

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 20, 2008



Academic
Quality Improvement
Program

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Elements of the Feedback Report	3
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	5
Using the Feedback Report	8
Critical Characteristics Analysis	9
Category Feedback	12
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	12
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	17
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	20
<i>Valuing People</i>	24
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	27
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	30
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	33
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	36
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	40

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: Helping Students Learn

Highland Community College (HCC) has developed and institutionalized some measures for effectiveness of teaching and learning; there is an opportunity for the institution to incorporate more direct measures of learning to assist in generating a robust picture of teaching and learning effectiveness.

Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

HCC identifies a variety of performance measures to evaluate how effectively it is addressing its other distinctive objectives. There is an opportunity to develop additional measures and a more data-driven focus to quantify the effectiveness of many of its activities. The institution is in the early stages of developing trend data for measures to support its other distinctive objectives.

Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

HCC does not appear to have a well-defined committee structure for internal communications and decision making. Determining and improving student and stakeholder requirements may be facilitated with a more formal process than conversations with college personnel. There is minimal data reported to track improvement efforts and determine the institution's effectiveness with Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.

Category 4: Valuing People

HCC maintains strong values as a traditional institution providing primarily transfer-oriented coursework. As such, it emphasizes the qualifications of its faculty and provides professional development opportunities. The College has identified a number of opportunities to improve current processes related to valuing people, particularly those focused on staff and administrators. It may benchmark against some processes for faculty that could be used as models for developing processes related to other staff. A more systematic approach to collect and analyze data will provide information to be used in developing and implementing more focused, strategic, formal, clearly understood processes focused on valuing people.

Category 5: Leading and Communicating

As a small organization, HCC relies primarily on informal systems and processes related to leading and communicating. Communications are supported through its meeting structure; i.e., monthly Board of Trustee meetings and weekly President's Staff meetings. The leadership team is in an early stage of a more formal approach to using data and information to drive fact-based decision making and using comparative data to assess its performance relative to other similar organizations. As a new strategic plan is developed, an opportunity exists for the College to put into place a formal process of communications that provide greater opportunity for participation by all employees and other stakeholders.

Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations

The College is applying the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (PDCA) model for carrying out change and to improve services that support institutional operations. It is unclear if it is embedded in the culture of the organization and implementing it as a comprehensive, documented framework to formalize improvements to its student and administrative support processes.

Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness

There are diverse systems on campus to measure effectiveness that are not well integrated and reflect an inconsistent approach to institutional improvement. It is unclear how campus constituent groups, such as the President's Staff, collect, align and integrate data and information for tracking daily operations. There is little evidence that data and information are used to support institutional decision making.

Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

HCC acknowledges that it is in the beginning of its process improvement journey and has to embed continuous improvement into its planning processes. It has developed components needed for planning continuous improvement, as evidenced by the AQIP Leadership Team, AQIP Advisory Team, and various action projects that are underway. Participation in the AQIP process may be serving as the motivation for establishing continuous improvement systems. It appears that HCC may benefit from: (1) reaffirming its commitment to AQIP, (2) ensuring that continuous improvement principles are clearly understood and implemented across the College, and (3) identifying and tracking effectiveness measures and performance targets related to

achievement of its strategies and action plans.

Category 9: Building Collaborative relationships

HCC focuses on being a community partner in its nine-county service area as part of its mission, has established a number of collaborations and partnerships, and has an opportunity to become more of a local and regional workforce provider with its proposed merger with NEKTC. However, it lacks a comprehensive, inclusive, strategic planning or continuous improvement process to systemically support its efforts in Building Collaborative Relationships. The College also has an opportunity to further implement the PDCA Cycle as the cornerstone of its standardized problem solving methodology and use its processes to better understand, prioritize, communicate, measure, and improve on its collaborations and partnerships. Lastly, HCC has an opportunity to identify more robust, data-driven measures to track the effectiveness of its collaborations and to more systematically collect and analyze data to identify and monitor trends, efficiencies, and priorities for improvement.

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 based upon the institution's achievements and challenges in regards to each of the nine AQIP Categories. 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. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

institutions 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 has not provided enough information in the portfolio to allow the Systems Appraisal team to make fully-developed recommendations concerning their strategic directions. For example, an organizational chart is referenced but not provided and the index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* is incomplete. Also, the responses to questions in categories 7-9 do not provide enough description to allow the reader to provide much feedback or advice. In order to move forward in their AQIP processes, the College must make sure all necessary information is clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Without complete

information on all of the institution's efforts related to continuous improvement, it is difficult to provide support and/or determine the institution's progress.

It is unclear if a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning or continuous improvement process exists. There are limited measures for planning continuous improvement within the institution. The College states, "we currently have none and perceive that having measures for measuring the effectiveness of our Continuous Improvement planning is beyond the scope of what we need in a small rural community college." This raises a serious concern as to whether this institution is ready to participate in the AQIP process. This statement points to a lack of understanding of the continuous quality improvement process. The lack of a performance measurement system may limit the College in backing up their public relations and marketing with data and information that verify that good results are being achieved.

Even as a small institution, HCC can still benefit from the development and deployment of a more formalized data collection and analysis system. These systems may not be as complex as those used by larger colleges, but they can still serve to provide useful data and information to be used to make decisions and support continuous improvement efforts.

HCC appears to have recognized the usefulness and importance of establishing a plan, do, check, act process. Full deployment and an ongoing evaluation of this process, including the necessary resources to support it, must be considered a priority in order for the institution to benefit from participation in the AQIP process.

HCC is in the early stages of commitment to becoming a quality-driven organization and would benefit from a more concerted focus on creating a culture that fosters continuous improvement of its processes and on using data and information to support fact-based decision making. Identifying performance measures that presently do not exist and further refining existing ones would be of great benefit to the College. It is unclear how the College incorporates the results of organizational performance reviews into the systematic evaluation and improvement of key processes.

HCC recognizes online providers and other colleges and universities in the surrounding areas as competitors and flat enrollments as vulnerability. HCC would benefit from a

more concerted focus on agility and foresight to strengthen its competitive position and to create flexibility to proactively prepare for the future and to respond rapidly to unforeseen changes that may affect current and prospective students and stakeholders, operations, and performance.

The College lacks essential data to support a fact-based system – including environmental scan data, performance data, and comparative data. Without a comprehensive system of collecting and analyzing data and information, it may be difficult to track performance and plan for continuous improvement.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas

for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

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

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of 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 (HCC) is governed by an elected six-member Board of Trustees.
- O1b HCC was the first college in Kansas and is in its 149th year of providing higher educational opportunities for students.
- O1c HCC is coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), which governs the state's six universities; coordination prior to 1999 was governed by the State Board of Education.

- O1d HCC's main campus is located in Doniphan County and there are six regional campuses in the nine county service area.
- O1e According to the Regent universities in Kansas, students who begin their college careers at HCC and then transfer do as well or better academically as all other students who transfer to those universities and those who start there.
- O1f The mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.
- O2a HCC offers four Associate Degrees and one Certificate program in 50 concentration areas and 15 technical education programs.
- O3a Fifty-six percent of credit students are male.
- O3b In the Fall of 2007 the College enrolled approx. 2,800 students; 616 students were served on the main campus and 2,193 students were served in the six regional centers and 33 course delivery sites in the service area.
- O4a HCC key collaborative relationships are with their alumni, KBOR, and the local economic development organizations, as well as various professional and civic groups.
- O4b HCC has a partnership with Northeast Kansas Technical College to provide AAS degree programs.
- O5b HCC full-time faculty average 48 years of age and 11 years of service.
- O5d The administration, faculty and staff at Highlands are predominantly white (over 95%); the male/female ratio of faculty and administration is roughly equal, while 77% of staff is female.
- O5e HCC has over 500 adjunct faculty members.
- O6a The main campus at HCC has nine academic buildings, eighteen campus housing units and a living/learning center for Fine Arts students. The newest addition to the campus is the HCC Wellness Center
- O6b HCC received a Title III grant and converted 24 of the 26 campus classrooms to SMART classrooms. Much of that technology will be transferred to regional sites as new equipment has been purchased.

- O6c The regional centers reflect the value HCC places in face-to-face education as opposed to distance education, although the campus offered 21 online classes in fall 2007 and also provide classes over a TELENET II system.
- O6d The HCC Atchison center is on the Northeast Kansas Technical Campus, and the two colleges are working on a merger to be in place by July 2008.
- O7a While HCC is the only public higher education institution in the nine-county service area, the college nevertheless faces competition from other colleges and universities in the surrounding areas, and flat enrollments at HCC in the face of rising tuition at the state universities speaks to HCC's vulnerability.
- O7b Tuition for out-of-state students was reduced to attract border state students and offset competition from out-of-state institutions.
- O7c Faced with competition from online providers, HCC introduced online courses in the Fall of 2007.
- O8a Over a third of HCC's students require developmental learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- O8b A \$1.7 million, five year grant to develop a program aimed at students needing assistance with basic skills needed for success and the introduction of quality improvement concepts are opportunities for the College.
- O8c HCC offers ten sports, five for women and five for men, attracting between 200 and 250 students each year. These require significant funds, support and attention, and have negative ramification for the academic enterprise.
- O8d HCC faces significant challenges with its administrative software system, PowerCampus, which, without ongoing customization at great cost, is leaving the college without the ability to generate reports in support of data-driven decision making.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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 HCC is coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), which governs the state's six universities; coordination prior to 1999 was governed the State Board of Education.
- O1e According to the Regent universities in Kansas, students who begin their college careers at HCC and then transfer do as well or better academically as all other students who transfer to those universities and those who start there.
- O2a HCC offers four Associate Degrees and one Certificate program in 50 concentration areas and 15 technical education programs.
- O4b HCC has a partnership with Northeast Kansas Technical College to provide AAS degree program.
- O6b HCC received a Title III grant and converted 24 of the 26 campus classrooms to SMART classrooms. Much of that technology will be transferred to regional sites as new equipment has been purchased.
- O6c The regional centers reflect the value HCC places in face-to-face education as opposed to distance education, although the campus offered 21 online classes in fall 2007 and also provided classes over a TELENET II system.
- O8a Over a third of HCC's students require developmental learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- O8b A \$1.7 million, five year grant to develop a program aimed at students needing assistance with basic skills needed for success and the introduction of quality improvement concepts are opportunities for the college.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	S	Faculty determine common student learning objectives; lead instructors are responsible for determining student objectives for courses within a discipline. In addition, some disciplines participate in the Kansas Core

Competencies Project that has identified standard course competencies for each course. Core competencies are indicated by the KBOR and Industry Standards for some technical programs.

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| 1P2 | S | HCC outlines a multi-step process for identifying new or modifying existing courses that involves faculty, departments, a Curriculum and Instruction Team, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and KBOR. |
| 1P2 | O | There doesn't appear to be a systematic process for developing new programs that would include input and support the dynamic needs of business and industry. |
| 1P3 | O | HCC has a clearly defined placement process that allows students and faculty to understand why they are placed in particular English, Reading and/or Math courses. However, there does not appear to be a systematic approach to determine program and specific curricula placement. |
| 1P5 | O | Different approaches are used between regional and main campus to help students choose programs of study that match their needs, interests and capabilities; however it is unclear how activities are coordinated or evaluated. |
| 1P6a | S | HCC determines and documents effective teaching and learning through its faculty review form process. This process is reviewed by the Assessment Team and reflects the College's commitment to standardized assessment. |
| 1P6b | S | Information obtained from student evaluation of instructors is shared with faculty, incorporated into faculty development plans and posted on the institutional website. |
| 1P7 | O | HCC recognizes the need to put a process in place to develop a more effective method of coordinating and communicating a student-friendly schedule. Such a process could improve the College's retention efforts. |

- 1P8 OO Although HCC has a process in place to introduce new programs, new coursework, or course modifications and a systematic approach for in-course assessment; it is unclear if there is a systematic process to evaluate programs and/or to discontinue programs and courses. Additionally, it is unclear how data is collected and analyzed in this area, which is essential for continuous improvement to occur.
- 1P9 S The College uses a variety of methods, including the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and organized conversations with students, to identify student support needs. A variety of mechanisms including President's meetings, team meetings and ITs help line (TrackIt) are used to identify and communicate faculty needs.
- 1P10 O HCC is in the early stages of aligning co-curricular goals and curricular learning objectives through the use of learning communities; therefore, it is too early to determine the effectiveness of this approach without results.
- 1P11 S HCC's multi-faceted assessment program aligns student assessments with the KBOR Core Competencies Project and includes course placement, course competencies, and general education assessment.
- 1P12a S Universities to which HCC students transfer conduct studies that indicate that HCC students do as well or better than other groups of students at those universities.
- 1P12b O HCC may benefit from collecting input from employers and former graduates to document how well prepared their students are for employment.
- 1P13 OO A formal process to correlate the various performance measures listed in this category could assist HCC in coordinating a deliberate response to improve learning and effective teaching. A process to "mine" the performance measures to determine areas of improvement can assist HCC in promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

- 1R1 O Although HCC performs close or at the national average on CAPP scores for YR2007 in Writing, Math and Reading, it has consistently performed below the national average in Critical Thinking for the past seven years. The Assessment Committee is investigating ways to improve those scores.
- 1R2 OO No evidence is provided to demonstrate student learning or knowledge acquisition within program areas as it relates to WorkKeys or Industry or Professional Credentialing. In addition, no results are reported to support placement of students in their field of study.
- 1R3 OO Limited results are provided about the effectiveness of processes associated with helping students learn. The absence of more comprehensive data minimizes the institution's understanding of student learning and efforts to enhance learning. Therefore, HCC has an opportunity to enhance its "emerging focus on assessment, analysis, and experimentation that corresponds to the concept of institutionally derived data-driven decision-making." Closing the loop on the effectiveness of placement can assist HCC in ensuring that students are correctly placed in appropriate level courses.
- 1R4 S Through participation in the NCCBP, HCC has obtained comparison results for their developmental writing and math outcomes as well as for costs and expenditures. HCC's developmental writing and math students are retained and completion rates are above the NCCBP level.
- 1I1 O HCC realizes that the institution must develop more formal processes for improvement of Helping Students Learn. While individual units have developed improvement processes and plans that resulted in successful student learning, an overall institutional improvement plan is needed.
- 1I2 OO HCC understands that it needs to take a more data-driven approach to these discussions in order to develop the best possible targets for improvements. However, there is little evidence to indicate how HCC

communicates its current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders or the effectiveness of that communication.

- 1P3-1P6 SS This is a sample of a comment on a *range* of adjacent Category items that the institution has addressed with a single section of its Portfolio.
- 1P7,1R4 O This is a sample of a comment on two separate Category items that the institution has addressed in a single section of its. This occurs rarely.

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

- O1f The mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.
- O4a HCC key collaborative relationships are with their alumni, KBOR, and the local economic development organizations, as well as various professional and civic groups.
- O4b HCC has a partnership with Northeast Kansas Technical College to provide AAS degree programs.
- O6d The HCC Atchison center is on the Northeast Kansas Technical Campus, and the two colleges are working on a merger to be in place by July 2008.

- O8a Over a third of HCC's students require developmental learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- O8c HCC offers ten sports, five for women and five for men, attracting between 200 and 250 students each year. These require significant funds, support and attention, and have negative ramification for the academic enterprise.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2P1a	S	HCC describes the contributions of the Board of Trustees in has in Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. Involvement by the Board in the College's Vision Statement ensures that there is alignment between the Board and HCC administration in developing action plans pertinent to the long-term vision.
2P1b	O	It is unclear how faculty and staff are involved in Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. Increasing participation by other segments of the college might increase buy-in of institutional vision.
2P2	S	HCC uses a variety of approaches to communicate its accomplishments and expectations in relation to its other distinct objectives.
2P3	OO	Although HCC determines faculty and staff needs relative to other distinctive objectives through discussions with these groups, it does not appear that its approach is systematic nor is it clear how information is analyzed and used.
2P4	O	HCC reviews its results with Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives at an annual administrative retreat. The College assesses its distinctive

objectives using available data to review actions of the past year and communicates both its successes and opportunities. It is unclear if the College links projects in a cohesive plan rather than multiple individual projects occurring simultaneously with no coordination or connection.

- 2P5 O HCC identifies numerous measures for meeting its goals; however, determining the key indicators of progress and reporting actual results is unclear. There appears to be no central process for aligning processes and measures relating to distinctive objectives.
- 2R1a S HCC has demonstrated efficiency in reducing the Doniphan County Mil Levy from 1997 to 2007 and a shift in Revenue Sources during this same period with more state funding support as compared to local revenue. The results of contributions to HCC from alumni and friends indicate strong local and regional support.
- 2R1b O Although the College reports a variety of results, the data does not provide useful information regarding its current performance with Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. For example, HCC reports survey results on the success of its technical students to support Vision 1; it is unclear what year(s) these data represent. In addition, it is unclear what the data represent to support Vision 2 and 3 or how they translate into usable information (e.g., the community survey and campus usage documents). No results are reported to support Vision 4 and to demonstrate the effectiveness of activities such as the GED program to support community educational and cultural development (e.g., pass rates or participation levels, etc.).
- 2R2 OO No comparative data are provided with respect to Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.
- 2R3 O Although HCC has enacted a number of projects to strengthen relationships with the community, it does not report results of these relationships.

- 2I1 O HCC is responsive to perceived needs for improvement; however, the process for monitoring continual improvement is somewhat haphazard. The College may benefit from a more systematic approach to improve its systems and processes for accomplishing its other distinctive objectives.
- 2I2 O Although HCC uses a variety of approaches to communicate targets for improvement to faculty, staff, administration, students, and the Board of Trustees, it is unclear if the College has a systematic approach to determine targets for improvement and how it communicates these targets to external stakeholders.

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

- O1d HCC's main campus is located in Doniphan County and there are six regional campuses in the nine-county service area.
- O3a Fifty-six percent of credit students are male.

- O3b In the Fall of 2007 the College enrolled approx. 2,800 students; 616 students were served on the main campus and 2,193 students were served in the six regional centers and 33 course delivery sites in the service area.
- O4a HCC key collaborative relationships are with their alumni, KBOR, and the local economic development organizations, as well as various professional and civic groups.
- O4b HCC has a partnership with Northeast Kansas Technical College to provide AAS 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 3, Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	S	In addition to informal conversations with student leaders, HCC uses a the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) with ten additional customized institutional questions that is administered annually to identify student expectations, satisfaction, and changes in student needs. Results can be segmented by departments. Using gap analysis, departments develop action plans for those results with a performance gap of 1.0 or greater.
3P2	S	HCC builds and maintains relationships with its current and prospective students through its invitational culture that includes a variety of mechanisms (e.g., career fairs and 1-on-1 contact with advisors, faculty, and staff). In addition, an Action Project has identified a number of activities for special attention to address overall student retention.
3P3	O	Beyond involving “everyone on campus to gather information,” HCC appears to lack a comprehensive, systematic approach to identify, analyze, and respond to stakeholder needs and to address all key stakeholder groups (i.e., alumni and transfer institutions).

- 3P4 S HCC uses a variety of approaches (i.e., activities, programs, and publications) to build and maintain stakeholder relationships.
- 3P5 O HCC recognizes that it uses informal processes to determine new student and stakeholder relationships. As it moves toward more data-driven decision making, it may benefit by a more proactive, systematic approach that may result in consistent processes as well as more effective allocation of resources to meet the needs of existing and newly identified student and stakeholder groups (e.g., the HCC and NEKTC merger).
- 3P6 O While there are processes in place to collect data relating to student and stakeholder complaints and grade appeals, HCC lacks a systematic approach to analyze complaint data. Lack of a systematic approach may result in missed opportunities to more effectively improve processes and procedures that add value in meeting the needs of student and stakeholder groups.
- 3P7 O Although HCC identifies a variety of measures to determine student satisfaction, there are no measures (formal or informal) reported to assess stakeholder satisfaction.
- 3R1a S Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) results, both those in the standardized questions and customized HCC questions, depict trends that demonstrate improved student satisfaction since 2004 in several key areas such as instructional and supporting instructional operations and performance in most areas that are at or above the national average. Issues relating to student housing concerns were addressed in 2005 and represent an improvement in the 2006 gap score. Overall, gap scores in 2006 show improvement and are less than 1.0 in all areas except Safety and Security.
- 3R1b O Although HCC demonstrates improvement in its gap score for Safety and Security relating to parking spaces, lighting, and responsiveness of security staff, the gap has remained above 1.0 since 2004. Beyond the

- SSI, limited results are provided to determine student and stakeholder satisfaction, which may limit HCC's ability to develop and deliver programs and services to effectively meet the needs of these key groups.
- 3R2 O HCC recognizes the need to implement additional methods of data collection to determine its effectiveness as it relates to student relationship building. No results are provided to address attrition, retention, or other key indicators. This lack of results limits HCC's ability to assess its effectiveness in addressing its strategic focus on retention.
- 3R3,3R4 OO HCC indicates that it currently does not have results to determine stakeholder satisfaction or the effectiveness of stakeholder relationship building. Lack of results may result in missed opportunities to more effectively meet the needs of these key stakeholders.
- 3R5b O Other than the national average comparison on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), no other comparative data are provided for Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs. A lack of focus on comparative data may limit HCC's ability to assess its performance relative to other educational institutions as well as its flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities and changing needs of its key stakeholders.
- 3I1 OO HCC lacks a formalized, systematic approach to improve current processes and systems for understanding the needs of key student and stakeholder groups. Anecdotal information and informal processes provide limited information for continuous improvement and to ensure that student and stakeholder needs are effectively addressed.
- 3I2 O While HCC is committed to responding to students and stakeholders, the institution has not formalized targets for improvement within the region, identified priorities for improvement, or identified a process to communicate current results and improvement priorities to these key groups. Understanding the variables that affect students' and stakeholders' needs is paramount to creating a culture of continuous improvement.

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

- O1a Highland Community College (HCC) is governed by an elected six-member Board of Trustees.
- O1f the mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.
- O5b HCC full-time faculty average 48 years of age and 11 years of service.
- O5d The administration, faculty and staff at Highlands are predominantly white (over 95%); the male/female ratio of faculty and administration is roughly equal, while 77% of staff is female.
- O5e HCC has over 500 adjunct faculty members.
- O6a The main campus at HCC has nine academic buildings, eighteen campus housing units and a living/learning center for Fine Arts students. The newest addition to the campus is the HCC Wellness Center

- O6c The regional centers reflect the value HCC places in face-to-face education as opposed to distance education, although the campus offered 21 online classes in fall 2007 and also provided classes over a TELENET II system.
- O8d HCC faces significant challenges with its administrative software system, Power Campus, which, without ongoing customization at great cost, is leaving the college without the ability to generate reports in support of data-driven decision making.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1a	S	HCC follows the NCA’s higher education standards and also follows KBOR guidelines concerning full-time instructors possessing a master’s degree and part-time instructors possessing 18 graduate hours in the discipline.
4P1b	O	Presidential review of each new hire appears to be a cumbersome process which may be streamlined. It is unclear if there is a process in place that includes determining the credentials and skills for employees other than faculty.
4P2	O	There is little evidence of faculty and staff involvement in the hiring process. The methods for employee recruitment and orientation are unclear. HCC plans for changes in personnel only when it is gaining or losing a program. This lack of a proactive approach and focus toward the future may limit HCC’s ability to attract and retain qualified employees.
4P3	O	The College identifies committee work as a primary institutional means by which communication, cooperation and high performance are addressed; evidence is lacking of an established process to ensure that committee

- work is, in fact, part of the governance system. it is unclear how employees are selected to be part of a committee, if they can influence change, and how these committees interact with the leadership team.
- 4P4a S HCC offers in-house training, boot camps, funds for graduate, continuing educating classes, and other opportunities to support the training and development of employees.
- 4P5 O Training needs are determined through individual Plans of Action and the Professional Development Team. It is unclear how the College prioritizes training needs to close the loop on the strength of the initial steps of this process.
- 4P6a S A comprehensive faculty performance evaluation system, as defined in faculty contract, has been in place for 15 years.
- 4P6b O HCC acknowledges that its current evaluation system of other employees is not conducive to continuous improvement.
- 4P7a S A number of employee recognitions, awards and benefits are highlighted, including the Bruning Award for faculty and an employee recognition luncheon.
- 4P7b O It is unclear what reward and recognition is in place for employees other than faculty and if and how classified staff can receive monetary awards.
- 4P8 O While HCC provides a number of opportunities for employees to discuss key issues, it is unclear if there is a formalized process to aggregate these topics and act upon the key issues. A formal process may allow HCC to more effectively understand trends in the key issues facing employees.
- 4P9 S HCC addresses employee well-being through a variety of steps, including, but not limited to health insurance for employees and access to a wellness center.

- 4P10 OO HCC recognizes that it does not have any formal collection or analysis of employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being.
- 4R1a S The Employee Job Satisfaction survey that was conducted in 2007 provides the College with critical information from its employees. The results of the survey point to improvement plans; consistent use of the survey will establish trend data by which the College can more effectively track its progress.
- 4R1b O Limited measures of satisfaction are reported.
- 4R2,3 O HCC acknowledges that collecting and analyzing results on its processes for valuing people is a major opportunity as well as collecting and analyzing results on the productivity and effectiveness of employees in helping the college achieve its goals
- 4R4 OO No comparative data are reported.
- 4I1 O Work to improve processes in Valuing People appears to be informal and on an ad-hoc basis. It is unclear how the College implements, manages, and improves its key processes to foster an organizational culture conducive to high performance.
- 4I2 O Although the College describes a process for setting target improvements and establishing priorities for valuing people, it is unclear how employees at the department level are involved.

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

- O1a Highland Community College (HCC) is governed by an elected six-member Board of Trustees.
- O1c HCC is coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), which governs the state's six universities; coordination prior to 1999 was governed the State Board of Education.
- O1f The mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	S	HCC leaders set direction that align with its Mission and Vision Statements through the strategic planning process that includes the development of the Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Academic Plan that create a focus on students and learning. The Vision Statements were created in 1998 and have been annually reviewed and updated.
5P2a	S	HCC leaders guide the institution in seeking future opportunities and building and sustaining a learning environment by staying connected with state and local stakeholders, including conducting surveys and holding focus groups with community residents and participation in the KBOR Tech Ed Authority activities.

- 5P2b O The focus in seeking future opportunities is determined primarily on input from external stakeholders. A process for determining future directions that includes input from the campus community may assist the college in sustaining a learning environment.
- 5P3 O Institutional teams and individual employees are used to support the decision-making process. An empowered workforce requires information to make appropriate decisions. It is unclear how information is made available in a timely and useful way.
- 5P4 O Although HCC has begun using the PDCA cycle as a means of formalizing a process of data-driven decision making, there is little evidence of how HCC leaders are using the information in the decision-making process.
- 5P5 O While the informal one-on-one communication between and among levels may foster an overall culture of communication at HCC, the formal process described in the portfolio is a top-down process, with little evidence of a process that encourages two-way communication from all levels of the organization.
- 5P6 S HCC communicates its Mission and Vision Statements and expectations using a variety of approaches. The focus on social responsibility, ethics, and community service are included within the Vision Statements.
- 5P7 O While HCC encourages leadership abilities among faculty, staff, and administrators using a variety of approaches that include tuition assistance, faculty professional plans, the Bruning Award and team interaction, the College appears to rely upon voluntary training to encourage and enhance leadership capabilities. HCC appears to lack a systematic approach to communicate and share leadership best practices, knowledge, and skills.
- 5P8 O HCC does not appear to have in place a leadership succession plan for either administration or board members that will ensure the continuity of the College's mission and Vision Statement.

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| 5P9 | S | HCC is in the early stages of collecting and analyzing results to measure leadership and communication through its implementation of the IDEA Feedback Survey in 2006. |
| 5R1 | O | While HCC reports baseline data from the spring 2006 IDEA evaluation, there are no trend data reported for leading and communicating. |
| 5R2 | O | HCC does not currently report any comparative data for leading and communicating. There are plans to participate in the Kansas Study and the Kansas Academic Quality Improvement Program in the future. |
| 5I1, 5I2 | OO | There are no reported improved processes for leading and communicating noted. Although some anecdotal examples are provided, there is no indication of measureable improvement as a result of these changes, nor is there evidence of targets for improvement. HCC has an opportunity to formalize these processes to ensure that they can link improvements to measureable results that have been collected and analyzed. |

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 In the Fall of 2007 the College enrolled approx. 2,800 students; 616 students were served on the main campus and 2,193 students were served in the six regional centers and 33 course delivery sites in the service area.
- O6b HCC received a Title III grant and converted 24 of the 26 campus classrooms to SMART classrooms. Much of that technology will be transferred to regional sites as new equipment has been purchased.
- O7c Faced with competition from online providers, HCC introduced online courses in the Fall of 2007.
- O8d HCC faces significant challenges with its administrative software system, PowerCampus, which, without ongoing customization at great cost, is leaving the college without the ability to generate reports in support of data-driven decision making.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	HCC identifies overall support service needs of its students using a variety of approaches such as ACT and Asset scores, IEPs, SSI results, focus groups, informal discussion with student leaders, and self disclosure. Individual needs are identified through faculty observation of classroom performance.
6P2a	S	HCC uses a variety of approaches to identify administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and other key stakeholders such as taxpayers and alumni. Employee approaches include Track-It to identify computer needs, work orders, in-house surveys, and day-to-day operations. Taxpayer needs are identified through the community perception survey and community focus groups;

alumni needs are identified through the Alumni Board of Directors, annual Alumni Games, and Alumni Banquet.

- 6P2b O The process of identifying the needs of faculty, staff, administrators and other stakeholders appears to be rather informal and does not seem to be part of a larger, structured, improvement process. It is unclear how input is gathered from faculty, staff, and administrators and used to improve support services.
- 6P3 O HCC indicates that daily operations are managed as needed rather than having a formal management process. Some processes are documented, such as the Employee Guide to using the Business Office, Student Housing Handbook, Employee Orientation, and Class Schedule, but it is unclear how these documented processes encourage innovation. There is a lack of evidence of how input from students and stakeholders is used to change processes.
- 6P4 O Although HCC's utilization of the PDCA cycle has been effective in using data and information to improve services in a few select areas, there is no evidence of a formal process for consistent use of information to improve service, and It is not clear how new initiatives are successfully deployed for goal achievement.
- 6P5 O HCC updates SSI, TrackIt, and IDEA measures, Student Accounts Receivable and Revenue Sources as well as the Five-year Rolling Facilities maintenance plan and reviews them annually. However, there is no indication that there is a systematic process related to this evaluation or the use of the data that is created.
- 6R1 S In addition to the 11 standardized SSI category results that are discussed in the results section of Category 3, the results of the ten institutional questions on the SSI that address student activity and housing overall reflect an improvement in the gap analysis from 2004 to 2006 between student expectations of the perceived service and satisfaction with the

actual service. The SSI results indicate the College performs above the national average in many of its support services.

- 6R2 OO TrackIt data, Alumni and Taxpayer data are being collected but results are not reported.
- 6I1 O Reported improvements are primarily anecdotal and are not supported by data. A distinct opportunity exists for HCC to initiate continuous quality improvement by establishing standardized student support processes and the use of institutional data to improve those processes.
- 6I2 O HCC has not identified specific improvement priorities and appears to lack a systematic approach to setting targets for improvement or to identify how improvement targets will be addressed. It is unclear how the College communicates current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate stakeholders.

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 HCC is coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), which governs the state's six universities; coordination prior to 1999 was governed the State Board of Education.

- O1f The mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.
- O3b In the Fall of 2007 the College enrolled approx. 2,800 students; 616 students were served on the main campus and 2,193 students were served in the six regional centers and 33 course delivery sites in the service area.
- O6b HCC received a Title III grant and converted 24 of the 26 campus classrooms to SMART classrooms. Much of that technology will be transferred to regional sites as new equipment has been purchased.
- O6c The regional centers reflect the value HCC places in face-to-face education as opposed to distance education, although the campus offered 21 online classes in fall 2007 and also provide classes over a TELENET II system.
- O7a While HCC is the only public higher education institution in the nine-county service area, the college nevertheless faces competition from other colleges and universities in the surrounding areas, and flat enrollments at HCC in the face of rising tuition at the state universities speaks to HCC's vulnerability.
- O8a Over a third of HCC's students require developmental learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- O8b A \$1.7 million, five year grant to develop a program aimed at students needing assistance with basic skills needed for success and the introduction of quality improvement concepts are opportunities for the College.
- O8d HCC faces significant challenges with its administrative software system, PowerCampus, which, without ongoing customization at great cost, is leaving the College without the ability to generate reports in support of data-driven decision making.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	O	Although HCC expects managers to collect and use data within each department/area, and data are also collected for KBOR performance agreements, it is unclear how data and information are used to support organizational decision making. The College may benefit from a systematic approach to selecting data and information as it relates to the Performance Agreements; i.e., who is involved, the frequency, etc.
7P2	O	The College reports that the new data collection system, PowerCampus, will be used to capture and store relevant data. However, it is unclear how the College determines and meets the data needs of the various departments and units.
7P3	OO	Although HCC has identified National Community College Benchmark Project and the Kansas State Postsecondary Database Project as sources of comparative data, it is unclear how they will select and ensure the effective use of comparative data from within and outside higher education to support operational and strategic decision making.
7P4	OO	Although Action Project teams analyze some data and data analysis is routinely shared at Board, faculty, team, and staff meetings, HCC lacks a systematic approach to analyze information and data regarding overall performance.
7P5	O	Although the summer Strategic Planning process includes a review of institutional goals, Action Projects, and state reporting, it is unclear if a process exists to ensure that departmental data analysis aligns with institutional goals.
7P6	OO	HCC cites the need to have a systematic process to ensure the effectiveness of its information system (PowerCampus).

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| 7P7 | OO | HCC has no formal process for measuring the effectiveness of its system for measuring effectiveness. Without a process for determining the effectiveness of measures, HCC is impeding its ability to effectively evaluate and improve key processes. |
| 7R1 | OO | No results are reported. Without a measurement system, it is difficult to evaluate and improve processes. |
| 7R2 | OO | Although HCC has joined the NCCBP, the College has not identified or reviewed data from other institutions. Without the effective use of comparative data, it is difficult to support operational and strategic decision making. |
| 7I1 | O | Although HCC's Computer Users Group and Action Teams research and document information system needs, it appears to lack a systematic approach to improve current processes and systems for measuring effectiveness. |
| 7I2 | OO | The College does not report on a process for setting targets for improvement and priorities. |

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*

- O1a Highland Community College (HCC) is governed by an elected six-member Board of Trustees.
- O1f The mission statement adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1997 includes purposes of the College and goals and objectives to accomplish those objectives.
- O6a The main campus at HCC has nine academic buildings, eighteen campus housing units and a living/learning center for Fine Arts students. The newest addition to the campus is the HCC Wellness Center.
- O6d The HCC Atchison center is on the Northeast Kansas Technical Campus, and the two colleges are working on a merger to be in place by July 2008.
- O7a While HCC is the only public higher education institution in the nine-county service area, the College nevertheless faces competition from other colleges and universities in the surrounding areas, and flat enrollments at HCC in the face of rising tuition at the state universities speaks to HCC’s vulnerability.
- O8d HCC faces significant challenges with its administrative software system, PowerCampus, which, without ongoing customization at great cost, is leaving the College without the ability to generate reports in support of data-driven decision making.
- O8e HCC is addressing the differences between the processes and programs at the main campus and the regional centers.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1	O	HCC has determined that its process of annual planning by the President’s staff needed to be enhanced and secured an outside consulting firm beginning in summer 2007 to assist with a comprehensive academic strategic planning process. It is unclear who is involved in the development, implementation and ongoing assessment of its current

institutional goals and objectives; how modifications are made to the mission and vision; and how the Strategic Plan, Campus Facilities Master Plan, and Academic Plan are aligned. A revitalized strategic planning process may lead to a greater focus on developing goals and measures to support its continuous improvement effort.

- 8P2 O Short-and long-term strategies are determined by the President's staff during the annual review of the Board's Vision Statements. It is unclear whether this method effectively establishes targets for improvement and how data is used to determine the key influences, challenges, and requirements that affect the College's strategic initiatives. Engaging in the new, comprehensive strategic planning process may provide an opportunity to implement a more inclusive and participative process and to plan for more than one year at a time.
- 8P3 O There is no evidence of a systematized process for producing, implementing, measuring, or revising actions plans. While mention is made throughout the Portfolio of the PDCA cycle, it is unclear how this process has been institutionalized or formalized, how others at the institution are involved, and how progress is communicated to internal and external stakeholder groups.
- 8P4 O The College's process for aligning planning processes and overall institutional strategies does not appear to be inclusive and collaborative. It is unclear whether departments, work units, and employees from the regional centers are included in this process and whether the centers' goals are aligned with institutional strategies.
- 8P5 O Although College Teams work on AQIP Action Projects identified in Figure 8.1 (Short- and Long-Term Strategies), it is unclear how these teams select measures and set performance projections. Without measures, it is difficult to track progress towards stated goals.
- 8P6 OO Although College Teams request resources for implementing

recommendations, it is unclear whether HCC has a systematic process that ties resource allocation to continuous improvement goals and the planning process.

- 8P7 O HCC has short-term processes for employee development as part of the planning process; however, a process that links employee development with mission and vision, long-term strategic goals and plans may assist the College in its resource allocation processes.
- 8P8 OO The College does not report on the measures it collects and analyzes to determine the effectiveness of its planning efforts. Without ongoing tracking of relevant measures, it is difficult to determine progress towards stated goals and success with specific objectives.
- 8R1 O HCC describes strategies related to the Boards seven Vision Statements. There are no results reported for accomplishing institutional strategies and actions plans.
- 8R2 O The College describes activities to address future concerns. No actual projections of performance (i.e. enrollments) are reported.
- 8R3 OO No comparative data are reported. The lack of comparative data may limit HCC's effectiveness in assessing its planning and continuous improvement efforts relative to other organizations.
- 8R4 OO Although the Summer Blitz program is cited as evidence for effective continuous improvement planning, results are not provided to demonstrate effectiveness.
- 8I1 O HCC is beginning its continuous improvement journey and, as such, the institution understands that it must improve its processes and systems for planning. Full deployment of the PDCA cycle may improve upon its planning processes.
- 8I2a S HCC's process of aligning Action Projects with Strategic Planning shows a commitment to continuous improvement. Action Project Teams, some work teams, and the AQIP Leadership Team/ President's staff set targets

for improvement that include distance learning, the role of athletics in the institution, and retention.

- 8I2b O HCC does not report results that can be used to set improvement targets. Furthermore, HCC communicates to various stakeholders through town-hall meetings, but it is unclear if the approach effectively encompasses students and all stakeholder groups; e.g., alumni, KBOR, etc.

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

- O1d HCC's main campus is located in Doniphan County and there are six regional campuses in the nine-county service area.
- O4a HCC key collaborative relationships are with their alumni, KBOR, and the local economic development organizations, as well as various professional and civic groups.
- O4b HCC has a partnership with Northeast Kansas Technical College to provide AAS degree programs.
- O6c The regional centers reflect the value HCC places in face-to-face education as opposed to distance education, although the campus offered 21 online classes in fall 2007 and also provides classes over a TELENET II system.

O6d The HCC Atchison center is on the Northeast Kansas Technical Campus, and the two colleges are working on a merger to be in place by July 2008.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	O	Although HCC views establishing partnerships within its nine-county area as a priority to fulfill its mission and vision statements and desires to be a positive partner in its service area, it is not clear that building and maintaining collaborative relationships is part of a comprehensive, systematic continuous improvement process.
9P2	O	Although HCC uses surveys, advisory teams, focus groups, one-on-one contact, and participation in community/business groups to address partner needs, it is unclear whether these approaches ensure that the needs of all key collaborators are being met (e.g., transfer institutions, KBOR, USDs, etc.).
9P3	S	HCC uses work teams, Action Project Teams, and daily interactions to create and build relationships within the organization and encourages and promotes employee involvement across campus and regional sites to enhance communication and integration.
9P4	O	Although HCC measures the success of partnerships by identifying what is accomplished by each partnership (e.g., CEP agreements, involvement in the incubator program, and community organization focus groups), it may benefit by having more quantifiable measures to monitor progress relating to specific strategic goals and activities to support collaborative relationships.
9R1a	S	Results to support Building Collaborative Relationships include acceptance and completion of KBOR Performance Agreements,

NEKTC's proposed merger with HCC in July 2008, enrollment of over 500 high school students currently taking HCC classes in their respective high schools, and articulation agreements with transfer universities (Figure 1.7 Academic Comparisons).

- 9R1b OO No results or trend data are reported to demonstrate effectiveness of its involvement in the incubator program or community organization focus groups. Without these results or other results that provide more specific, data-driven information about all its key partnerships, it is unclear whether HCC is effectively meeting the needs of its collaborators.
- 9R2 O Beyond GPA studies, no comparative evidence is provided. Lack of comparative data may limit HCC's effectiveness in assessing its partnership and collaboration performance relative to other organizations.
- 9I1 O Although HCC cites its business study by the Docking Institute and involvement with the county Economic Development Commission, it appears to lack a systematic approach to improve its current processes and systems for Building Collaborative Relationships to address all key collaborative relationships identified (e.g., USDs, NEKTC, etc.)
- 9I2 OO Although HCC and its collaborative partners set targets for improvement, it is unclear what specific improvement priorities are targeted, how they will be addressed, or how current results and improvement priorities are communicated to partners, faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate students and stakeholders.