developing and implementing effective cycles of measurement, evaluation and change.
- 7P3 O WSC has a priority system for using comparative data. None of the top priorities are connected with the improvement of academic programs or other systems unless such comparisons are 1) mandated by external entities, 2) necessary to “maintain Wayne State College’s presence in the higher education community” or 3) are “essential to the ongoing management of various internal aspects of the institution.” Quality improvement is facilitated by using comparative data much below these priority thresholds. Needs of this kind are “served as resources permit.” If departments see these priorities as barriers to requests for data to enable routine quality improvement, few requests for this kind of data will be forthcoming. This is likely the reason that “the number of department requests for specialized comparative data...is consistently very low.”
- 7P4 O Results of analyses “are provided to high-level administrators for use and for possible selective dissemination.” It is not clear that the processes for sharing the analysis of overall performance data permit the information to be shared throughout the organization.

- 7P5 S WSC has completed several cycles of strategic planning over the past ten years. One result of that process is that departmental and sub-unit goals and objectives must be aligned with institutional goals and objectives. As well, efforts have improved to align goals among lower- and higher-level units within the organization.
- 7P5 O Measures of student learning are presented by each academic department in an assessment report. These reports were not mentioned in the discussion of student learning in criterion one. These reports are sent upstream in Wayne State College's hierarchy and published in "the institution's assessment report." This report would seem to be of great significance and should be highly familiar to the quality team and to departments in their pursuit of continuous quality improvement.
- 7P6 S The organization ensures the effectiveness of its centralized information systems through experienced leadership and trained employees, systematic backup and monitoring, administrative controls, on-line Trouble Ticket system to report difficulties, a help desk, security measures, and training and troubleshooting.
- 7P7 O WSC has six core values which address measures of effectiveness. The first of these is "teaching and learning," and WSC also lists "four areas as being the most important for immediate attention." First on this list is "institutional quality." All of the six core values which address measures and the four areas requiring the most immediate attention are important, but they are somewhat diffused. In addition, the focus of the administrative services department is driven by "approval of both internal and external entities." WSC may be better served by developing a process to guide its ability to measure effectiveness for continuous quality improvement which will also satisfy its approval needs as a by-product. Currently, it appears that all of these commendable goals listed above compete and that resources for routine measurement at the departmental level are given the lowest priorities.
- 7R1 O WSC has been challenged by both the scale of restructuring and senior level personnel changes during recent years. WSC asserts success with meeting the needs of most of its internal and external stakeholders with regard to the ability of effectiveness measures to operate continuously during a period of

rapid change. What is missing is evidence that the systems for measuring effectiveness are meeting the institution's needs with accomplishing its mission and goals.

- 7R2 O "WSC does not specifically look at systems for measuring effectiveness at other" organizations for comparative purposes. Incorporating best practices and results as identified in other institutions could provide benchmarks to assist WSC's plan for guiding their continuous improvement initiatives.
- 7I1/I2 S WSC has identified ten targeted areas for improving its systems for measuring effectiveness, with the recognition that "Not all of the current processes and systems for measuring effectiveness are developed or integrated to the extent that they could be." WSC's plate is very full, but hitting all of these targets will be important for strengthening their efforts with measuring effectiveness.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

Mission: WSC is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to freedom of inquiry, excellence in teaching and learning, and regional service and development.

Vision: to make a notable difference to rural and community life through learning excellence, students success, and regional service; a regional college of national distinction

O1 WSC underwent extensive internal review in 2001 and moved to a four-college structure directed by Deans.

O7 WSC is squeezed on one side by research universities in NE and SD and on the other side by nearby community colleges.

O8 WSC has experienced an 11% enrollment decline in the last six years.

O8 State budget deficit mandated cuts in the operating budget.

O8 In the last five years WSC has initiated a campus-wide assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning/mission building process.

O8 WSC has low name recognition in its service region.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Wayne State College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, *Planning Continuous Improvement*:

8C2 S The College's planning process is charted in Figure 8a. WSC's six core Strategic Plan values are: Teaching and Learning; Community; Collaboration; Quality; Stewardship; and Student Persistence.

8P2 OO Planning is currently guided by external forces rather than by an internal consensus and shared vision of what WSC wishes to become. Effective planning includes shaping and positioning the institution to achieve its vision and the needs of the community it serves. Annual planning should flow from the strategic plan which can be a roadmap for how the institution is going to fulfill its mission and vision. Without this connection, the institution will not grow in a strategic, intentional fashion.

- 8P4 OO There appears to be little evidence of coordination and alignment of planning processes at various institutional levels. In many areas a department is making isolated progress that is not shared with others so that all can learn and that the institution can move as a single entity rather than a loose community of units.
- 8P6 OO Short-term reactionary planning based on budgets will not lead to the development of a healthy institution. There does not appear to be an organizational focus for appropriate resource needs within the strategy selection and action plan implementation processes.
- 8P7 O The institution is currently weak in its ability to scan the environment for new opportunities beyond the budget set by the state legislature. This is a critical institutional capacity that should be addressed.
- 8R1 S The success in the first three vital projects, especially vital projects 1 and 2, should give the institution confidence that it has the capacity to change in an intentional and planned fashion.
- 8R2- OO There is no current plan for monitoring continuous quality improvement. No
8R4 results are presented to reflect that the organization's system for planning continuous improvement is effective.
- 8I1 O WSC proposes the establishment of a monitoring/review system, but how this fits in the planning process is unclear.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

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 Wayne State College 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*:

- 01a WSC is a regional public, open admission college geographically positioned to serve rural NE.
- 04 WSC has about 250 collaborative relationships, with 34 key relationships.
- 08e WSC has low name recognition in its service region.
- 08f WSC has become overly insular; programs do not reach out to neighboring communities to demonstrate the College's worth.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Wayne State College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, *Building Collaborative Relationships*:

- 9C1 S WSC has identified 34 key collaborative relationships that reflect five defined categories: (1) those that generate student enrollment, (2) involve agencies that receive WSC graduates, (3) provide services for its students; (4) serve as educational partners and resources, and (5) are associations, consortia, external agencies or general partners in the community.
- 9P1 S WSC identifies an "emerging" pattern of development to create relationships that includes a feasibility study, collecting data and information, prioritizing, conducting cost/benefit analysis, and developing summary reports. This process may help the college increase its effectiveness in developing collaborative relationships if the process is systematically followed throughout the organization.

- 9P2 O Although the organization indicates that on-going communication and assessment ensures that the needs of those involved in collaborative relationships are being met, no formal process is evident to evaluate the success or benefits of its collaborative relationships. Thus, the organization may be limiting its ability to build on successful relationships or to learn from efforts that are not successful.
- 9P3 O Although WSC has recently reorganized from 9 divisions to 4 schools of 14 departments, the success of the reorganization is too new to determine in terms of its effectiveness in facilitating integration and communication within those schools.
- 9R1 O No quantitative results are presented to support the qualitative measures/results described in this criterion.
- 9R2 O Only 3 of the 250 collaborative relationships have data available for comparison with what other educational institutions are doing with the same kind of constituencies. Therefore, WCS appears to be measuring its success using only subjective perception by “those responsible for developing and nurturing collaborative relationships.” Thus, the organization may be missing an opportunity to learn from comparison with “best practices” institutions.
- 9I1 O Although the institution identifies the beginning of a process to improve the development and creation of building relationships through an 8-step process described in 9P1, there does not appear to be (1) clear statements of intended outcomes as they relate to collaborative relationships and (2) a specific improvement process to address the second area of improvement; i.e., the collection and analysis of assessment data as they relate to collaborative agreements.
- 9I2 O Although the organization has identified five targeted areas for improvement, there does not appear to be specific action plans to support these targeted areas nor is there a systematic process to communicate results and improvement priorities with faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate students and stakeholders.

Overall, the Systems Appraisal Team saw Wayne State College's performance on this Category as Beginning, characterized by:

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES FOR: Wayne State College

Strategic issues are those most closely related to Wayne State College'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 (as it is for most) then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified these issues through analysis of your *Organizational Overview*, the feedback it provided for each Category, and a review of the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your Systems Portfolio. This list of strategic and accreditation issues is included to assist you and your colleagues on prioritizing the important issues facing Wayne State College. Among these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, the opportunities and challenges that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. AQIP expects an institution to have three or four vital Action Projects at a time in order to encourage administrators, faculty, and staff to prioritize their efforts and resources. The Systems Appraisal Team has listed more than three or four issues, trusting that Wayne State College will discuss and prioritize those it concludes are most critical. Hopefully, this *Strategic Issues Analysis* will intensify your continuing quality efforts.

S WSC does not systematically report on its supportive campus environment criterion.

- S Key collaborative partnerships are not well documented. Additional opportunity might easily result if identified processes were utilized to assess collaborative relationships and stakeholder needs. Systemic analysis of stakeholders might also reveal unmet needs or opportunities.

- S WSC's communication structures are reported to be top down with dissatisfaction regarding the quality of communication at lower levels. High performing institutions develop ways to increase the flow of communication in all directions, share ideas and skills within the organization, and tap into knowledge and skills of other stakeholder groups.

- S WSC cites the 11% drop in enrollment as a significant concern, but no systems are apparent to address this issue in a systematic fashion. Without a system of processes to guide and integrate improvement with recruiting, retention, program development, marketing and scholarship/financial assistance to maintain/increase enrollment, WSC may limit its ability to compete and ultimately impact its ability to sustain its mission.

- S WSC is transitioning to a process of systematic review and continuous improvement. WSC has just started creating baseline data, and this lack of data is evident throughout the Systems Portfolio. There is concern that WSC is still transitioning after three years. While the organization identifies various improvements that have been made and/or improvements to be made, there does not appear to be a systematic improvement process to evaluate progress, to target priorities to make improvements, and to communicate improvements to enhance learning throughout the organization as they relate to the criteria. One example of commitment to quality can be shown by developing an accountability and recognition system which celebrates individuals and teams who achieve success through an attention to quality.

- A Core accreditation component 2c states that the "organization's on-going assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement." WSC is just beginning its program for assessment of student learning. WSC indicates that its current assessment is not now tied to specific learning objectives and it is not apparent that there is a process to objectively determine the success of its General Education program.

** WSC has identified the need to move from short-term budget based action toward strategic long-term focus, but no current plan for monitoring or measuring continuous improvement exists. It is unclear how the organization is effectively addressing several of its organizational challenges; namely that it “has experienced an 11% enrollment decline in the last six years”; its “low name recognition in its service region”; it has “become overly insular”; “programs do not reach out to neighboring communities to demonstrate the College’s worth”; and that “the State budget deficit mandated cuts in the operating budget”. The college lacks processes and systems for scanning the external environment for the development of new opportunities such as program development and new partnerships. This lack of capacity calls into question the ability of the institution to react and adjust to changes in its external environment and to achieve its vision of “being a regional college of national distinction”.

** This is an important strategic issue that will become an accreditation issue without their immediate and focused attention.

APPRAISAL SUMMARY FOR: WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

The Systems Appraisal conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program of The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools provides a comprehensive examination of the Wayne State College conducted by a trained team composed primarily of higher education peer reviewers. In order to provide fresh and objective insights and perspectives the team also included reviewers from outside higher education. Following is the Appraisal Team’s summary evaluation of Wayne State College’s current performance in each of the nine AQIP Categories.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: *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.

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: *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.

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: *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.

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AQIP CATEGORY 4: *Valuing People* explores your institution's commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators since the efforts of all 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.

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AQIP CATEGORY 5: *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.

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AQIP CATEGORY 6: *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.

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AQIP CATEGORY 7: *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.

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performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: *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.

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AQIP CATEGORY 9: *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.

Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.