

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of
INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

September 22, 2006



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE (IHCC)

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

Category 1 - IHCC exhibits a significant commitment to building a quality culture that supports learning-centered concepts of higher education and student success. The use of teams, task forces, and other groups that include faculty, staff, administrators and students is proving to be very effective in identifying successes and areas for improvement. Perceptual satisfaction measures are good sources of potential issues; these sources would be strengthened if validated by direct measures of student learning.

Category 2 - IHCC takes a proactive approach to determining its distinctive objectives. While each initiative has its own unique outcomes they all are aligned with and support the College mission and vision. Measures that combine college-wide and initiative-specific activities have been identified. The results, even though a subset of the measures identified, provide evidence of the success and effectiveness of The College's distinctive initiatives. IHCC is to be complimented for distinguishing itself in establishing one of seven world-wide training centers in CISCO network security training centers, for developing an accelerated program option for adult learners, and creating a robust on-line learning program. IHCC has also distinguished itself by beginning the process of developing a state and national comparative database early in its journey as an AQIP institution.

Category 3 - IHCC has identified student and some stakeholder segments and has developed practices to ascertain and improve on issues involving satisfaction. The needs and requirements of these groups have been articulated and a wide range of both formal and informal processes are in place to develop relationships among the College and its students and stakeholders. The multiple-loop feedback systems provide insight into issues facing students; however, it is not clear that the College is as sensitive to the needs of other, more external stakeholder groups. There may be an excessive dependence on satisfaction surveys and informal data gathering without a balance of more objective data.

Category 4 - IHCC seems to be making a good-faith effort to create an environment in which people are valued. Strategic goals are incorporated into the process of recruiting and hiring new employees. The college provides employees with a wide variety of faculty development opportunities. IHCC also annually recognizes the achievements of faculty and staff through programs such as the Faculty Awards for Excellence.

Implementing a valid climate/culture survey is a bold strategy because it is almost assured that there will be issues that reflect adversely on leadership. A willingness to accept the findings of the survey, present them to the college community, and move forward to address issues indicates a significant commitment to the principles of quality. In-depth analysis of climate/culture data is needed to create specific action plans to address issues raised.

Category 5 - The College is committed to multi-faceted efforts to ensure the effectiveness of current leaders and prepare people for future leadership positions. It facilitates and supports leadership development through formal and informal channels. IHCC has a clearly articulated leadership structure, promotes teamwork and collaboration, and encourages communication among faculty, staff, and students. Active development of a comprehensive mentoring and succession plan could prove motivating and empowering to a broad range of employees.

Category 6 - IHCC demonstrates a commitment to AQIP and continuous quality improvement by its consistent and systematic efforts to improve academic and administrative support processes over an extended period of time. The College assesses student, academic and administrative support needs and process outcomes through a diverse set of approaches. Although IHCC is ambitious in its design, collection, analysis of data, and in developing plans to address identified issues in supporting institutional operations, it does not appear to have plans to address the following significant support issues identified by the College such as, an increasing dependence on student tuition to support operations, replacing major aging technology components, and enhancing facilities.

Category 7 - IHCC has a strong commitment to measuring institutional effectiveness and making data-driven decisions. The College is on a clear path towards strengthening its systems for measuring effectiveness and accomplishing its mission. The state system and projects like The Minnesota Quality Improvement Project (MnQIP) demonstrate a statewide commitment to the collection and analysis of data and to broader quality concepts. IHCC's active use of all available systems is commendable.

Category 8 - Inver Hills' planning process demonstrates a strong effort to solicit input of key stakeholder groups and serves to align initiatives with the institution's mission, vision, and values. The Innovations Fund is available to provide financial support for opportunities that arise outside the normal budget request cycle. This allows the institution to remain agile in addressing emergent needs or opportunities.

Category 9 - IHCC has an emerging internal cultural of collaboration among faculty, administrators and staff. Likewise, there are strong external collaborative relationships,

especially with other colleges in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system, the service area K-12 schools, and other 4-year colleges and universities. IHCC has trending data for many of its collaborations which allow it to track growth. Feedback is acquired through surveys, evaluation forms, focus groups, advisory boards, and informal meetings. Results of feedback and satisfaction surveys are shared with all stakeholders. Targets for improvement of learning through collaborative relationships are identified in college planning at the AQIP Action Project, program, division, and institutional levels. Some of the shortcomings in the communication process may result in the college not appreciating the satisfaction of other collaborators.

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

ELEMENTS OF Inver Hills 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 Inver Hills 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 Inver Hills 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 Inver Hills 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:

While the College can point to a number of examples demonstrating data-informed improvement cycles, it is not clear that the full cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, improvement, and re-assessment occurs systematically throughout the institution. The Budget Request Cycle, Program Review, Master Academic Plan, and Student Academic Achievement Program are well-established. However, in other areas there appears to be a significant reliance on informal processes and indicators and an over-emphasis on satisfaction surveys that could result in a false sense of security and accomplishment. It is important to develop multiple measures for achievement and to ensure that perceptual measures are corroborated by more objective measures. Developing more systematic processes would assist the College in decision-making, improvement efforts, and in selecting comparative data.

The College has identified emerging competition from other colleges and universities, particularly proprietary schools, as a major issue. Not aggressively engaging the emerging competition has the potential to drain resources and threaten the College's reputation for excellence in educational and training programs. To meet this competition, IHCC is increasing its reliance on technology by expanding its online learning program. Outdated technology may have a negative impact on IHCC's ability to aggressively compete in the increasingly competitive Twin City higher education market.

IHCC has created some truly impressive achievements through the use of team and taskforce structures. Additionally, their development of collaborations with other organizations is impressive. A secure revenue stream is essential to enhance these efforts, maintain a learning-centered focus, and compete in its market. Although declining revenues from traditional sources and an increasing dependence on tuition are identified as significant issues, there does not appear to be institution-wide involvement in initiatives to enhance alternate revenue.

IHCC has a strong culture of continuous improvement, data assessment and analysis, and teamwork. Continuing to develop this culture and applying results to improve student learning will further IHCC's already impressive progress towards its vision of excellence. While Inver Hills has developed a wide array of processes, it is not clear that the College has deployed a consistent set of measures to assess the effectiveness of these processes. Measures are often referenced without accompanying results. At times there seems to be confusion about what constitutes a result that is sufficient to guide decision-making and 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 Inver Hills 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 Inver Hills 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 IHCC is one of 32 public post-secondary institutions in the MnSCU system. The system shares a common Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and system support services although each institution houses a separate administrative structure, budget and hiring authority.
- O1b IHCC is recognized nationally as an Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) for its adult accelerated education program and its Adult Success through Accelerated Programs (ASAP). It has received the national Bellwether Award for its Liberal Studies/Professional Skills program.
- O1c IHCC is an open-door enrollment, comprehensive community college granting associate degrees and certificates, providing non-credit adult education courses and services, delivering training to business and industry, and offering cultural programs in the community.
- O1d IHCC, initially accredited by the North Central Association (NCA) in 1972 and an early adopter of AQIP, has actively committed to institutional self-assessment, targeted planning, and implementation of strategies that lead to measurable results.
- O2a IHCC offers credit transfer and career programs including AA, AFA, AS, and AAS degrees and 19 certificates. Additionally, they offer continuing and community education programs.
- O2b IHCC delivers offerings in various formats and on convenient schedules including an adult accelerated education program and online and weekend classes.
- O2c College programs are designed to provide students with “innovation in teaching and learning” through “multiple opportunities” for meeting their “personal, academic and career goals.”

- O3a IHCC is a suburban college serving Minneapolis/St. Paul and Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington counties from its main campus and 76 offsite locations. It has a student body of approximately 9,000 with an average age of 25. Fifty-eight percent are women, 42% are men, 17% are people of color, 40% are full-time, and over 2,000 are continuing education students.
- O3b IHCC utilizes student satisfaction surveys, program advisory boards, formal program reviews, and the Student Academic Achievement Program (SAAP) processes to provide data used to develop and enhance programs and services.
- O3c IHCC's increasingly diverse students, who reflect traditional-aged students, many returning adults, a wide socio-economic range, and who bring vastly different expectations, life experiences, and educational capabilities create a challenge for the institution.
- O4a IHCC has a range of collaborations with various institutional and program accreditation agencies, regional K-12 schools, baccalaureate transfer institutions, business, industry, non-profit and community-based organizations, and municipalities.
- O4b IHCC focuses on collaborations that allow them to advocate for underrepresented and underserved learners within the College's service area.
- O5a IHCC is a highly unionized campus with 90 full-time faculty and 169 part-time faculty. There are 132 full- and part-time staff and administrators. One-hundred and ten students work on campus.
- O6a IHCC's has a \$29.5 million operating budget and has come to increasingly rely on tuition, which currently accounts for half of its general fund. Revenue derived from state apportionment is distributed among MnSCU institutions according to a complex allocation formula.
- O6b Although IHCC has a well-developed, secure, technology infrastructure with all classrooms having either wireless or connected network/web access and instructional equipment, it is faced with the need to replace major technology components which will take significant resources.
- O6c With aging facilities in need of improvement, IHCC engaged in a renovation and building process supported by state funding secured through a competitive legislative proposal process.
- O7a IHCC's most prevalent competitors are other community colleges and universities, particularly private, for-profit institutions within the region who offer similar academic and

vocational services. There has been a notable increase in the for-profit institutions in the region, including several online colleges.

- O8a The number of students requiring developmental education is increasing, thus creating a challenge in the areas of student retention and goal attainment.
- O8b IHCC has multiple processes for measuring institutional effectiveness.
- O8c IHCC has identified three specific concerns for the FY07 budget cycle: fiscal constraints; facilities and infrastructure; and internal and external competition.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O1a IHCC is one of 32 public post-secondary institutions in the MnSCU system. The system shares a common Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and system support services although each institution houses a separate administrative structure, budget and hiring authority.
- O1b IHCC is recognized nationally as an Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) for its adult accelerated education program, for its Access through Accelerated Programs (ASAP) and it has received the national Bellwether Award for its Liberal Studies/Professional Skills program.
- O1c IHCC is an open-door enrollment, comprehensive community college granting associate degrees and certificates, provides non-credit adult education courses and services, delivers training to business and industry, and offers cultural programs in the community.
- O2b IHCC delivers offerings in various formats and on convenient schedules including an adult accelerated education program and online and weekend classes.
- O2c College programs are designed to provide students with “innovation in teaching and learning” through “multiple opportunities” for meeting their “personal, academic and career goals.”
- O3a IHCC is a suburban college serving a Minneapolis/St. Paul and Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington counties region from its main campus and 76 offsite locations with a student body of approximately 9,000 with an average age of 25, 58% women, 42% men, 17% of color, 40% full-time, and over 2,000 continuing education students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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	O	IHCC has experienced a threefold increase in the number of students enrolled in the online courses over the past three years. There is an opportunity to ensure that this growth is being accommodated and quality is being maintained.
1P3	S	While the College operates with an open-door admission policy, students are assessed to make sure they are properly placed in courses and provided appropriate academic support to be successful. The

effectiveness of placement exams and interventions, e.g., **Integrating Developmental Education and Acculturation Skills—Positive Learning for Underrepresented Students (IDEAS+)**, are measured and guide improvements in academic support and placement.

- 1P5 S IHCC utilizes multiple means to help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities including counselors and academic advisors, career planning classes, introductory courses teaching career options, and basic skills assessments.
- 1P6 S The College uses a variety of direct and indirect measures to document the achievement of student learning outcomes. The focus on learning is integrated into hiring practices and reinforced through professional development processes. The inclusion of students in this process should be recognized.
- 1P7 O A number of measures are used to guide the scheduling of academic offerings; however, the stakeholders and data identified do not appear to include current or prospective students. The approach to scheduling seems to be focused on historical trends and not based upon input from students about their needs. The discussion on teaching and learning—and how student success is tracked and facilitated—is very general and could be developed to be more specific.
- 1P10 O Collaboration exists between Academic and Student Affairs, however, it is not clear that there is an alignment of goals. No process for establishing goals for co-curricular activities is provided. Developing a process to establish those goals would make the alignment of learning and co-curricular goals more intentional and effective.
- 1R1 O Student achievement of learning outcomes is demonstrated primarily by course grades. While this is one measure, demonstration of learning may be more clearly indicated through various developmental and authentic assessment methods.
- 1R3 OO Further details of methods to assess processes are described; however, only limited results are provided. It is difficult to determine how process improvements are made based on limited results.
- 1R4 O Analysis of data indicates a willingness to identify and address possible shortcomings. However, over-dependence on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) as representative of instructional effectiveness may lead

to an overestimation of actual success. The SSI is a measure of student perception of aspects of instructional effectiveness. The College does not provide correlation of perceptions with other more objective measures of effectiveness.

- 112 O The College has a strong strategic planning and improvement process that sets clear annual priorities and includes input from college leadership, administrators, staff, faculty, and students, but there is no indication of how the results are being used to improve student learning.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O1b IHCC is recognized nationally as an Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) for its adult accelerated education program and its Adult Success through Accelerated Programs (ASAP). It has received the national Bellwether Award for its Liberal Studies/Professional Skills program.
- O2b IHCC delivers offerings in various formats and on convenient schedules including an adult accelerated education program and online and weekend classes.
- O2c College programs are designed to provide students with "innovation in teaching and learning" through "multiple opportunities" for meeting their "personal, academic and career goals."

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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>
2P1	SS	IHCC has established a proactive process, as reflected in the Action Projects, for determining distinctive objectives which includes input from all relevant stakeholders, internal and external. The College determines distinctive objectives by identifying and building on its strengths, viewing its mission and goals with out-of-the-box thinking and developing collaborations that enforce and provide additional resources for the College. Every initiative selected must establish its own distinctive set of objectives and demonstrate alignment with the College’s mission.
2P2	S	Expectations regarding the College’s distinctive objectives are communicated through some conduits common to all college initiatives, e.g., budget planning, program review, meetings of internal stakeholders (faculty, staff, and administration), professional development days, and the publication of measurable outcomes. Additionally, each distinctive objective communicates expectations to its stakeholders through unique communication approaches, e.g., consultancy, advisory group meetings, niche marketing, and recruitment and retention activities.
2P3	S	IHCC identifies faculty and staff needs and the resources to meet those needs specific to each distinctive objective through annual conferences, faculty and staff development, noncredit learning events, meetings, review and update of curriculum, surveys, and online task force groups. However, the processes described sometimes seem informal or based on outside revenue support rather than being part of a fully deployed systematic approach.
2P4	S	Objectives are assessed through multiple measures designed to the unique characteristics of the objective and involves persons appropriate to the situation. The Center for Strategic Information Systems and Security (CSISS) assessment is accomplished through designated process and an outside evaluator. ASAP has a full ongoing review process focused on quality improvement. The Nursing program is assessed through the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) accreditation program, the Office of Service Learning, and faculty evaluations of students. The Emergency Health

Services (EHS) Program goes through a regular accreditation process and receives peer feedback and trend data analysis. The online programs participate in the Academic Program Review process. Feedback is incorporated through task force meetings and quality improvement strategies.

- 2P5 S Data is gathered from a variety of campus-wide or system generated measures. Measures include: assuring that graduates have a high degree of employability; establishing a network of expertise and resources that transcends institutional boundaries, case studies and research; enrollment and tuition revenues; retention; student satisfaction; enhanced reputation; new and enhanced technology; and, student learning outcomes.
- 2R1 S Results are clearly illustrated and in line with program objectives. There appears to be a very clear understanding of results in regard to identified distinctive objectives. The EHS Program yielded national recognition for research as demonstrated by the submission, acceptance, and publication of six projects at Emergency Medical Services (EMS) conferences. Baseline data from the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) survey provides information about strengths and challenges of online instruction. The Nursing Department's service partnership was nationally recognized and is considered a best practice model.
- 2R1 O Although many results are provided, a large number of the measures identified in 2P5 do not have results in this section.
- 2R2 S ASAP's results from the Adult Learning Inventory (ALI) ranked IHCC in the top 10% of national results. Student satisfaction results show that IHCC exceeded the national group on 22 of 75 items and on only one item did the College's ratings fall significantly below the national peer group. The College is a benchmark program for MnOnline. IHCC is in the middle of Metro Area community colleges in total number of credit hours generated.
- 2R3 S The initiatives add to the College's reputation for collaboration that promotes community, contributes to the economy, and provides access and opportunity for underserved students. Specific examples include participation of partners on the board of advisors, grants and internships,

use of networks, expanding relationships with industry, involvement in research, community service, and enhanced online access.

- 2R3 O While results suggest that each of the initiatives is successful, only the Online Programming Initiative provides evidence of strengthening the institution. It is not clear how the other initiatives directly work to strengthen the institution.
- 2I2 O Targets for improvement are identified, but how they are set is not explained. Some of the targets are not specific and may be difficult to measure. Targets include developing new curriculum and programs, establishing processes to respond to student needs, establishing a network of expertise, achieving high results on employer surveys, implementing the AQIP Action Project goals, increasing online programs, and increasing student access to those programs.

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 Inver Hills 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 IHCC is a open-door enrollment, comprehensive community college granting associate degrees and certificates, provides non-credit adult education courses and services, delivers training to business and industry, and offers cultural programs in the community.
- O3a IHCC is a suburban college serving a Minneapolis/St. Paul and Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington counties region from its main campus and 76 offsite locations with a student body of approximately 9,000 with an average age of 25, 58% women, 42% men, 17% of color, 40% full-time, and over 2,000 continuing education students.

- O3b IHCC utilizes student satisfaction surveys, program advisory boards, formal program review, and the Student Academic Achievement Program processes to provide data utilized to develop and enhance programs and services.
- O3c IHCC's increasingly diverse students, who reflect a traditional-aged students, many returning adults, wide socio-economic range, and bring vastly different expectations, life experiences, and educational capabilities create a challenge for the institution.
- O8a The number of students requiring developmental education is increasing creating a challenge in the areas of student retention and goal attainment.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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	IHCC demonstrates a commitment to identifying and meeting the changing needs of its students through ongoing assessment and data-driven decision making based on assessment results. Instruments used to measure change needs include the Image and Awareness Survey, Placement tests, Noel-Levitz SSI, Graduate Follow-up Survey, Academic Program Review, SAAP, Review of Non-Academic Services, ALI, and PSOL (Figure 3-2). Additional methods used include meetings and review of class registration rates. As a result of two AQIP projects, processes for analyzing data and making decisions were clarified and strengthened to support the creation of action plans that incorporated systematic data collection. Examples of needs include increasing access for underrepresented students and credentialing for paraprofessionals in P-12 schools under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requirements.
3P2	S	To build relationships with students, IHCC engages students in faculty-led initiatives, such as Student Success Day, and in student life programming, as well as academic support services and a variety of specialized services. The latter include service learning projects, college newsletters and communications, and services from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Disability Services.
3P3	S	IHCC uses multiple data sources to identify the changing needs of key stakeholder groups including survey results, meeting minutes, legislative

action, verbal feedback to administrators, faculty, and staff representatives. The Office of the Chancellor regularly reports data trends to College personnel. Trends and stakeholder needs are summarized and communicated to the Management and Operations Teams who review the data. The College's Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC) discusses trends and makes recommendations.

- 3P3 O Although IHCC identifies many constituent groups they do not identify other colleges and universities even though many students will be going on to those schools. Additionally, it is not clear that they meaningfully segment different businesses and other organizations as potentially having differing needs (manufacturing, retail, professions, social service agencies, governmental entities). It appears that a significant number of measures are informal and rely heavily on one-on-one communication. Development of more formal, systematic processes to measure stakeholder needs would help provide more reliable data for decision-making.
- 3P4 S IHCC demonstrates a strong commitment to building and maintaining relationships with its key stakeholders through multiple initiatives involving many sectors of the campus community such as prospective students, parents, high school personnel, IHCC alumni, IHCC retirees, employers, transfer colleges/universities, advisory boards, the Foundation board, residents, and legislators/elected officials.
- 3P5 S A systematic approach to identifying new student and stakeholder groups has been developed. The College uses demographic data, legislative priorities, and market trends to identify new groups and to develop new initiatives. Once groups are identified, initiatives are undertaken to address the group needs. These initiatives enter the budgeting and decision-making process of the College.
- 3P6 S IHCC has clearly defined processes to collect information and address complaints from students concerning instructors, administrators, and staff. Additionally, processes are in place to deal with complaints concerning student behavior, discrimination and/or harassment, and informal complaints. Policies and procedures are communicated to Student Senate members through publications such as the *Insider* and the *Student Bulletin*. Additionally, they are posted on the College's website. The Vice President of Student Affairs analyzes complaint data and

initiates improvements, as appropriate. Students and other stakeholders are involved in review and improvement of due process procedures, as well as policy revision.

- 3P7 S IHCC uses a variety of formal and informal measures to determine student and stakeholder satisfaction such as course enrollments, SSI, ALI, PSOL, Student Success Day, Annual Student/Faculty Conference, course evaluations, graduates, high school personnel visits, community surveys, informal meetings at Breakfast with the President, and attendance at Foundation events. External stakeholder satisfaction and expectations are measured more informally.
- 3R1/3R2 S Results for student satisfaction and relationship building are measured in terms of increases in applications and enrollments which increased by 34% since last fall. SSI results showed that IHCC is above the national norm in terms of satisfaction for registration, intellectual growth experiences, variety of courses, campus safety and security, and library resources and services. Graduation and goal attainment rates and transfers to colleges/universities to pursue a bachelor's degree are other positive indicators of satisfaction and relationship. An increase in the number of student clubs and the increase in the number of Somali students are other indicators.
- 3R1/3R2 O IHCC students were less satisfied than their peers in eight areas shown in Figure 3-3: sense of belonging; security staff are helpful; adequate financial aid; parking space; lab facilities; change policies; timely feedback; and progress notification. In addition to the SSI, the ALI and PSOL are identified as measures, although no results are provided. It is difficult to determine the level of student satisfaction or the effectiveness of building relationships based on limited data. More substantial results would improve analysis and decision-making.
- 3R3 S IHCC systematically assesses stakeholder satisfaction. Relationships and partnerships with high school personnel are positive as demonstrated by new partnerships with schools. Graduate follow-up surveys showed 85% of graduates are employed. Service learning programs served 34 community partner sites with 224 IHCC students serving over 4,000 people from different backgrounds. Board loyalty is shown by continued service and a 100% participation rate by the Foundation board in financial

support. Survey results from residents were reported to be above average. Legislative support was measured in terms of positive bonding proposals.

- 3R3 O Only limited results are presented for external stakeholder satisfaction. There is no indication of satisfaction results from business and industry and information on transfer colleges' satisfaction is anecdotal. Formalizing satisfaction measures and/or processes associated with building relationships with stakeholder groups other than students would help provide more valid and reliable data.
- 3R4 S While quantitative results are not provided, the College makes a strong case for effectively building relationships with its many stakeholder groups.
- 3R5 O Formal processes identified for measuring student satisfaction (SSI, ALI, PSOL) allow comparisons with other institutions. Informal processes used to measure stakeholder satisfaction, as well as measures of building relationships, make obtaining comparison data difficult. Formalizing these measures and/or processes would allow Inver Hills to more readily identify comparison data both inside and outside of higher education.
- 3I1 S It is clear that IHCC knows how to use data to analyze issues and create meaningful improvements and solutions. Process improvement meetings address student and employee needs by incorporating action steps into a plan shared with the operations team. They, in turn, establish Rapid Response Teams, as needed, to investigate areas of concern, develop plans, report to the management team, and report results campus-wide.
- 3I2 S Through strategic planning, the College targets and manages improvement processes through committees and teams and a review by the Institutional Effectiveness Council. The college-wide process improvement model ensures that priorities for intervention and improvement are identified and addressed immediately. Data from the SSI, ALI, and PSOL are analyzed, prioritized, and communicated to the campus. Areas for targeted improvement include: sense of belonging; security staff are helpful; adequate financial aid; parking space; lab facilities; change policies; timely feedback; and, progress notification.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O4b IHCC focuses on collaborations that allow them to advocate for under-represented and underserved learners within the College's service area.
- O5a IHCC is a highly unionized campus with 90 fulltime faculty and 169 part-time faculty. There are 132 full- and part-time staff and administrators. 110 students work on campus.

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

Item S/O Comment

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|-----|---|--|
| 4P1 | S | IHCC provides training to all search committee members that includes discussions of the MnSCU Confidentiality in the Search Process policy, its affirmative action plan expectations and goals, and its hiring process. All applicants are screened for required credentials and criteria defined by the faculty contract or by MnSCU prescribed criteria for all classified staffing. |
| 4P2 | S | A systematic approach to recruiting and hiring new employees is deployed across the institution. The Human Resources Department posts all positions in a broad range of publications and targeted websites with a concerted effort to target underrepresented groups. The Human |

- Resources Department conducts a college orientation for all employees and each department provides an orientation to their respective department new hires. These processes are tied to the strategic goals of the College such as the recruitment of a more diverse faculty and staff.
- 4P3 O Although IHCC has established policies and procedures for ensuring compliance in the areas of ethical behavior in the workplace and the classroom, it is not clear how work processes and activities contribute to communication, cooperation, high performance, innovation, empowerment, organizational learning and skill sharing. Neither is it clear how performance in these areas is measured.
- 4P4 O Faculty development is clearly an institutional focus as evidenced by a variety of training opportunities such as attendance at national and MnSCU conferences, state-wide training and campus activities, and funding for innovation and sabbaticals. It is not clear, however, that the level of development and training opportunities for staff and administration is comparable or as systematic. Development opportunities across all employee groups help in growing a quality culture and valuing people.
- 4P5 O IHCC determines training needs based on campus-wide input which is reviewed by the Institutional Effectiveness Council. Faculty training needs are identified by the Faculty Development Committee with collaboration from faculty and administration. A campus-wide training committee also solicits training needs through annual online surveys. It was not evident, however, how these processes align with overall continuous improvement efforts.
- 4P6 O Although performance evaluation systems exist for faculty and staff, the College does not outline how the evaluation systems align with and support Category 1, Helping Students Learn, and Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. Failing to recognize people for support of these two categories can result in misplaced personal priorities that do not support the strategy of the College.
- 4P7 S Several incentive programs for faculty exist, including a Faculty Awards for Excellence program. A faculty member who has submitted an approved project plan may receive up to \$5,000 for “their extraordinary efforts.”

- 4P7 O It is not clear how employees are supported through benefits and services nor is it clear how the program aligns with student learning.
- 4P8 S Issues are discussed both formally and informally throughout the campus community. Employee Climate Survey results are discussed through formal structures such as the Shared Governance Committee, Exchange of Views, Operations Team, management Team and Process Improvement meetings. The Rapid Response Team allows for the discussion and action on issues through staff training, department meetings, taskforces and process improvement forums.
- 4P10 O The measures identified are somewhat limited. Measures of the effectiveness of processes associated with training/development, employee recruitment and hiring, and personnel evaluation would strengthen the institution's ability to determine its effectiveness in valuing people.
- 4R1, 4R2 OO Figures 4-3 and 4-4 indicate areas of strength and areas for improvement concerning valuing people and associated processes. Little analysis is provided of these data and no correlation to institutional goals and distinctive objectives is indicated. Although the College gathers information, little is indicated to demonstrate how this information is used.
- 4R3 O While processes described indicate potential for measuring how institutional goals are achieved, only anecdotal evidence is presented. Examples of process improvement in customer service and increased efficiency in student services provide limited proof of effectiveness. Descriptive statements such as ". . . making the student enrollment process more user-friendly" and "the result is more effective and efficient use of . . ." are made without data to support them.
- 4R4 O Although it is asserted that IHCC's efforts to compare its practices with MnSCU policies and processes provides "an excellent opportunity for the College to compare itself with other MnSCU institutions," no evidence is presented that it has done so in relation to the category of Valuing People.
- 4I1/4I2 O IHCC exhibits a noteworthy willingness to face issues and seek improvement. Continuing the climate survey and taking its findings to heart illustrates a sincere desire for improvement in an area of difficulty.

- 5P1 S Alignment with mission and core values is fundamental to planning and leadership initiatives throughout the College. All budget requests and plans are aligned with campus priorities. Performance and staff development initiatives promote mission, values and College priorities through training, evaluation, merit pay and sabbaticals.
- 5P1 SS A systematic approach to program review has been deployed. Departments and programs are required to align their mission, vision, and goals with those of the institution. Each department and program identifies learning outcomes and reports on them through the Student Academic Achievement Program.
- 5P2 S The College supports and sustains the learning environment through matching funds for grants, budgeting innovation funds for new course development, provides professional development resources to support long-term and short-term goals, and maintains strong relationships with the community, local foundations, legislators, and business for seeking input and support.
- 5P3 S The College is committed to collaborative decision making and effectively uses teams, task forces and quick reaction groups to enhance and facilitate the work of college committees. Roles, responsibilities, timelines, processes, and activities for each decision-making entity are clearly defined.
- 5P4 S Throughout the report, the College demonstrates a willingness to create and use data and information in decision making. The College identifies how information is used in decision making for the Management Team, key committees and resource processes to provide for ongoing monitoring and assessment of institutional progress and to ensure efficient use of resources. In some areas, measures are well-established while in others there is evidence of experimentation with multiple measures. In almost all areas, there is a commitment to building data-driven decision systems.
- 5P4 O While the data/information used by various segments of the institution has been identified, it is not clear how the data/information is actually used in decision-making or improvement processes.
- 5P5 S Inver Hills uses multiple means of communicating with employees and students, including verbal reports of division and Management Team

meetings, the President's semester meeting, campus-wide convocations, the Provost's open sessions, the *Staff Bulletin*, voice messages, published meeting minutes, reports, and e-mail.

- 5P5 O Given the heavy reliance upon person-to-person communication, it is important that the College assess the effectiveness of its methods in order to ensure consistency and accuracy in communication.
- 5P6 S The view that budget requests communicate values and expectations and the practice of requiring that budget requests be specifically tied to strategic guidelines is exemplary and reflective of a fully integrated planning system.
- 5P7-5P8 S IHCC leaders take advantage of the MnSCU leadership development opportunities such as the Luoma Leadership Academy. Campus leaders engage in state and national leadership opportunities that are available as well as institute attendance. The College is establishing plans for additional leadership development through professional development initiatives. The distributed decision-making approach used by the College provides stability to help insulate the institution from abrupt changes in process that could result from change in personnel.
- 5P8 O Because faculty contract pay and retirement structure make it more desirable financially to remain on the faculty, a process and reward system to encourage faculty participation in institutional leadership succession would better position IHCC to take advantage of faculty experience and expertise in the future.
- 5P9 S The performance review of the College President is shared with administration, faculty, and staff as a measure of the effectiveness of leading and communicating. This 360 degree performance review provides information about the effectiveness of senior leaders at the College.
- 5P9-5R1 O Although the measures of presidential leadership are commendable, no results from the president's performance review are included in the portfolio so it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of leadership processes. There is, moreover, no evidence of the evaluation of leadership impact of other College leaders. Broader measures of leadership across the range of College leaders can serve to build belief in both the leaders and the led.

- 5R2 O IHCC has recognized that the use of a nationally-benchmarked employee satisfaction instrument might produce more useful comparative data. Since the presidential review is conducted by the MnSCU system, the opportunity for comparative data within the system may exist.
- 5I1-2 O IHCC exhibits an emerging improvement process based on data-enhanced decision making. Results and effective analysis, however, are still in the early stages.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O6a IHCC's has a \$29.5 million operating budget and has come to increasingly rely on tuition, which currently accounts for half of its general fund. Revenue derived from state apportionment is distributed among MnSCU institutions according to a complex allocation formula.
- O6b Although IHCC has a well-developed, secured, technology infrastructure with all classrooms having either wireless or connected network/web access and instructional equipment, it is faced with the need to replace major technology components which will take significant resources.
- O6c With aging facilities in need of improvement, IHCC engaged in a renovation and building process supported by state funding secured through a competitive legislative proposal process.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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	The College makes use of a wide variety of formal and informal methodologies to obtain valid information about student support service needs. Among others, the College Student Inventory has provided consistent information since 2002 about these needs.
6P2	S	IHCC’s Master Academic Plan, created as a result of extensive input from all College stakeholders, provides strategic direction for Support Services and Facilities Management as well as Academic Affairs.
6P3	S	IHCC utilizes a well designed system of process improvement meetings, formal and informal surveys, data analysis, and departmental meetings to critically examine services and processes, and to identify ways to improve them.
6P5-6R2	S	Each support service unit tracks and analyzes data. Department meetings provide a forum for discussing usage reports and logs of student suggestions/complaints. These discussions influence how resources are used.
6R3/6I1	S	IHCC compares its support service analysis to other colleges in the Minnesota system and with available nationally standardized data. It compares favorably with other institutions in terms of student support needs as seen in the SSI results. Comparisons with other MnSCU institutions indicate that IHCC provides strong administrative support services to employees and other stakeholders. IHCC has created numerous information technology custom applications and reports to guide its decision-making. It refers processes in need of change or improvement to the appropriate supervisor or dean for action.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O1b IHCC is recognized nationally as an Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) for its adult accelerated education program, for its Adult Success through Accelerated Programs (ASAP) and it has received the national Bellwether Award for its Liberal Studies/Professional Skills program.
- O1d IHCC, initially accredited by the NCA in 1972 and an early adopter of AQIP, has actively committed to institutional self-assessment, targeted planning, and implementation of strategies that lead to measurable results.
- O3b IHCC utilizes student satisfaction surveys, program advisory boards, formal program review, and the Student Academic Achievement Program processes to provide data utilized to develop and enhance programs and services.
- O8b IHCC has multiple processes for measuring institutional effectiveness.
- O8c IHCC has identified three specific concerns for the FY07 budget cycle: fiscal constraints, facilities and infrastructure, and internal and external competition.

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

Item S/O Comment

- 7P1 S The Program Review Action Project serves as a good example of data management, analysis, and use in decision-making. It is clear that the College very successfully uses a systematic process for the selection, management, and use of information/data.
- 7P2 S In 2003, IHCC conducted a college-wide data audit to standardize the College's processes for requesting, storing and accessing information.

- 7P3 S Data comparing IHCC with other MnSCU institutions are readily available through extensive Integrated Statewide Record System (ISRS) and HR Oracle Database (BRIO) databases.
- 7P4 S The College gathers several data sets and shares the information with many stakeholders regarding overall performance. The President's formal evaluation with the Chancellor is a key indicator of overall performance. A cross-section of IHCC employees submits confidential evaluations of the College's progress toward meeting its goals. A scorecard of the College's achievements is created. Reports are shared with the Management Team. Each year the Institutional Effectiveness Team reviews the long-range and short-range goals of the Strategic Plan. Key indicators are also measured by national normed surveys as are the outcomes from AQIP Action Projects. Each semester the Provost shares overall performance results with the campus community at professional development days. The Operations Team schedules annual summer retreats to review performance data.
- 7P5 O IHCC has instituted a program review process that is data-driven and focuses on student achievement of learning outcomes. As all programs cycle through this process, its effectiveness will increase. This represents an opportunity for great improvement in terms of student success.
- 7R1 S The Master Academic Plan and conducting Progress Improvement meetings each semester have formed a solid foundation for systematically collecting, analyzing, and using data in decision making.
- 7R2 S IHCC receives reports from MnSCU regarding how well the College is achieving its goals. The College is compared with 32 other institutions and received very positive results. Another comparison is found in the recent initiative to align College Instructional Program (CIP) codes. IHCC's institutional goals and strategic priorities are audited by MnSCU to see if they are aligned with system goals. The College was recognized for its creative and successful initiatives to increase the diversity of the student body. IHCC received a positive rating on two recent audits for degree audit reports. Audit results were also positive regarding IHCC's financial aid practices.
- 7I2 O Specific priorities for improvement at this time are pursuing four new Action Projects and increasing online offerings and services. Other improvement efforts include hiring a shared researcher and IHCC's active participation in MnQIP and the MnSCU Institutional Researchers Workgroup.

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 Inver Hills 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 IHCC is one of 32 public post-secondary institutions in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU). The system shares a common Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and system support services although each institution houses a separate administrative structure, budget and hiring authority.
- O6a IHCC's has a \$29.5 million operating budget and has come to increasingly rely on tuition, which currently accounts for half of its general fund. Revenue derived from state apportionment is distributed among MnSCU institutions according to a complex allocation formula.
- O7a IHCC's most prevalent competitions are other community colleges and universities, particularly private-for-profit institutions within the region who offer similar academic and vocational services. There has been a notable increase in the for-profit institutions in the region, including several online colleges.
- O8a The number of students requiring developmental education is increasing creating a challenge in the areas of student retention and goal attainment.
- O8b IHCC has multiple processes for measuring of institutional effectiveness.
- O8c IHCC has identified three specific concerns for the FY07 budget cycle: fiscal constraints, facilities and infrastructure, and internal and external competition.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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, 8P2	S	IHCC follows an integrated, collaborative planning process that includes administration, faculty, staff and students. There is a Master Planning process resulting in a Master Academic Plan and a Master Facilities Plan. The IEC is responsible for integrating all planning into a single cohesive Strategic Plan. Departments and units follow specific steps in selecting goals that involve: identification of need; collaboration for input; development of goal statements; identification of challenges; alignment with mission; seeking feedback; resource requests; and, finalizing the plan. Conflicting goals and expectations are addressed through a consensus-building model. The IEC reports to the Management Team and College President. Communication occurs through the Operations Team, Management Team, Faculty Shared Governance, and staff Exchange of Views.
8P3	S	Every four years the Master Academic Plan, Master Facilities Plan and the AQIP System Portfolio are reviewed and updated with extensive involvement and review with all campus constituencies. Action plans include outcome targets which are tracked and monitored.
8P4	S	Professional development days are used to communicate outcomes, gather input from internal stakeholders, participate in planning, and celebrate successes. Departmental and division plans are linked to institutional and system-wide strategic goals. This occurs through the Master Academic Plan, SAAP, and the budget request cycle.
8P5	O	Data that generate concern from Action Projects serve as the baseline for the initiative, target results in these data areas, and then become outcome measures. Action Plans are also sources of data targets aligned to specific outcomes or goals. IHCC defines performance projections in terms of stretch targets. However, it is not clear that a systematic approach is in place for selecting measures that are directly aligned with the outcomes/goals identified in the planning process.
8P6	S	Meeting resource needs is achieved through the budget planning and allocation processes. An Innovations Fund of \$75,000 is set aside to allow the College to respond with agility to emerging opportunities. At the project level, resource needs are identified as a part of the project proposal process. Creative projects are funded through the Innovations

Fund. If an unanticipated need arises, the Management Team reviews requests to determine funding needs.

- 8P7 S The College develops employees throughout the probationary period. Key areas for change are also considered when hiring new personnel. Ongoing professional development of all employees is a major activity within the College. Employees have professional development funds. A Campus-Wide Training Committee plans and implements diverse opportunities for personal enrichment and wellness. The annual performance appraisal process is a main vehicle for employers to advise and coach employees.
- 8R1,8R2 S Table 8-2 provides an excellent overview of accomplishments and comparisons to other institutions.
- 8R1-3 OO The results reported in this section do not match up with the measures identified in 8P8. It appears that results for the measures in Figure 8-3 are descriptions of processes or actions rather than results of outcomes measures.
- 8R3 O IHCC's limited evidence that the College's system for planning is effective compared to other institutions is based on: successfully meeting AQIP plans; success of Process Improvement meetings to identify issues and solutions; SSI results; student satisfaction on specific planning and communication processes involving students; support for College Center expansion projects, high level of involvement of employees in planning events; and results of the Employee Climate Survey for the planning process.
- 8I1 O The College regularly uses feedback loops where new information is continuously introduced. Changes are implemented based on data for AQIP projects. More systematic approaches include the yearly IEC reviews of the Strategic Plan to identify areas that need revision. Data from the faculty developed College Organizational Survey prompted several key changes in the IHCC planning process. Satisfaction results for decision making and planning on the 2006 Employee Climate Survey indicate that the College has made some progress in these areas.
- 8I2 O The College is creative in searching for, identifying, and acting on necessary changes to the continuous improvement process. To set new targets for improvement the College states they will adopt a campus

climate/employee satisfaction survey to gain national comparisons, increase student engagement in planning, increase employee satisfaction with challenge items and continue to develop its ability to identify measurable outcomes and methods of measurement, data collection and analysis methods.

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 Inver Hills 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

- O4a IHCC has a range of collaborations with various institutional and program accreditation agencies, regional K-12 schools, baccalaureate transfer institutions, business, industry, non-profit and community-based organizations, and municipalities.
- O4b IHCC focuses on collaborations that allow them to advocate for underrepresented and underserved learners within the College’s service area.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Inver Hills 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	SS	An effective, systematic approach is in place to create collaborative relationships. The College has identified key collaborations and designed approaches to cultivate each of those collaborations.
9P2	S	The College reviews needs and outcome measures in its annual strategic planning process and through the use of an environmental scanning

process. The continual feedback loops through advisory boards, surveys, focus groups meetings are ongoing methods to assess needs. The Management Team discusses and makes decisions regarding the development and implementation of partnerships.

- 9P3 S Cross-functional teams and committee structures, team workgroups, and alignment with College mission, values, and goals build internal relationships. The IEC and other key work groups monitor each area on a cyclical basis to ensure relationship alignment with key goals and stakeholder needs and expectations.
- 9P4 S Through environmental scanning and other data acquisition methods and sources, the College strives to promote proactive and timely responses to the marketplace, learner needs, and stakeholder expectations.
- 9R1 O The Employee Climate Survey registered average employee satisfaction with several aspects of internal collaboration. A spring 2005 survey showed that most collaborations were viewed as effective by the College community and indicates room for improving communication, relationships between administration and faculty and between administration and staff.
- 9R2 O IHCC has not established an effective method of comparing results in this area with other appropriate institutions.
- 9I1 O Results of feedback and satisfaction surveys are shared with all stakeholders as a part of the continual improvement process to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations, however, the processes are not systematic. Review of current processes for efficiency and effectiveness is a vital component of continual improvement efforts.
- 9I2 O It is not clear that IHCC is effectively obtaining feedback from external partners about the value and effectiveness of the collaborations. Failure to obtain such information could lead to a one-sided perspective on the collaborations.