Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500 | Chicago, IL 60604-1411
312-263-0456 | 800-621-7440 | Fax: 312-263-7462 | ncahlc.org

February 13, 2012

David Reist
President
Highland Community College
606 West Main Street
Highland, KS 66035-4165

Dear President Reist:

Enclosed is a copy of Highland Community College's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. It begins with a concise Executive Summary, intended for those general readers that do not require a high level of detail. Your Systems Appraisal Team of quality experts provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this full *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution. The enclosed *After Your Appraisal* details what lies ahead and how to use your Feedback Report most effectively, and explains when and how to register for your next Strategy Forum.

To comply with federal requirements, we need the CEO of the institution formally to acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Please read the enclosed *After Your Appraisal* suggestions *before* you decide how to respond. Limit your acknowledgement and comments to a maximum of two typewritten pages, and understand that your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file, to be shared with future peer reviewers who review your institution (including the next Systems Appraisal team, the next Quality Checkup visit team, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation panel). Email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org; call me or Mary Green (at 800-621-7440 x130) if you have any questions about it.

We know you will gain real value from the Systems Appraisal Feedback and the activities it will stimulate within your institution, and we are proud to be working with you as you continue along the never-ending path to improvement.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Spangehl
Vice President for Accreditation Relations

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 10, 2012

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

In response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission NCA

February 10, 2012

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight **Highland Community College**'s achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

- Category 1: HCC has participated in institutional and state processes to align curriculum and outcomes in programs and courses. The institution has trend and comparison data to indicate strengths and opportunities for improvement in student success. As HCC continues these efforts, the institution has an opportunity to develop processes throughout this category which will not only measure, but also analyze and provide feedback for improvement.

- Category 2: HCC's processes for other distinctive objectives are not clearly described and the results (which include identified academic performance gaps between athletes and non-athletes and between various athletic groups) are incompletely analyzed. These gaps suggest an opportunity for improvement for the processes that promote student academic performance. HCC also has the opportunity to analyze trends and comparisons of the results for its other distinctive objectives to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.   Finally, HCC has an opportunity to demonstrate how the institution applies the elements of the Strategic Plan process to the data collection and analyses of the activities and measures related to Other Distinctive Objectives.

- Category 3: The College has an opportunity to set targets and benchmarks using the measures it collects and to analyze the data in alignment with the identified targets. The College has the opportunity to highlight certain results to indicate its performance in areas that it deems crucial vis-à-vis student and other stakeholder satisfaction. HCC has not presented in this section an overall or comprehensive system that discerns, analyzes and acts on multi-dimensional data on student and other stakeholder needs. Elements of that system are evident, but have yet to coalesce and organize into what constitutes an effective system that would be found in a maturing AQIP institution.

- Category 4: HCC has several elements in place to guide its success in the category Valuing People such as the recently administered Institutional Climate survey. HCC is encouraged to use the elements and framework contained in the category of Valuing

People to develop a strategic process to achieve its desired outcomes with respect to employee effectiveness and satisfaction. The College could also develop processes which include part- time employees in its efforts to demonstrate that it values all employees.

- Category 5: HCC has recently initiated use of a Campus Climate Survey to assist improvement in Leading and Communicating processes. The development of an ongoing assessment process which will provide routine feedback to the campus community on effectiveness of current practices, on possible areas for improvement, as well as on comparison with similar institutions will enhance the culture of continuous improvement at HCC.

- Category 6: HCC understands the need to identify specific processes to improve to meet its goal of delivering high-quality education by deploying the efficient use of financial resources. The institution is just beginning to gather results to demonstrate successful approaches, processes, and outcomes. HCC has an opportunity to develop and present in greater detail the processes in place for the institution.

  The College may well be data-rich but in many instances appears to be information poor for assessing its performance in its support operations. Conducting an overall assessment of the assessment methods currently used by the College may be beneficial. HCC has the opportunity to consistently demonstrate its ability to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of other processes related to attempts to improve its institutional operations in much the same manner as what was done with the crisis alert system.

- Category 7: Highland appears to be positioning itself to address its data collection and analysis needs for the future; however, the College does not demonstrate how current evidence provides support for continuous improvement. As HCC gathers data from a variety of local, state, and national sources and with the purchase of software to allow for the display of these data in a dashboard format (iDashboard), the College should develop indicators to ensure that the data are reliable and presented in a timely manner.

- Category 8: HCC has just implemented a strategic planning process and structure and has a good beginning with its efforts to plan continuous improvement. HCC can create a stronger organization by showcasing how these processes have come together to

achieve measurable improvements. Identification of appropriate measures and benchmarks may help HCC determine if these processes and structures are effective in improving College outcomes.

- Category 9: HCC is actively cultivating relationships to better understand and fulfill its role as a key partner in serving its communities.

  HCC also has awareness that simply listing what it does in this regard is only the beginning of a quality journey and that it further needs to evaluate how effective the partnerships and relationships help HCC improve its role of serving its students and the broader community. There could be a benefit from more clearly articulating how processes are developed to build collaborative relationships as well as how processes are reviewed and evaluated through the use of comparisons such as trends and benchmarks within and outside the institution.

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

ELEMENTS OF Highland Community 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 Highland Community 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 Highland Community College 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 Highland Community College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

- HCC provides responses to process questions that tend to be anecdotal. However, process questions ask how a process is developed and evaluated. This systems appraisal cites numerous opportunities for improvement in how the institution develops processes and assesses the effectiveness of the processes.   Answering the how questions will help HCC determine the effectiveness of the processes in advancing quality improvement.

- HCC provides some trend and comparison data for each category, but the institution does not provide evidence as to how these data are analyzed to measure effectiveness and used for quality improvements. The purchase of the iDashboard may provide the College with a tool to analyze data. The analyses may identify courses of actions that improve the quality of its processes in each of the categories. Providing evidence of analyzing and using data will help HCC close the Plan-Do-Check-Act quality improvement cycle.

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 Highland Community College, 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 Highland Community 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.

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Highland Community College began as Highland University in 1858 making it the first college in Kansas and is a rural two year college in northeastern Kansas. It serves a nine county area through the main Highland campus and six regional centers.

O1b   Highland Community College has governance through a six member Board of Trustees and the Kansas Board of Regents.

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O1d   HCC offers five associate degrees: associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, associate in nursing, and associate in general studies; and nineteen certificate programs. While traditionally a transfer institution with approximately 70% of HCC students intend to transfer their coursework to a bachelor degree-granting institution, the recent merger with the local technical school system has increased their technical skills training.

O1e   The College provides instruction using a variety of methodologies both in the traditional classrooms using Smart classrooms, as well as providing a growing number of completely online courses throughout its service area through Kansas' TELENET-2.

HCC provides both developmental and orientation classes to address the needs of incoming students. Approximately 40% of each incoming class requires at least one developmental course.

O2   Highland is student centered providing courses to develop and display their talents in art, music, and drama, as well as activities in intramural and intercollegiate athletics. The College is community responsive serving its citizens through adult basic education, providing credit and non-credit training for individuals and businesses, as well as providing other community enrichment opportunities.

O3a   The expectations and needs of students can be quite varied, ranging from updated computer skills to a jump start on college transfer hours for high school students taking college-credit courses or complete degree programs.

O3b   Highland is competing with other mostly Kansas institutions vying for similar students, and the College is also competing for limited state and county financial resources needed to achieve its mission.

O4   HCC has 90% full-time personnel in faculty, administration and support staff.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O7   The Strategic Planning Council, Action Projects, and work teams identify strategies to meet strategic goals and determine the data and information collected and distributed. The Institutional Research Department provides research for college projects.

O9   Key relationships center on educational, coordinating, and economic partners. KBOR – by legislation, the Kansas Board of Regents governs the six universities in Kansas and coordinates the Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. USDs – the unified school districts in our service area are the primary providers of our students. Area Articulated Colleges and Universities – these institutions are the primary receivers of our AA, AS, and AGS students.

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill

enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O1d   HCC offers five associate degrees: associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, associate in nursing, and associate in general studies; and nineteen certificate programs. While traditionally a transfer institution with approximately 70% of HCC students intend to transfer their coursework to a bachelor degree-granting institution, the recent merger with the local technical school system has increased their technical skills training.

O1e   The College provides instruction using a variety of methodologies both in the traditional classrooms using Smart classrooms, as well as providing a growing number of completely online courses throughout its service area through Kansas' TELENET-2. HCC provides both developmental and orientation classes to address the needs of incoming students. Approximately 40% of each incoming class requires at least one developmental course.

O3a   The expectations and needs of students can be quite varied, ranging from updated computer skills to a jump start on college transfer hours for high school students taking college-credit courses or complete degree programs.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
1P1a	S	Highland CC faculty and staff have established through a consensus process six Common Learning Outcomes for students, faculty, and staff. These outcomes are integrated into all academic programs and the new program approval process requires that these student learning outcomes are integrated into the courses. The Student Services division has also developed mission, vision, and belief statements to guide the work of this division.

1P1b	O	HCC has an opportunity to provide processes for how the identified learning objectives will be routinely reviewed and assessed beyond the initial consensus building in 2010 to fully integrate them into the creation of a culture of continuous improvement.
1P2	O	Although HCC indicates that program learning objectives are determined in conjunction with state consortia and the Board of Regents, the institution has an opportunity to describe the processes for assessment and review of these student learning outcomes.
1P3	S	New and/or revised programs and courses are designed through team effort and are based on industry changes, occupational standards, certification requirements, emerging technology, and community needs. The Curriculum and Instruction Committee has been granted authority by the Board of Regents to provide final approval for individual courses.
1P4	S	The new program approval process requires a rationale indicating market need and student demand. Alignment of curricula for technical programs has been established through a Technical Education Authority project.
1P5a	S	Highland CC consults with other state community and technical colleges and reviews success data in determining appropriate levels of preparation for students entering its programs. Work Keys scores are reviewed periodically by faculty and Program Advisory Councils to determine appropriate student admission decisions. Criteria are determined by the state for high school students enrolled in concurrent enrollment.
1P5b	O	HCC has an opportunity to develop processes for evaluating the effectiveness of the various preparation standards identified. The development of assessment processes could provide information on which standards are appropriate and when modifications may be indicated. Such a change would create a more robust culture of continuous improvement.
1P6	O	Although Highland uses a catalog, HCC Web site, flyers, course bulletins, student/parent orientation, and the first semester orientation class to communicate to current and prospective students the required

preparation and learning objectives for specific programs, courses, and
degrees or credentials; it is not evident that HCC has evaluated these
communication methods for their effectiveness.

1P7a   S   The College offers New Student Orientation for all first time college
students and first time transfer students and encourages first time
students to enroll in Freshman Seminar. Additionally, each semester,
prior to registering for classes, degree seeking students are encouraged
to meet with an academic advisor to plan their course of study and update
degree plans, if necessary. The Kuder Career Planning System allows
students to explore opportunities for education and the workforce. The
College also participates in Arkansas Career Pathways (ACP). ACP is a
statewide initiative that enables participating two-year colleges to offer
free career training and college classes to those students who quality for
the program. Finally, each fall the College hosts EXPO where hundreds
of area high school juniors and seniors tour the campus for a first-hand
look at the College's academic programs.

1P7b   O   Although HCC lists several advising activities; it is not clear how all
students are advised and how these processes are integrated or how
these activities are evaluated.

1P8a   S   Highland provides additional assistance by the program instructor(s)
through a variety of methods such as non-class instruction time,
computerized remedial training, additional review worksheets and
assignments, or by partnering current students with students who are
underprepared for the Tech Center academic programs and courses
offered. Developmental courses are offered for the transfer students
whose scores on the ACT or COMPASS are below the minimum in math,
reading, or writing.

1P8b   O   Although various methods are listed; it is not evident these methods have
been evaluated for their effectiveness.

1P9   O   Although HCC identifies efforts in classes for student self-assessment
and use of Title III monies to train faculty in the areas of learning styles,

there is an opportunity to identify the percentage of students and faculty impacted by these efforts and processes for assessing. There is also an opportunity to assess the effectiveness for the varying learning styles.

1P10	O	HCC focuses efforts in the area of student subgroups with special needs on the ADA requirements. HCC has an opportunity to develop internal monitoring of effectiveness of special needs remediation efforts and processes for identification of other subgroups among the student population, both current and emerging.
1P11a	S	The faculty contract includes expectations for effective teaching. Evaluations are completed and reviewed with faculty during the first three years of their employment. Subsequent evaluations are conducted on a rotating basis. Students are provided the opportunity to evaluate both the course material and instruction.
1P11b	O	The College has a process involving the accumulation of information by selected individuals such as the Vice President of Academic Affairs; however, it is not evident how the feedback process substantively improves either the quality of student learning or instructional methodologies.
1P12a	S	Instructors in technical programs employ traditional classroom practices, hands-on activities, projects, lab/shop time, and clinicals. In the transfer area Highland delivers an array of courses that are needed for the majority of students whose goal is to transfer to a four-year school after a year or two at HCC.
1P13	O	Although HCC utilizes Program Advisory Councils and the Kansas Core Outcomes Project to ensure that the technical programs and courses meet the needs of business and industry as well as transfer institutions; it is not clear there are processes identified to evaluate academic and technical programs.
1P14	O	The portfolio did not articulate a process for changing and/or discontinuing programs.

1P15 O Although Highland uses Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), an opportunity exists for Highland to use more than student satisfaction and engagement to determine and address the learning support needs (tutoring, advising, placement, library, laboratories, etc.) of students and faculty in student learning, development, and assessment processes.

1P16 O Although as mentioned in 1P1 the Student Services division established mission, vision, and belief statements, HCC has the opportunity to align these statements with the recently approved Common Learning Outcomes. This alignment may also help this division align its activities to help students learn these outcomes.

1P17 O While Highland uses outcomes assessments; it is unclear how the institution systematically measures how well students meet expectations with regard to General and Career Education goals for programs other than those that undertake national certification or licensure examinations.

1P18 O The Assessment Committee, consisting of faculty, administrators and staff, has been charged with conducting surveys of classes on a rotating basis. However, measuring and analyzing assessment results through feedback processes is not evident. In addition to measuring indirect means of assessment it might be beneficial to utilize the committee to gather and assess direct methods of classroom and program assessment.

1R1 S HCC has identified direct and indirect measures of student learning that rely on nationally normed tests and measures of student success and persistence. These measures allow the institution to compare its performance with other institutions through gap and trend analyses.

1R2 O Table 1.2 indicates consistent results for student learning as measured by the CAAP test. As HCC develops assessments of the Common Learning Outcomes, the college has an opportunity to identify the teaching and learning processes that produced the CAAP results and apply them to

produce positive assessment results for the Common Learning Outcomes. Results for other measures are not provided.

1R3   O   Table 1.3 shows positive consistent performance results from 2008 to 2010 for the Automotive Technology, Diesel Engine Repair, and Electrical programs. HCC has the opportunity to learn from the processes used by these programs to produce such positive results and apply these processes to other programs.

1R4a   S   Table 1.5 provides comparisons of HCC transfers to Kansas universities. Results are positive for HC transfers to Kansas State and Washburn universities. Table 1.6 indicates positive employment rates for Technical Center graduates during the years 2008-2010. These results suggest strengths in the program advisory committee and curriculum development processes in these programs.

1R5   S   Table 1.7 indicates positive results from 2006 through 2010 for the student advising processes from a student perspective.

1R6   S   Tables 1.8-10 provide state and national peer comparisons from 2007 through 2011 on persistence, competition, and transfer rates of HCC students. Trends and comparisons indicate that HCC results varied during these years which suggest strengths and opportunities for improvement in student progression through HCC and other colleges and universities.

1I1   S   HCC deploys Improvement Project Teams to address gaps in student success with these teams producing positive results for math and students on probation.

1I2   O   The Project Teams provide an opportunity to share best practices throughout the College and to inform new teams on the process to identify the root cause of problems. Involving more campus faculty, staff, and administrators in these teams may help the College further develop its culture of continuous improvement.

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Highland Community College began as Highland University in 1858 making it the first college in Kansas and is a rural two year college in northeastern Kansas. It serves a nine county area through the main Highland campus and six regional centers.

O2   Highland is student centered providing courses to develop and display their talents in art, music, and drama, as well as activities in intramural and intercollegiate athletics. The College is community responsive serving its citizens through adult basic education, provides credit and non-credit training for individuals and businesses, as well as providing other community enrichment opportunities such as recreation.

O9   Key relationships center on educational, coordinating, and economic partners. KBOR – by legislation, the Kansas Board of Regents governs the six universities in Kansas and coordinates the Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. USDs – the unified school districts in our service area are the primary providers of our students. Area Articulated Colleges and Universities – these institutions are the primary receivers of our AA, AS, and AGS students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Highland Community College'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	While HCC indicates there are stakeholders involved; there is no indication in the portfolio of the process used to lead, design, and determine the positive impact of non-instructional operations toward fulfillment of the institution's mission and major objectives. Further, the portfolio does not describe the method by which Highland collects and analyzes data in order to make decisions about what key non-instructional processes to implement or about how to improve those already existing. The institution has an opportunity to develop a system for prioritizing its key non-instructional processes and for reviewing the effectiveness of those in place.
2P2	O	Although HCC clearly identifies those involved in determining the institution's key non-instructional objectives for external stakeholders, there is an opportunity to more clearly identify the processes for how these objectives are determined and how they are aligned with the institutional mission.
2P3	O	Although HCC identifies the mechanisms for communicating expectations regarding non-instructional objectives, there is an opportunity to more clearly identify processes employed to monitor effectiveness of those communication mechanisms.
2P4	O	Although HCC indicates that it assesses the appropriateness and value of its non-instructional objectives via feedback from participants, advisory councils, focus groups, legislators, business and industry, and state and local partners, the institution does not indicate the process or processes in place to gather and manage the feedback it receives from the stakeholders listed, nor does it provide evidence of how it reacts or reacted to the feedback and the results of any actions.
2P5	O	The strategic planning process is used to review other distinctive objectives but it is unclear how the needs of faculty and staff are identified in this process.

2P6   O   HCC identifies how adjustments are made for faculty and staff needs through the budgeting process of the overall strategic planning process, the institution has the opportunity to identify how this process is used to prioritize and modify key non-instructional objectives.

2R2   O   HCC provides data regarding GPA and transfer rates for selected athletic groups. The reported Student GPA averages range from 3.137 to 1.985. The institution does not provide a discussion of contributing factors for the disparity across athletic group academic performance. Furthermore, no or limited data are presented for other distinctive objectives such Auxiliary Services, Community Service and Enrichment or Economic Development. The institution has an opportunity to implement a more robust means of reporting on the efficacy and appropriateness of these initiatives through presenting data for all measures identified in 2P1 as well as conducting analyses within a year's results and developing trend data across academic years for all Distinctive Objectives.

2R3   O   HCC has an opportunity to improve how it accomplishes its other distinctive objectives by putting into place a system by which it establishes targets, collects and analyzes data, and compares its results to those of other institutions. The results could be used to determine which non-instructional efforts to implement and what steps to take to improve existing efforts.

2R4   O   While HCC reports how its efforts have strengthened its bonds to its community, the portfolio does not describe how the College has put into place a mechanism for intentionally collecting and reporting data on key performance indicators that provide evidence on the success of the College's efforts to strengthen those bonds and on how the College might make future decisions in this area.

2I1-2I2   O   The institution has not shown how it is using the strategic planning process to drive improvement at the institution or to help select those processes

that may need improvement. The institution has the opportunity to collect,

analyze, and utilize relevant performance and trend data.

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O1d   HCC offers five associate degrees: associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, associate in nursing, and associate in general studies; and nineteen certificate programs. While traditionally a transfer institution with approximately 70% of HCC students intend to transfer their coursework to a bachelor degree-granting institution, the recent merger with the local technical school system has increased their technical skills training.

O1e   The College provides instruction using a variety of methodologies both in the traditional classrooms using Smart classrooms, as well as providing a growing number of

---

completely online courses throughout its service area through Kansas' TELENET-2. HCC provides both developmental and orientation classes to address the needs of incoming students. Approximately 40% of each incoming class requires at least one developmental course.

O2   Highland is student centered providing courses to develop and display their talents in art, music, and drama, as well as activities in intramural and intercollegiate athletics. The College is community responsive serving its citizens through adult basic education, provides credit and non-credit training for individuals and businesses, as well as providing other community enrichment opportunities such as recreation.

O3a   The expectations and needs of students can be quite varied, ranging from updated computer skills to a jump start on college transfer hours for high school students taking college-credit courses or complete degree programs.

O3b   Highland is competing with other mostly Kansas institutions vying for similar students, and the College is also competing for limited state and county financial resources needed to achieve its mission.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O9   Key relationships center on educational, coordinating, and economic partners. KBOR – by legislation, the Kansas Board of Regents governs the six universities in Kansas and coordinates the Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. USDs – the unified school districts in our service area are the primary providers of our students. Area Articulated Colleges and Universities – these institutions are the primary receivers of our AA, AS, and AGS students.

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

Item   *S/O*   *Comment*

3P1a   S   HCC deploys various surveys and assessments to identify the changing needs of students. Faculty and staff also listen to students through

various groups including a Campus Care Team, Student Leadership Team, and Technical Program Advisory Committees. Survey results and information gathered from groups are considered by the Strategic Planning Council and President's Staff.

3P1b   O   Although HCC deploys surveys it is not clear how the College uses and analyzes the survey results. HCC has the opportunity to use other methods to identify needs and assess the effectiveness of its processes. Using the results may help HCC take actions to improve its processes.

3P2   S   Relationships with students begin when students enroll at HCC; students are required to attend a College Orientation which is provided for face to face and online students. In addition all students are assigned a faculty advisor, class sizes are structured to allow relationship building, and tutor services are provided. HCC hosts A Block Party where students can interact informally with faculty, staff, administrators, and other students.

3P3   O   Although HCC analyzes the changing needs by conducting various activities such as a needs assessment for new programs, considering public comment at Board of Trustee meetings, developing and maintaining credit transfer agreements with other colleges and universities, working with technical program advisory committees, reviewing certification and licensure examination results, and developing articulation agreements with area high schools; it is not evident that a process exists to analyze the changing needs of key stakeholder groups.

3P4   O   HCC lists numerous activities, services, and programs to maintain relationships with prospective students, high school personnel, businesses, and community members/taxpayers. It is not clear how these activities, services, and programs are systematically developed and prioritized. The development of priorities for these activities may help HCC determine the efficacy of each activity, program, and service.

3P5	S	HCC advisory committees, focus groups, and school district personnel provide input on current and future education needs. A SWOT analysis is used to determine the feasibility of the suggestions.
3P6	O	While there are methods established to manage complaints from student and stakeholders, some of the processes are only ad hoc and case-by-case in nature; HCC describes no systematic method for aggregating and analyzing the data resulting from the complaints process to make improvements.
3R1	O	While HCC collects a variety of information from stakeholders, it is not clear if the College uses a formalized analysis of the measures for student and stakeholder satisfaction, nor does the College indicate that it collects comparative data. Understanding of stakeholder satisfaction could be strengthened by the use of a national instrument.
3R2-3	S	HCC identifies and presents analyses of multiple measures of student satisfaction and relationship variables.
3R2-3	O	HCC has an opportunity to describe processes employed to analyze these data to assess the effectiveness in these areas as well as expand use of benchmarks and trend data for each measure.
3R4-5	O	Although results are listed for community, prospective students, and business stakeholders it is not clear how these results are collected and systematically reviewed. As mentioned in 3R2, a systematic process may help HCC identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the processes deployed to improve stakeholder satisfaction.
3R6	O	Although HCC presents data from Noel-Levitz and CCSSE for comparison of institutional efforts with comparable institutions, the opportunity is present to describe the processes employed to apply those results to close the feedback loop as a part of the CQI culture.
3I1-2	O	It is not clear from the portfolio how the College uses their processes to understand or meet the needs of its various stakeholder groups. It is not

clear how the College comes to decisions to implement new initiatives and demonstrates its systematic and comprehensive processes.

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O4   HCC has 90% full-time personnel in faculty, administration and support staff.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
4P1	S	HCC identifies specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators through the use of job descriptions. Job descriptions are developed through a cooperative effort between the appropriate direct supervisor and the VP for that department or unit. Faculty credentials are specific to the teaching disciplines. The Human Resources Director reviews the job description prior to final approval by the President. The Common Learning Objectives will be implemented to ensure common values for students and staff.
4P2	O	HCC's hiring process includes screening all materials provided by applicants to ensure minimum requirements are satisfied before interviews are scheduled. However, HCC has an opportunity to develop a process to ensure that potential employees also possess the skills and values required by the institution.
4P3	O	HCC has identified tools used to recruit potential employees. As mentioned in 4P2, HCC has an opportunity to establish processes for the next steps in the hiring as well as an opportunity to develop processes to retain current employees.
4P4	O	Although HCC identifies elements of the basic orientation process, the institution has an opportunity to develop in further depth processes to integrate new employees more fully into HCC, and to include adjunct instructors.
4P5	O	Personnel change processes as described appear to be largely reactive in nature, responding to budgetary constraints. Planning for personnel changes is a strategic activity as much as it is a budget process. HCC has

an opportunity to identify processes that proactively anticipate forces beyond resignations and retirements which impact personnel changes.

4P6	O	HCC notes that its workflow is dependent on its information systems; it does not describe an intentional process to review the effective use of its human capital as it relates to organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.
4P7	O	Although HCC has clearly stated policies to prevent conflicts of interest and define behaviors that are considered unethical for employee supervision, the institution has an opportunity to develop processes for monitoring the effectiveness of the identified policies and other potential problem areas in the ethical behavior of employees; e.g., a review of complaint related trends (see 3P6).
4P8	O	It is not evident that HCC has a process for determining training needs for all employees in either a systematic or strategic manner. Furthermore, there is no indication of how employee training is intentionally aligned with short- and long-range organizational plans in a way that strengthens instructional and non-instructional programs and services.
4P9	O	Although HCC uses in-service and other training activities for faculty, staff and administration, the College has an opportunity to describe the processes it uses to ensure that all employees develop and maintain skill levels necessary for a successful professional life through the length of their career.
4P10	O	While the Master Contract prescribes the evaluation process for full-time faculty, HCC recognizes the opportunity to create a continuous improvement-based evaluation process for other employees.
4P11	O	HCC recognizes employees annually at an end-of-year luncheon. However, it is not evident that a process exists to design employee recognition, reward, compensation, and benefit systems that align with objectives for both instructional and non-instructional programs and services.

4P12	S	HCC has initiated the Institutional Climate Survey which can serve as the foundation for an ongoing climate assessment process to help HCC determine the effect of its employee motivational practices.
4P13	S	HCC will use the Climate Survey as its primary means to gather additional information on employee satisfaction. The College provides paid health and dental insurance for employees with an option for employees to purchase family insurance. Full-time employees are provided membership to the Highland campus wellness center. HCC has an established Crisis Team and practice drills are conducted on a regular basis.
4R1	S	HCC has initiated a Climate Survey as a primary means to measure valuing people.
4R2	O	HCC has an opportunity to provide more analysis, interpretation, and illustration of the Institutional Climate Survey results along with exploring the implications of the other measures to evaluate its effectiveness with valuing employees.
4R3	O	HCC has an opportunity to push the assessment process beyond citing an employee turnover rate of less than 10% as the limited measure of employee effectiveness with helping to achieve institutional goals. Minimally, the use of trend and comparison of turnover rates with other community colleges, businesses, and organizations may help HCC identify strengths and opportunities for improving its processes to increase the productivity and effectiveness of its employees.
4R4	OO	HCC has an opportunity to provide comparative data and analysis for all measures it identifies in the Results section of this category.
4I1	O	HCC lists two items of improvement—a Sick Leave Bank and the establishment of a Crisis Team—but did not use the process and results sections to show why these items were needed and implemented. The College has an opportunity to look at how processes and data can be used in this category to help drive systematic quality improvement with respect to valuing its employees.

| 4I2 | O | While HCC's Strategic Planning Council has helped the College implement a few projects in this area there is opportunity to achieve deeper change by building an effective infrastructure to assist the College to continually improve its efforts to value people through systematic data collection and analysis to target specific processes for change. |

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Highland Community College has governance through a six member Board of Trustees and the Kansas Board of Regents.

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance
        agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O5c   The strategy aligning Leading and Communicating processes is adherence to
        local/state/federal/HLC guidelines.

O9   Key relationships center on educational, coordinating, and economic partners. KBOR –
        by legislation, the Kansas Board of Regents governs the six universities in Kansas and
        coordinates the Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. USDs – the unified
        school districts in our service area are the primary providers of our students. Area
        Articulated Colleges and Universities – these institutions are the primary receivers of our
        AA, AS, and AGS students.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
5P1	S	HCC's Board of Trustees and President's staff revised its mission and value statements in 2008 as part of a strategic planning process. A Strategic Planning Council (SPC) was established. The SPC and Board annually review the strategic goals. The College has the opportunity to include its constituents in the planning process.
5P2	O	While Highland has implemented a Strategic Planning Council, it is not clear how leaders systematically set directions in alignment with the College's mission, vision, and values.
5P3a	S	HCC has several projects underway to improve facilities, technologies, lifelong learning, economic development, and academic progress. These projects address the needs of students and other key stakeholder groups.
5P3b	O	Highland describes a range of stakeholders and tools to address constituents' needs, but does not clearly describe a process of how these various inputs are intentionally and systematically included in the planning process.

5P4	O	Although the Highland leadership team has implemented initiatives to increase enrollment and organizational strength; it is not evident that a process exits to guide the organization in seeking future opportunities.
5P5	O	The role and relationship between the leadership team and the Strategic Planning Council respective to the decision-making process is not clearly stated. A process to evaluate the effectiveness of HCC's committees is not defined.
5P6a	S	Various teams at HCC use data to make recommendations for quality improvement throughout the College. These recommendations are reviewed by the President's staff and the SPC. Actions implemented in the past three years include new programs, creation of HCC online, a merger with another education institution, and development of Common Learning Outcomes. Recommendations for quality improvement are also developed through HCC's program review process.
5P6b	O	HCC identifies several examples of using data in decision-making efforts, but it is unclear how the information is employed or what process exists to use it as a basis for measuring effectiveness in decision-making processes. An opportunity exists to further expand this description to address how these efforts are integrated into an overarching process which may align decisions with institutional goals and external pressures.
5P7a	S	HCC uses a variety of print, electronic, and personal methods to ensure communication of important information regarding leading and communicating occurs between and among the levels and units of the organization. Some of the communication occurs continuously, daily, at scheduled times, and as needed.
5P7b	O	The direction and means of communication described seems to indicate a top-down flow of providing information to College personnel. An opportunity exists to develop feedback processes which would monitor effectiveness in these communication efforts and track improvements.
5P8	O	Although HCC has employed Town Hall-type meetings, institution wide, all-employee meetings, and regularly scheduled faculty and staff

meetings to communicate a shared mission, vision, and values that deepen and reinforce the characteristics of high performance; it is not evident that these methods have been evaluated. Highland has an opportunity to develop communications that reinforce the values, mission, and vision developed to share the results that have accrued.

5P9-10   O   Although HCC provides several leadership opportunities to its employees; it is not clear how leadership knowledge and best practices are shared throughout the College. The sharing of such knowledge may help employees learn about leadership in order to become effective leaders who will continue the work of high performance quality improvement at the executive level.

5R1   O   HCC mentions a number of indirect measures for this category, but does not describe a process nor offer a plan for analysis of data for improvement. HCC has the opportunity to develop more direct comprehensive measures and to strengthen its commitment to the collection and analysis of its results in this Category.

5R2   O   While the institution has structures that provide information and perspective on Leading and Communicating, the institution may wish to consider how it can develop more quantitative measures where improvement could be better documented. This approach may also present opportunities for benchmarking. As the institution matures in the process trend data for current as well as new measures will be developed.

5R3   O   HCC employees results from Noel-Levitz and CCSSE for comparative data for this category but has not developed a method that will allow it to compare its results to those of similar institutions. As Highland develops its approach to Leading and Communicating, it should consider selecting measures that may be commonly produced by other state schools within its system or nationally-available surveys that create an opportunity for comparative analysis.

5I1	S	HCC has made several improvements in leading and communicating most significantly the initiation of a Campus Climate Survey.
5I2	O	Highland has a number of groups comprised of employees from areas of the organization and mechanisms for communication between groups, and between the groups and senior leadership. The gaps between employee groups identified in the Climate Survey provide an opportunity to improve processes for leading and communicating. The college may also improve its means of leading and communicating by collecting data and then, based on an analysis of those data, targeting specific processes for change.

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O3b   Highland is competing with other mostly Kansas institutions vying for similar students, and the College is also competing for limited state and county financial resources needed to achieve its mission.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance

agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O7   The purview of the Strategic Planning Council, Action Projects, and work teams identify

strategies to meet strategic goals determines the data and information collected and

distributed. The Institutional Research Department provides research for college

projects.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
6P1a	S	Table 6.1 lists the seven support services, instruments and methods used to gather support service needs, and the faculty, staff and administrators responsible for identifying these needs. Student success is also considered in the identification of support service needs and there are monthly and quarterly scheduled meetings to discuss issues and actions to address these needs.
6P1b	O	HCC utilizes test scores and failure rates to identify the support needs of lower performing students. In addition surveys are used to gather information and areas identified with low satisfaction rates are addressed. It is unclear how the support service needs of other student groups and key stakeholders are identified.
6P2	O	Although HCC considers work flow issues in meeting reporting requirements; it is not clear how these issues are integrated in the College's decision making process for resource allocation. A systematic process may help HCC allocate resources to meet administrative support service needs in a timely manner through integration of these allocations in the strategic planning process.
6P3	O	Although a Crisis Team was developed that meets to discuss issues related to campus safety and security, it is unclear what systematic process HCC uses to design, maintain and communicate key support

processes to ensure safety and security. Audits and review of incidents may provide HCC with information to determine strengths and opportunities for improvement in addressing safety and security issues.

6P4 S HCC has developed a new process to collect feedback from those who use key offices. Service Review Cards are located outside of these offices and patrons are invited to provide feedback to the respective offices or through the school's website.

6P5 O Although support processes are documented in the Student Handbook, Class Schedule and Committee or Team minutes, which are posted on the Intranet, and through informal communication channels; it is not evident that a process exists to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation, and empowerment.

6R1 S HCC identifies traditional measures of student support operations as being gathered and assessed regularly.

6R2 O Although HCC uses multiple measures for support services processes, data are provided for only probations, lost scholarships, academic dismissals, and housing retentions. Results from other measures listed in 6R1 are not provided. It is not clear from these data how various support services data reported in Table 6.3 are related. While presenting some data on student support services, HCC has the opportunity to discuss how this data is used to help improve student support services.

6R3-4a S External financial auditors have issued unqualified opinions for the past 15 years indicating integrity in HCC's financial records. A facilities audit listed in Table 6.2 indicates findings and renovations to address problems with the facilities. The facilities audit information was used by HCC in its five year rolling facilities plan and resulted in $1,211,100 in facilities renovation through a State of Kansas loan program.

6R3-4b O HCC lists the number of Track It tickets and response time and receivables as quality indicators for information technology, and maintenance, and business offices. Data are not provided to indicate strengths and opportunities for improvement in the offices' operations.

These data may help HCC identify action projects to improve services in these operations.

| 6R5 | O | Although the College provides student satisfaction comparisons of various support services, HCC has the opportunity to provide direct measures for supporting institutional operations. It is not clear how HCC uses this information for improvements as mentioned in 6I1-2 such as areas as security staff, library resources, and financial aid counselors. |

| 6I1-6I2 | S | HCC identifies several improvements based on processes described in this category. Although several of these processes include opportunities as described above, the improvements represent movement towards developing a culture of continuous improvement. |

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 Highland Community 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

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively; Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic

Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication

of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the

College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance

agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O7   The purview of the Strategic Planning Council, Action Projects, and work teams identify

strategies to meet strategic goals determines the data and information collected and

distributed. The Institutional Research Department provides research for college

projects.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
7P1a	S	A variety of tools are used to measure student performance and data required for state and federal reports are collected and analyzed. The purchase of iDashboard will allow HCC to expand on the data that is collected and analyzed.
7P1b	O	Although the college has identified key instructional and non-instructional goals and objectives in its Strategic Plan, and that plan includes key performance indicators for each objective and the means of assessing each of those; it is not evident that a process exists to select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support instructional and non-instructional programs and services.
7P2a	S	HCC collects data based on its strategic goals and indicators. Data are also collected to respond to state and federal reports. Idashboard was recently purchased to provide real-time data to HCC leadership and the Institutional Research Director.
7P2b	O	Although the Strategic Plan is use for selecting data and performance information for planning and improvement; It is not evident that a process

exists to select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support planning and improvement efforts.

7P3	O	Beyond a "need-to-know" basis, it is not clear if HCC has a process for regularly posting data and reports related to its efforts to measure improvements related to its quality initiatives.
7P4	O	Although the College conducts numerous activities in support of this category, HCC has an opportunity to show examples and results of some of the efforts of analysis in lieu of simply stating that "Various committees and teams analyze data for a variety of purposes."
7P5	S	HCC uses a variety of sources (including NCCBP, Noel-Levitz, IPEDS, Other AQIP colleges in Kansas, etc.) to collect comparative data. The criteria used to select these measures are based upon their availability at the national level.
7P6	O	Although program-level analysis of data happens in technical programs and Regional Center activities, it is not evident a process exists to ensure department and unit analysis of data and information aligns with the College's organizational goals for instructional and non-instructional programs and services.
7P7a	S	The data infrastructure and network are monitored and backed up daily. IT staff are automatically alerted of any network issues.
7P7b	O	Although key staff are responsible for providing timely reports, it is unclear what processes are used to ensure timeliness, accuracy, and reliability of the College's information system.
7R1-7R3	O	HCC mentions some of its reporting obligations but missed the opportunity to list in these sections some of the measures of performance and other evidence it collects and uses to assess progress toward its Strategic Goals and in its quality journey. There were no comparative data listed in 7R3.
7I1-7I2	O	HCC has initiated a SPC that establishes strategic objectives with performance results and collects data. However, the College does not

offer how its performance results are systematically tied to the Strategic
Plan. The College has an opportunity to review its process measures and
ensure their alignment with strategic goals and objectives to support the
availability of accurate and relevant data for decision-making and
planning.

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 Highland Community 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:**

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1c   As a comprehensive community college, HCC's goals for student learning are to provide
opportunities for associate degree completion, certification completion, and skill
enhancement to meet student objectives. These are accomplished via the following
common learning outcomes: Be competent at your work; Communicate effectively;
Respect others; Think critically; Act responsibly; and Work effectively on teams.

O5a   New Mission and Vision Statements were adopted in August of 2009. The Strategic
Planning Council is now responsible for the creation, maintenance and communication
of the College's mission and values. An annual review of the plan is conducted by the
College leadership in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

O7   The purview of the Strategic Planning Council, Action Projects, and work teams identify
strategies to meet strategic goals determines the data and information collected and
distributed. The Institutional Research Department provides research for college
projects.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
8P1	S	HCC's Strategic Plan provides the framework for the college's planning initiatives; all planning initiatives align with this plan. The Strategic Planning Council was created to implement the objectives, review and refine the process, and share information with college stakeholders.
8P2	O	Although the HCC Strategic Planning Process is identified as generating short and long-term strategies, the opportunity exists to clearly identify what steps in the process are employed to generate these strategies. The resultant improved clarity could facilitate the planning process as well as strengthening the feedback process regarding strategy development, implementation, and review.
8P3-8P4	S	Key action plans are aligned with the short- and long-term strategies to implement the strategic plan. These plans are implemented by teams and departments. A priority of the strategic plan is to ensure financial viability for the College with alignment between the strategic planning and budgeting process.
8P5	O	It is not clear which criteria or processes the Strategic Planning Council uses to determine performance targets for the strategic plan objectives. In addition, HCC does not provide a process for their definition of objectives, the selection of measures, nor the setting of performance targets for their organizational strategies and action plans. Increased precision in process description as well as use of trends and benchmarks may help HCC determine the effectiveness of its quality improvement initiatives.
8P6	S	Highland articulated a process for linking and aligning its processes for budgeting and resource allocation with its other planning processes, including developing and reviewing its Strategic Plan, annual short-term strategies, and action plans.

8P7	O	HCC identifies a point in the annual SPC process at which a SWOT risk analysis is conducted. An opportunity exists to more clearly identify the process used to conduct the SWOT analysis, assess the effectiveness of that analysis, and how the results of that analysis are applied.
8P8	O	It is not evident that a process exists to ensure that the college will develop and nurture faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities to address changing requirements demanded by organizational strategies and action plans. As presented in the portfolio, the process for developing and nurturing faculty, staff, and administrators to address changing requirements appears ad hoc.
8R1	O	The College mentions several methods of gathering measures, but not what measures are used, and the methods mentioned do not necessarily measure the planning process. The opportunity exists to delineate the key measures used to measure the effectiveness of the planning process as well as what elements of the planning process to which those measures apply.
8R2-8R3	OO	Although there is a list of measures and mention of some targets, it is not clear what these targets are, what the results were, or whether the results indicate HCC has met these targets. Establishing targets will also help HCC determine the effectiveness of its quality improvement initiatives that are part of its strategic plans.
8R4	O	An opportunity exists for HCC to develop comparison measures for performance results for Planning Continuous Improvement with other institutions of higher education.
8R5	O	Although HCC has completed the first round of assessment and established a baseline, there exists an opportunity to present the results which contribute to that baseline as well as articulate the process which will be employed to apply those results in future iterations of the cycle.
8I1	S	The Strategic Planning Committee helped the College to develop values, create efforts to link and align planning processes, and attempts to broaden participation in planning. This improvement will help establish a

foundation necessary for developing a culture of continuous improvement.

| 8I2 | S | Development of the SPC process is a significant step in creating a culture and infrastructure that will enable the institution to further create a culture of continuous improvement. |

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 Highland Community 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:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Highland Community College began as Highland University in 1858 making it the first college in Kansas and is a rural two year college in northeastern Kansas. It serves a nine county area through the main Highland campus and six regional centers.

O5b   By state statue Highland is required to create and execute a series of performance agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents.

O9   Key relationships center on educational, coordinating, and economic partners. KBOR – by legislation, the Kansas Board of Regents governs the six universities in Kansas and coordinates the Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. USDs – the unified school districts in our service area are the primary providers of our students. Area Articulated Colleges and Universities – these institutions are the primary receivers of our AA, AS, and AGS students.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
9P1b	O	While listing a substantial number of collaborations, HCC has the opportunity to describe at least one of the processes it uses to develop these relationships. A focus on relationships would provide HCC the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the processes used to recruit students into the institution. HCC has the opportunity to articulate a process for determining how these organizational connections are developed for its strategic objectives.
9P2a	S	The College offers a variety of methods used to help build relationships with other educational institutions and business that depend on their graduates. The College has relationships with higher education and community organizations as evidenced by its articulation agreements and its industry partnerships. HCC has established a 2+2 program to allow students to complete the first two years of their education at HCC and transfer their credits to area colleges and universities. Advisory boards provide input on skills needed by local employers.
9P2b	O	Although HCC performs various relationship building activities with the educational organizations and employers that depend on the supply of HCC students and graduates that meet those organizations' requirements, HCC could benefit from an evaluation of these relationship building activities. HCC has an opportunity to further develop the process of prioritizing these relationships as well as develop processes to identify which relationships should be strengthened or terminated, as well as scanning for emerging new potential relationships.
9P3	O	HCC has the opportunity to describe and use a process by which it identifies its students' needs and then seeks relationships with organizations to provide services that meet the needs of its students, and to then evaluate how effectively the students' needs are addressed.

9P4   O   Although HCC identifies multiple organizations that provide services and supply materials, the institution has an opportunity to develop processes for determining when to strengthen or terminate the relationship with these organizations and identifying potential future service providing organizations.

9P5   O   While the College identifies many relationships and partnerships with educational associations, workforce groups, and community based organizations, it is not evident how systems are used to evaluate these partnerships. There is an opportunity to develop systems which determine if they are meeting the needs of the various stakeholders and the mission of the institution.

9P6   O   While listing a number of items, HCC has an opportunity to discuss how the items listed are used to measure the level of satisfaction with the constituent groups, and improve those relationships where needed. There is an opportunity to articulate the processes by which the criteria for the reviews are developed, who is involved, and what is done with the results.

9P7a   S   HCC has designed and implemented systematic processes to facilitate the building and maintenance of relationships among its internal organizational units, inclusive of the Regional Coordinators across its nine-county service area.

9P7b   O   Systematic measures or baselines to determine partnership success or how communication occurs throughout HCC are not clear. The College has the opportunity to discuss how the methods and activities listed are measured to insure that they are effective in building relationships across the institution.

9R1a   S   HCC lists a number of measures in Table 9.1it collects on a regular basis.

9R1b   O   Although HCC lists measures, it is not clear how these measures of effectiveness are analyzed to help HCC monitor and improve its collaborative relationships.

9R2	OO	HCC lists a number of results, but includes no information as to whether these results are poor, good, or outstanding. There is an opportunity to improve the connection between the measures and results in order to determine their utility in monitoring, assessing and enhancing relationships between HCC and external and internal groups.
9R3	O	While the College states they do not currently do this activity, as indicated in 9R2 there is an opportunity to compare results with targets or benchmarks. The process of developing these comparisons as well as the information generated would greatly enhance the development of a culture of continuous improvement with HCC.
9I1-9I2a	S	HCC identifies the existence of baseline data and Strategic Plan objectives which will be used to prioritize, build, and evaluate future relationships. Application of these efforts to the process questions above could strengthen the institutional development of a culture of continuous improvement.
9I1-9I2b	O	The College acknowledges that the effort to organize this portfolio simultaneously prompted an initiative to centralize measures and this activity will assist the institution to coordinate future comparison and analysis within the context of the Strategic Plan. More carefully connecting HCC's Strategic Plan to all collaborative activities could enhance this area greatly. HCC has the opportunity to set targets to improve processes for building and maintaining collaborative relationships to serve the College and its stakeholders.