



**HIGHLAND  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**

**Highland Community College  
Academic Quality Improvement Program Systems Portfolio  
November 2006**

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## Institutional Overview

### 01 Distinctive Institutional Features

Initially established in 1962 as Freeport Community College, Highland Community College (HCC) is a public, not-for-profit, comprehensive community college. Designated as Community College District 519, Highland is a part of the Illinois Community College System. The college serves three counties (Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Carroll) and part of a fourth (Ogle) in a predominately agricultural area in northwestern Illinois. The main campus is located just outside Freeport. A satellite campus, Highland West, was opened in 2004 in Jo Daviess County, providing more opportunity for the western part of the college district. The total district population is approximately 91,000 and includes 16 public high school districts and several private school systems. Highland's property tax revenue for FY06 was approximately \$6.7 million.

HCC has enjoyed wide community support from its inception; it was created by community leaders, and the Highland Community College Foundation was created in the same year as the college. The Foundation holds the distinction of being the first community college foundation in the state of Illinois and the second in the nation. From the beginning, the Foundation has provided scholarships for students and financial support for the college. Community collaboration extends beyond the Foundation to community members' participation in HCC's respected theater, art, and music programs. This sense of community extends throughout the campus, and the college has tapped that resource by relying heavily on a team approach to decision making. In 1997, the college president and the Board of Trustees adopted the principles of servant leadership as set forth by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, committing the college to operating under this philosophy. This commitment was reinforced in August 2005 with opening days servant leadership training by Dr. Michael Carey of Gonzaga University, a Greenleaf consultant.

An outgrowth of Highland's support of fostering leadership, Highland's Leadership Programs are a distinctive feature of the college. Designed to develop leaders throughout the community, the Leadership Institute has, since 1990, enhanced the leadership abilities of business, education, and other community leaders of the district. This program for developing community leaders was created by the college working with local businesses. A distinctive feature of this program is that it is administered through the college; it is not a business-directed entity. In 1997, the leadership program was expanded into the community by being offered to the high school students in the district. In January 2000, another expansion produced the Jo Daviess County Leadership Forum to serve the western region of the district.

Highland Community College is proud to be a comprehensive community college, as reflected in the mission statement, adopted in 1992 and revised in 1997: *Highland Community College is committed to shaping the future of our communities by providing quality education and learning opportunities through programs and services that encourage the personal and professional growth of the people of northwestern Illinois.*

This mission is carried out by

- Providing educational preparation to students for transfer to a baccalaureate or professional, degree-granting institution.
- Providing instruction to enable students to complete specific vocational degrees and certificates.
- Providing occupational training, retraining, and/or upgrading of skills to meet individual, local, and state needs.

- Providing developmental and general education designed to meet individual educational goals.
- Providing community education designed to meet local cultural needs and encourage lifelong learning.
- Providing opportunities that enhance cultural understanding through international education.
- Providing a range of student support services that recognizes and supports the educational goals and needs of a diverse student population.
- Supporting economic development through partnerships with business, industry, chambers of commerce, units of local government, and other educational institutions.
- Providing community access as an open-door institution to all college services and facilities.

The mission will be supported by programs and services that

- Measure learning.
- Are affordable for learners.
- Focus on student and community needs.
- Utilize appropriate learning strategies and technologies.
- Consider the interdependency of many cultures.
- Collaborate with other providers and agencies.

In addition, Highland's vision statement reinforces that mission: *Highland Community College partners with learners in successfully shaping their futures.* Recently, the college community has also committed itself to the core values of *integrity, compassion, and respect.*

In 2002, the college completed a comprehensive strategic plan for 2003-2008. Constructed by a council composed of both college personnel and community members, this plan gives direction to the college leadership and staff as annual college, unit and individual goals are set. The strategic plan identified six primary themes that the college needs to address. These themes are to

- Build an integrated quality assessment culture that encompasses all areas of the college.
- Develop competitive programming and instruction that optimizes accessibility.
- Enhance the college's market opportunities and likewise strengthen its communication and marketing efforts.
- Build key partnerships that support the college mission to serve the wider community needs.
- Ensure the ongoing strength of the academic programs and services by supporting the development of those persons employed by the college.
- Pursue long-range strategies and opportunities to increase funding from all sources that will assist the college in meeting its mission and strategic goals.

This plan serves as a basic guide to the formulation of yearly goals for the college.

## **02 Scope of Educational Offerings**

As a comprehensive community college, HCC offers five associate degrees and numerous certificates. Transfer degrees offered include Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Engineering Science. Students in these degree programs may prepare for transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution in over thirty majors. Non-transfer degrees offered are the Associate of Applied Science and the Associate of General Studies. Students may work on an Associate of Applied Science degree or a certificate in approximately twenty-five subject areas. Additional offerings are provided in developmental education, GED (General

Education Diploma), English as a Second Language, adult literacy, and workplace and community education.

In FY05, the college generated slightly less than 51,000 state reimbursable credit hours. The majority of these, 58.2 percent, were baccalaureate/transfer. Developmental coursework accounts for 13.0 percent, technical occupational accounts for 9.6 percent, health fields accounts for 8.4 percent, adult basic/secondary education accounts for 4.2 percent, and business occupational accounts for 6.5 percent.

### **03 Student Base, Needs, Requirements**

Highland serves many students from within the college district, some from out of district, and a few from the border states of Iowa and Wisconsin. Target populations include recent high school graduates, adult students entering college for the first time or for retraining, and high school students taking dual credit/dual enrollment classes. The college recruits and serves students who are interested in completing a transfer degree and moving on to a four-year institution, finishing a vocational non-transfer degree, improving basic skills, or taking a course or two for transfer to a four-year school. The Freeport campus enrolls approximately 3000 credit students per semester, more than half part-time, and over 1000 non-credit students. The HCC West campus serves an average of 150 students per semester. Some characteristics of the student population follow:

- Average age of the student body varies from year to year from 29 to 32 years old.
- 64 percent of enrolled students are female and 36 percent are male (FY04.)
- 13 percent of the student body is classified as minority (FY04.)
- For academic year 2004-2005, the average composite ACT score submitted to the college was 19.6 compared to the state average of 20.3.
- In FY05, 3760 students (duplicated head count) received \$4,186,000 in financial aid.
- For the fall 2001 cohort, 34 percent of students complete an associate's degree within three years compared to the state average of 22.6 percent.
- In 2005, 75.6 percent of persons taking placement tests place into one or more developmental courses.

The needs and requirements of these students vary according to their purposes and goals. In general, students need a high quality education provided at a reasonable cost. Other requirements can be financial aid, learning support, accessibility, and in some instances, language support.

### **04 Collaborative Or Partnership Arrangements**

The college enjoys collaborative relationships with many entities. Some of the partnerships are principally internal:

- Highland Community College Foundation: Student scholarships and financial support, financial support for college projects.
- Collective Bargaining Units: Shared governance on college issues, creating a partnership within the college that helps develop the policies and academic programs that respond to student and community needs.
- YMCA: Sharing of Sports Complex facilities, including child care center, and costs.

Other relationships are community based:

- Vision 20/20: Community-wide partnership for Stephenson County quality of life improvement.
- Senior Citizens Groups: Stephenson County Senior Center/RSVP/FHN's Top50.

- District non-profit organizations: use of college facilities.
- Community musicians, actors, artists: cultural partnerships by participation in music groups, theater, and arts events.

Some partnerships are with other educational institutions:

- Columbia College: Use of college facilities to provide bachelor's degrees locally.
- Illinois Community College Online (ILCCO): Access and support for ILCCO courses.
- Sauk Valley Community College: Small Business Development Partnership and the Partners for Employment Partnership.
- Area Community Colleges: No chargeback cooperative agreement.
- Regional Delivery Systems and district high schools: Articulation agreements, dual credit and Tech Prep.

Additional collaborations are with area businesses:

- Freeport Health Network: Financial assistance to expand college nursing program.
- District businesses: Highland Business Institute training.

### **05 Faculty and Staff**

The college has four major academic and administrative divisions: Academic and Student Services, Institutional and Community Development, Administrative Services, and Community Relations and Special Services. In spring 2006, the college employed 49 administrators, one who was part-time; 25 percent of these were grant funded. Five of these hold doctorates, 19 hold master's degrees, and 25 have bachelor's degrees or less. The faculty consisted of 48 full-time and 188 part-time instructors. Eleven instructors have doctorates, 104 have master's, and 121 have bachelor's or less. Of the 101 classified staff members, 69 are full-time and 32 are part-time employees. Three hold master's degrees, 18 hold bachelor's, 27 have associate's or certificates, and 53 have high school diplomas or less. Part-time employees make up 57 percent of the faculty and staff. Two unions (the Faculty Senate and the Highland Custodial and Maintenance Council) represent 42 percent of the full-time staff and faculty or 18 percent of the college's entire faculty and staff. In FY06, the college also employed 228 student workers. In addition, Partners for Employment (a federal grant program for which Highland serves as the lead administrative agent) has a staff of 20 employees.

### **06 Facilities, Equipment, Technologies, and Regulatory Environment**

Situated on 140 acres, HCC's main campus, located just outside Freeport, has been designated as a regional arboretum by the Illinois Department of Conservation and includes a five-acre natural prairie, a woodland, a two-acre pond, and athletic fields. The main campus includes nine buildings:

- Marvin Burt Liberal Arts Center: eleven classrooms (including two computer-equipped classrooms), the Clarence Mitchell Library (including an open computer lab), the Learning Assistance Center, administrative and instructor offices
- Science Center: nine classrooms and science labs, administrative and instructor offices
- Ferguson Fine Arts Center: two classrooms, band, chorus, and practice rooms, art studios, faculty offices, Fine Arts Theatre, Highland Gallery
- Student Conference Center: two classrooms, administrative offices, advising and admissions, financial aid and business offices, bookstore, cafeteria, student lounge, Career Center, HCC Foundation, Columbia College offices
- Community Services Center: three classrooms; adult education offices and classrooms, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, truck driver program office, county cooperative extension service
- Technology Center: four classrooms, five computer labs, automotive program labs and offices, cosmetology center, administrative and faculty offices.

- Sports Center: Northwest Illinois YMCA, athletic offices, Larry F. Kahl Gymnasium
- Child Care/Training Center

The HCC West campus at Elizabeth is housed in a single building, which provides eight classrooms, a computer lab, a gymnasium and offices, including one Partners for Employment office. Additional Partners for Employment offices are located in Sterling, Rochelle, and Freeport.

Highland utilizes various types of computer equipment and technologies among the geographic service areas of the college. The service areas include the main campus in Freeport, HCC West site in Elizabeth, and the Adult Education outreach sites in Mt. Morris, Savanna, and Elizabeth. Computer-based technologies are tied together on a Local Area Network with the college's Cisco network infrastructure, and services are expanded to the HCC West site via a Wide Area Network. Devices communicating on the network infrastructure include the college's servers, desktops, and peripherals. The server makeup consists mostly of HP ProLiant and HP 9000 servers running NetWare, Linux, UNIX, and Windows operating systems. Highland operates roughly 650 HP and Dell networked desktop PC's and laptops with access to campus applications and data. Specialized software applications for Design and Drafting, Adult Education, Web Programming, Office Technology, Graphic Arts, Physics, Nursing, English, and many other academic areas are installed and configured on the networked desktop PC's in the colleges seventeen academic computer labs. The college offers several online services to students: Blackboard Online Learning, online access to Records and Course Registration, WebAccess for GroupWise e-mail, and NetStorage file access for students and faculty to access their personal network files from off-campus. In addition to the web services offered, the college provides wireless hot-spot access in many areas throughout the Freeport campus.

Specialized equipment and technologies are provided in Highland's vocational programs. In the college's automotive and autobody labs, the following technologies are available: internet research (automotive industry related), basic PC and laptop operation (automotive specific software-downloads/service information), scantools (interfacing with vehicle computers), labscopes (viewing electrical/electronic generated signals from sensors/actuators), and ignition, fuel system, and gas analyzers (vehicle emission/tailpipe analysis). The CNC (Computer Numeric Control) classes use an Enco lathe, an Enco vertical mill, fourteen computers to write programs and simulate machining, software for computer based training, and a variety of hand tools and inspection equipment (dial indicators, micrometers, caliper, scales, surface plate etc.) The CAD (computer-aided design program) uses the same computers as the CNC classes with additional software for 3D-solid modeling, 2D drafting, architectural drafting, and GIS and Geospatial work. Welding technologies include a plasma cutting machine, an iron-worker, three portable oxygen/acetylene welding-cutting torch units, ten GMAW (Gas Metal Arc Welding) machines, seven combination SMAW/GTAW (Shielded Metal Arc Welding/Gas Tungsten Arc Welding) machines, a stationary pedestal grinding machine, a drill press, and assorted hand tools and attachments. The cosmetology program uses a computer-based CyberImaging System in addition to standard cosmetology salon equipment.

Highland's vocational programs (nursing, automotive, and cosmetology) are regulated by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. The automotive programs (auto mechanics and auto body) meet Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) standards and have had Master Automotive Certification status from NATEF (National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation) since 2002.

Highland follows Illinois Department of Labor guidelines in regard to employee safety. IDL adopts Federal Guidelines, in particular OSHA CFR 29 1910 General Industry Standards. The

programs that apply to the college are Hazard Communication, Bloodborne Pathogens, Forklift Safety, Emergency Procedures for Employees, Confined Space, LockOut/Tagout, Electrical Safety, Compressed Gases, Personal Protective Equipment, and Machine Equipment Guarding. In addition, the college is required to follow International Building Code when constructing new facilities, the Life Safety Code, Electrical Code, EPA Regulations (Illinois and Federal), Department of Natural Resources (for dam inspection and safety of people), Plumbing Code, Mechanical Codes (for health of occupants & proper ventilation), and ADA guidelines.

HCC is a member of the Illinois Community College system and is governed by a seven-member, locally-elected Board of Trustees. An additional student member elected by the student body serves in an advisory capacity. The Illinois Community College Board, in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education, provides oversight and formal recognition of the college. The college adheres to federal, state, ICCB and IBHE rules, regulations, training, and the resulting reporting requirements. The college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, is a member of North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, and is an AQIP participant.

### **07 Competitive Environment**

HCC competes for baccalaureate students with regional four-year institutions (Rockford College, Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, University of Wisconsin-Platteville). On-line programs can also compete for these students. Business and trade schools in the area provide competition for job-oriented applied science programs such as cosmetology and industrial technology.

### **08 Key Opportunities and Vulnerabilities**

Highland is looking forward to developing the following opportunities:

- The college's commitment to a collaborative and quality-centered culture, exemplified by participation in AQIP, provides an opportunity to develop a more learning-centered institution.
- Highland was selected in 2004 to be the official Title 1B Administrator by the Northwest Illinois Workforce Investment Board. This means Highland will be administering the work of the Workforce Investment Board in a five-county district. In this role, Highland will be able to streamline services to the un- and under-employed and provide an even higher level of service while further working to improve the local economy.
- A change in presidential leadership at the college in 2006 sets the stage for significant improvements in college partnerships with its Foundation, unionized and other employees, and local businesses and other organizations. Enhancing these partnerships will help the college to better serve its district and achieve its mission.

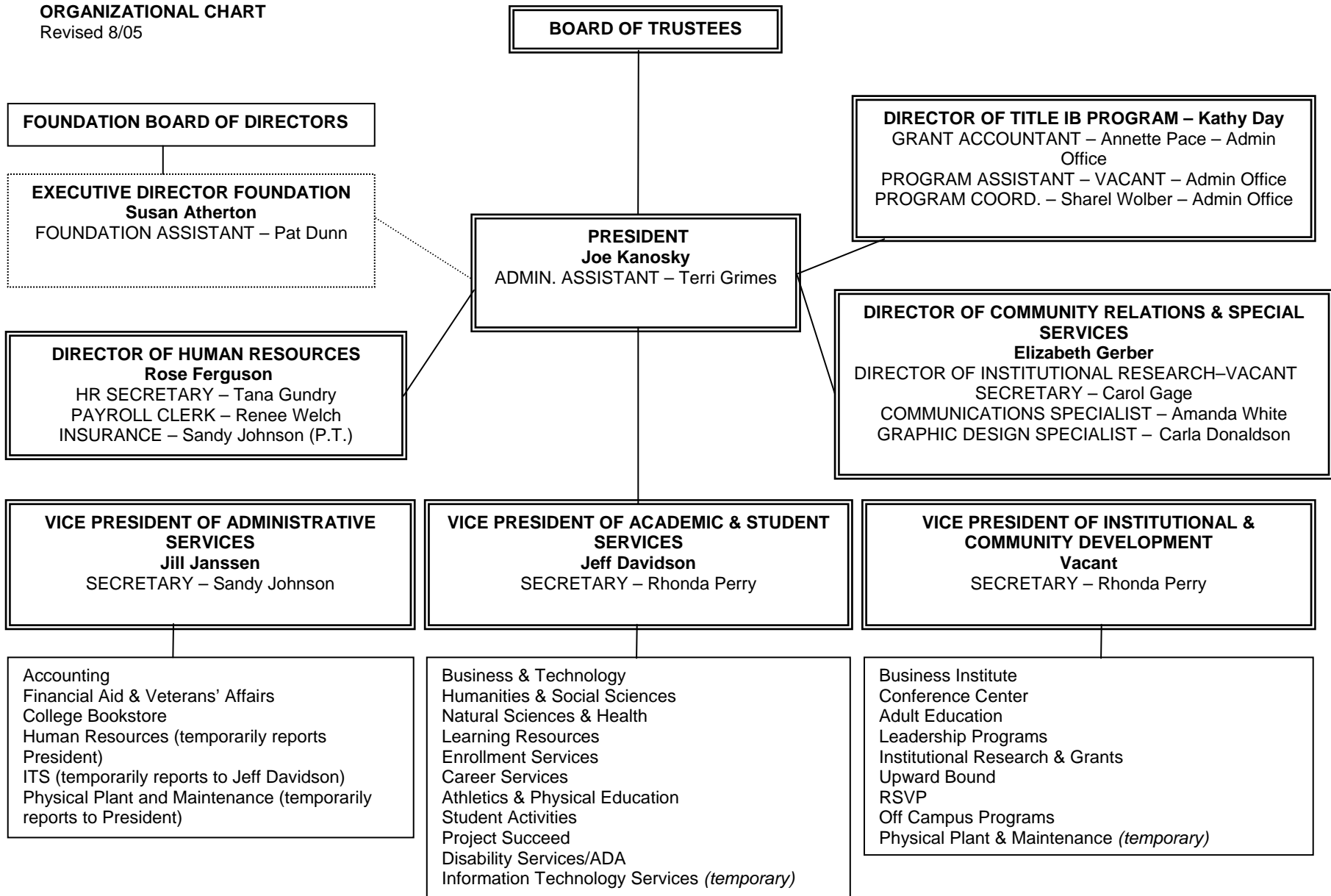
In addition, Highland also faces substantial challenges:

- While the passage of a \$1.5 million referendum in the spring of 2004 alleviated some immediate financial concerns, funding for Highland's programs will continue to be a challenge. Volatility in state and federal funding presents substantial difficulties for the college.
- A fragile local economy results in a decreasing population from which Highland draws its student body and creates an environment that makes it difficult to attract faculty and staff to the college district.
- Maintaining Highland's quality and culture in a transition period is an additional challenge. Many initial members of Highland's faculty and staff chose to stay with the college for the rest of their careers. Because of that, the college is in a period



characterized by a relatively high employee turnover. The college faces significant personnel and financial challenges in its attempts to replace these employees with new experienced, highly qualified, full-time personnel.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**  
Revised 8/05



## Category One: Helping Students Learn

### 1C1 Common Student Learning Objectives

Highland Community College incorporates many educational programs to meet the needs of students in Northwest Illinois. The college supports a Business Institute to provide training for the district's businesses and industries. Adult Basic Education/General Equivalency Diploma programs and English as a Second Language serve students who are not prepared for nor focused on college courses. The college has additional grant programs focused on serving a particular need in the community, such as the Upward Bound program that identifies high school students who need support services to become college-bound. However, Category 1, Helping Students Learn, is focused on the degree programs serving students at the post-secondary level.

The college has identified the common learning objectives it holds in general education for all degree-seeking students, regardless of their status or particular program of study. The college has six general education outcome areas: communication, critical thinking and problem solving, awareness and application of technology, academic and occupational success, decision-making and responsibility, and awareness and appreciation of human culture. The general education outcomes are supported by thirty-one specific competencies. These outcomes and competencies are identified below.

#### GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

1. Communication: Demonstrate the skills needed to produce and interpret written and oral communication.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. identify main ideas, facts, and opinions from texts or oral presentations.
2. follow written and oral instructions.
3. transmit information and opinions in writing using correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation and appropriate organization and style.
4. make oral presentations using correct pronunciation and grammar and appropriate organization and style.
5. critique their own written and oral presentations and make revisions to improve them.
6. communicate effectively using rhetorical patterns appropriate to the student's discipline.

2. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Demonstrate the thinking skills needed to interpret, analyze, and evaluate qualitative and quantitative information.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. analyze and evaluate evidence in order to make inferences and generate conclusions.
2. identify, apply, and evaluate problem solving techniques in a variety of situations.
3. perform basic arithmetic operations (+, -, x, /) and apply them to fractions, decimals, and percentages in real applications.
4. use numerical information to construct mathematical models such as tables and graphs.
5. interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, tables, and graphs.

3. Awareness and Application of Technology: Demonstrate the skills needed to function in society as technology changes.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. select and apply the appropriate procedures, tools, and other technologies to complete a task.
2. gather, analyze, and synthesize data using information systems (people, computer hardware, software, data, and procedures).
3. demonstrate a willingness to find and use procedures, tools, and technologies effectively.
4. identify the capabilities and limitations of procedures, tools, and technologies.

4. Academic and Occupational Success: Demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed by individuals for success in college and on the job.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. demonstrate industry, punctuality, self-discipline, and fairness and explain how these personal characteristics lead to personal and professional success.
2. identify skills and attitudes needed for professional success such as use of safety procedures, attention to detail, treating customers and co-workers with respect and working in a team to define and reach shared goals.
3. demonstrate a willingness to apply effective interpersonal and intergroup behaviors.
4. identify the benefits of education and a situation in which they might need to further their education.

5. Decision-Making and Responsibility: Demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed by a person to interact with others successfully and contribute to society.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. discriminate between ethical and unethical conduct.
2. identify the consequences of personal decisions and actions.
3. demonstrate a willingness to apply ethical standards to personal decisions and actions.
4. appreciate social and political diversity.
5. show concern for the welfare and rights of others.
6. accept that there is a need for balance & compromise in a democracy.
7. define a constructive role for themselves in a variety of settings including college, community, professional organizations, and a democratic society.

6. Awareness and Appreciation of Human Culture: Demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed to understand the aspirations, achievements, and expressions of all human beings.

Competencies: Successful students should be able to:

1. acknowledge cultural, gender, and intellectual diversity.
2. recognize ideas and aspirations that are common to many cultures.
3. engage in an informed discussion of questions regarding personal, professional, social, and global issues.
4. critically respond to artistic works in terms of their formal elements and historical context.
5. identify ways artistic works reflect personal and collective views of what it means to be human.

The college has been working on the assessment of general education outcomes across the curriculum. The recent addition of an institutional researcher will enable the college to integrate data previously collected into a format that can begin to have impact on teaching and learning. The newly formed data committee is assessing individual competencies for a second year.

The college is also establishing common learning outcomes for programs and assessing program outcomes. Eleven occupational AAS degrees and six disciplines in the transfer arts and sciences curriculum have been designated for program assessment. Faculty are in various stages of developing program outcomes, designing assessment measures, gathering and analyzing data, and discussing curricular change.

Where the college has entered dual credit agreements with district high schools, the students in those courses are considered to be Highland Community College students, and their learning is not distinguished from the other students enrolled in transfer or occupational degree programs.

## **1C2 Student Learning Expectations**

Highland Community College's vision statement establishes that "Highland Community College partners with learners in successfully shaping their futures." Its mission states that "Highland Community College is committed to shaping the future of our communities by providing quality education and learning opportunities through programs and services that encourage the personal and professional growth of the people of northwestern Illinois." Two key factors were identified as being central to aligning student learning with the vision and mission: (1) the hiring and development of instructors to ensure alignment and (2) revising syllabi to meet the needs of the students and community.

In order to acquire well-qualified instructors, the college has established procedures for faculty searches. Deans for the academic divisions select search committees, develop interview questions, and screen applicants for interviews. In practice, details vary somewhat, but the methods used to hire, develop, and evaluate faculty include:

- Hiring teachers knowledgeable in pedagogy,
- Asking interview questions that require candidates to respond to "personal and professional" growth of students,
- Working with advisory committees in occupational programs,
- Communicating with prospective employers and professionals in occupational fields to develop standards and expectations for program completers, and
- Monitoring returning instructors by regularly scheduled classroom visits and evaluations.

The college has established procedures for the evaluation of faculty prior to tenure, ongoing evaluation of faculty after tenure, student evaluation of instruction, and evaluation of part-time instructors. A college goal for 2005-06 has been a review of the instruments used in this process by a group including the chief academic officer, the academic deans, and faculty. Faculty evaluation includes measures of the extent to which faculty and instruction are aligned with the college's philosophy of education and delivery of course content as outlined in the syllabi and can result in staff development opportunities. More than 80 percent of the faculty have been involved in general education assessment and program assessment, processes which focus on learning outcomes.

A regular program of experience in industry for the faculty in occupational programs helps keep them abreast of the external needs and expectations. Each syllabus is reviewed and revised by faculty, but there is variation in frequency and criteria for evaluation. Frequency can be six months, one year, or more often. Factors for revision include changes in methods, content, outcomes, evaluations, form, and development; alignment of textbook with changes in curriculum; and alignment of curriculum with the needs of the students, community, profession, employers, or accrediting bodies.

Revision of syllabi is triggered by faculty or by the dean. In addition, faculty lead efforts to expand curricular offerings in a discipline. Other syllabi review are driven by the Illinois Articulation Initiative or by Illinois Community College Board initiatives such as the development of an Associate of Arts in Teaching.

## **1C3 Key Instructional Programs: Delivery Methods And Technology**

Highland Community College has identified seven key instructional program areas: Baccalaureate, Business Occupational, Technical Occupation, Health, Developmental / Developmental, Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education, and General Studies. Forty of seventy-nine full- and part-time faculty members returned a survey identifying the learning

methods used in their courses (a return rate of 51 percent), with the following results: 98 percent incorporate lecture; 88 percent reported small group discussion; 58 percent use cooperative learning groups; 53 percent reported in-class writing; 53 percent use group projects; 48 percent employ simulation; 30-35 percent incorporate role playing, case studies, and/or field trips; and 20 percent reported online small group activities. Half of the respondents listed one of the following: live demonstration, objective tests, short written reviews, videos/streaming video, computer aided instruction, tutor support, lab projects, online individual activities, peer review, internships, class discussion of reading, examples from outside the classroom, demonstrations, modeling, guest speakers, films, overheads and BlackBoard, learning games, online web quizzes, team testing, computer simulation, study groups, in class exercises, debates, and oral and silent reading.

While the survey revealed that the most commonly used technology was the overhead projector, the above listing indicates the wide variety of technology used by instructors in support of learning. Surveyed faculty stated that they believe their use of technology, for example Internet-based BlackBoard discussion groups, truly enhances learning rather than replaces one mode with another.

#### **1C4 Preparation for a Diverse World**

As an equal opportunity employer with an open door admissions policy, the mission of Highland Community College is to provide “quality education and learning opportunities through programs and services that encourage the personal and professional growth of the people of northwestern Illinois.” This mission is carried out in part by “providing a range of student support services that recognizes and support the educational goals and needs of a diverse student population.”

A survey of the college deans in the spring semester 2005 indicated that while there were few procedures in place that *require* attention to cultural and educational diversity, past and present practices do encourage the development of courses and learning opportunities and resources to accommodate various learning styles. A subsequent survey of the faculty revealed that although nearly all use small group discussion and lectures in their classes, many also utilize cooperative learning techniques, field trips, group projects, online activities, simulation, role playing, guest speakers, case studies and many other techniques that allow students to learn in diverse ways. Many instructors also recognized the importance of multicultural communication and diverse perspectives in each of their individual disciplines.

A diversity committee was assembled in the fall of 2004, and five top tier recommendations for enhancing awareness of diversity issues were developed. In 2005, the college began a phased implementation of an Ethnic Diversity Education Program in response to the college-wide goal to ensure the continued strength of programs by “supporting the development of those employed by the college” (Report from the Diversity Committee to the College Cabinet, March 2005). The diversity committee is currently meeting with the diversity director at Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin, in an effort to help channel its efforts and provide presentations regarding diversity.

In addition to the committee’s efforts, evidence of diversity and attention to multiple styles of learning was found to exist in the wide-ranging list of degree and certificate programs, the expanse of course offerings, and the continued effort to encourage diverse points of view on campus. On the degree and certificate level, Highland Community College offers opportunities for students seeking an assortment of programs for approximately 3,000 certificate and degree-seeking students. This includes, but is not limited to, AA and AS degrees in agricultural, biological, and natural sciences; political and social sciences; professional education; and the

fine arts. AAS degrees include medical transcription, information systems, graphic design, early childhood education, nursing, and office technology. Certificate programs include industrial manufacturing and technology, automotive repair, cosmetology, and desktop publishing. Many humanities and social sciences programs require coursework in anthropology, social problems, ethics, criminology, racism, and diversity as well.

In a continued effort to offer a variety of learning opportunities, Highland maintains a balance of freedom and encouragement for the design and implementation of both traditional and non-traditional teaching techniques. General education outcomes also include the ability to “demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed by a person to interact with others successfully and contribute to society.” Appreciation for social and political diversity and concern for the welfare and rights of others are incorporated into this outcome. Faculty and staff are also offered opportunities to learn about new practices during opening days and ongoing development programs such as Discussion of Instructional Practices and Writing Across the Curriculum.

HCC staff, faculty, and administrators work in partnership with the office of ADA Services to create access for all students, not by removing academic challenges, but by removing barriers to access. ADA Services provides academic support services (disability management advising, sign language and oral interpreting, alternative testing, reader/taping services, access to large print and Braille materials/electronic text, mobility assistance and access to adaptive technology), disability-related program access services (registration and financial aid assistance; liaison to college, federal, state and community agencies; academic adjustments; physical access evaluation; advocacy; and in-service training for faculty and staff), and information and referral services.

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) promotes the academic success of a diverse population of students by providing academic support, free of charge, to any student enrolled in any of HCC’s courses. This peer-tutoring program offers individual content tutoring by students recommended by Highland instructors. Study groups and review sessions are also provided at student request. Staff members provide students, as needed, with diagnostic information about skill levels and assist individual students with study skills. The Learning Assistance Center also coordinates the College Success Skills class. This freshmen success program is a two-credit, tuition-free course designed to help students develop the academic and personal strengths necessary for success in college. Information on study skills, critical thinking, learning styles, and campus resources are presented in a context that addresses the diversity of the student population on college campuses today.

Finally, Highland continues to offer students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to learn a culture of diverse thought and opinion through various clubs and organizations such as the Global Task Force, the International Students Club, Current Issues, the Boyer Colloquium, and the Student Senate. A “graffiti board” is also maintained in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, offering students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to voice a variety of social and political views.

### **1C5 Climate of Intellectual Freedom**

Included in the Highland Community College catalog is the following statement: “Highland Community College respects the rights and liberties of each member of the college; however, it is imperative for the College to be free from coercion, harassment, and disruption in order to allow for the exchange and expression of ideas” (Code of Conduct, p. 20, College Catalog 2006-2009). The college policy manual, 2005, includes 2.10 Academic Freedom: “The Board of Trustees and faculty, realizing that the basis of education is a search for the truth, recognize the obligation of the individual faculty member to present in the classroom within the instructor’s

discipline, the truth as the instructor sees it, as well as other representative points of view.” Article III of the Faculty Contract includes the same statement. These statements provide a context for academic freedom at Highland Community College, but it is recommended that the language be expanded to address a need for student awareness/understanding of the value of academic freedom and its role in student learning.

The library community has a history of supporting intellectual freedom. Inspired by library staff discussions on the need for students to be more aware of intellectual freedom issues, the Clarence Mitchell Library hosted a series of forums in 2005 and 2006 to address intellectual freedom. During the first forum, “Academic Freedom: Student and Faculty Responsibilities,” panelists with varying perspectives presented their views, discussing an incident at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in which a student complained of an instructor’s political bias. The second forum, “To Share or Not to Share: Perspectives on Illegal File Sharing,” dealt with illegal file sharing and downloading. Panelists included advocates of file sharing, a musician, and an ethicist who each made presentations. The final forum in the series, “See No Evil: Perspectives on the Censorship of Visual Images,” laid out the perspectives of an artist/gallery administrator, a photojournalist, and a student who finds many images offensive and strives to avoid them. At each forum, there was an opportunity for students and community members to ask questions of the panelists. Each forum concluded after lively and thought provoking discussions including panelists and attendees.

Intellectual property concerns are addressed in several additional ways at Highland. Students taking the freshmen College Success Skills course encounter intellectual property ethics. Instructors in various courses address issues of plagiarism, including how to avoid plagiarism and promote responsible research. Academic integrity and penalties for academic misconduct are detailed in the college catalog.

The college further maintains a climate celebrating intellectual inquiry and reflection through offering sabbaticals for intellectual development and tuition reimbursement for graduate coursework in the employee’s particular discipline.

### **1P1 Determining Learning Objectives**

The college’s first Assessment Plan was submitted to the North Central Association in the spring of 1995 and was approved. Prior to the development of the assessment plan, beginning in August of 1992, faculty began to convert all college syllabi to learning outcomes derived from clearly defined competencies. This initiative marked a significant shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on student learning. Beginning in the summer of 1994, a steering committee began the process of defining general education outcomes that specified the cognitive and affective knowledge, skills, and attitudes all students should acquire at Highland Community College. Over several months, the outcomes were discussed and revised by faculty from all academic divisions until a final document was accepted by all faculty.

*Program* for occupational degrees has been defined as “an approved sequence of courses that provide the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and proficiencies to prepare the individual for employment.” Highland Community College has identified the AAS degree occupational programs for program assessment: Accounting, Agriculture Management, Automotive Mechanics, Autobody, Early Childhood Education, Graphic Design, Industrial Manufacturing Technology, Information Systems, Information Technology/Health Care, Nursing AD, and Business Administration. *Program* for transfer students has been defined as those disciplines identified for the Illinois Community College program review cycle. Those programs are Social Science, Fine Arts, Mathematics, Natural Science, Communications, and Humanities. Faculty



in each program area meet to determine program outcomes, select assessment tools, gather data, and review the results for its implication for curriculum and course delivery.

### **1P3 Establishing Student Preparation Levels**

The college provides mandatory placement testing (skills assessment) for all certificate and degree-seeking students in reading, writing, and mathematics. Composition and mathematics have strict sequences of prerequisites and clear standards of mastery for exit from each course. The college's reading course has mandatory placement but is not a prerequisite for any of the arts and sciences courses.

The college's placement test task force conducted a quality improvement process to select the assessments and to develop policies and procedures. Subsequently, math placement test scores were reviewed and compared with similar courses and cut-off scores at other community colleges as well as with vendor recommendations. The writing sample used for placement in composition courses has been developed by the English faculty. Faculty for composition courses have also developed profile descriptions of entry-level writing for each level of the curriculum to reinforce levels of exit proficiency. Efforts have begun to analyze the relationship between reading levels and student performance in transfer courses in order to support definitions of student preparedness with data. In Fall 2004, the college instituted the practice of accepting ACT scores in lieu of placement testing. Monitoring of student success in courses taken based on ACT scores has indicated that the scores do establish preparedness levels.

Course prerequisites are established as part of the course addition/course revision processes through the Curriculum and Instruction Committee and are ultimately submitted to the Illinois Community College Board for approval. Requests for pre-requisites are granted when they are clearly related to a scope and sequence in the discipline or when they support expectations for course articulation with other post-secondary institutions.

Additional measures of student preparation are most commonly found in occupational programs. The Business/Technology division established an FY06 goal to set criteria for entry into every program. Faculty review the course outcomes and determine levels of student preparation needed to meet them. In some programs, entry level skills are determined by faculty to generally align with basic high school grade-level skills. Other programs have entry requirements that are established by an outside accrediting agency, such as reading levels on state licensing exams. Some occupational programs depend on other departments to prepare the students for entry. Cosmetology faculty, for example, have determined that a certain reading level is needed to learn successfully from the cosmetology text and to pass state licensing exams and have established a probationary period for students with low reading levels. Students are co-enrolled in the College Reading Strategies course, and students whose reading scores do not improve sufficiently to pass that class are not allowed to progress in the program until their reading skills meet exit level expectations.

The college's nursing program has established student preparation levels as part of the application process. A search of current literature found the courses that are most predictive of success in nursing programs are science courses. Therefore, the grade earned in the last attempt of a prerequisite science course is multiplied by the number of credits in the course as points toward admission. Student scores on the Nursing Entrance Test (NET) are also used. The NET test measures aptitude in reading comprehension, reading speed, and basic math skills. Points are awarded in the following manner: composite percentage of 75 or above=15 points, composite percentage of 74-50=10 points, and composite percentage below 50=0

points. Applicants to the nursing program are ranked according to a point system in which points earned from the NET are added to points earned from prerequisite course grades.

#### **1P4 Communicating Expectations to Students**

Highland Community College's course catalog includes stated pre-requisites for those courses having skills levels or previous coursework as entry-level requirements. The college's student registration software system incorporates these pre-requisites and prevents students from registering for courses if pre-requisites have not been met. Academic advisors help to clarify expectations for students, using the Highland catalog to discuss course prerequisites. Auxiliary course expectations including writing requirements and research papers are also discussed. Individual advisors may call instructors for additional course requirement information.

The college's recruitment activities in district high schools frequently include explanations of college expectations. Evening orientation sessions have been held each August for entering students and their families. These sessions include breakout sessions about transitioning to college. The freshmen success course, College Success Skills, emphasizes the transition from high school to college in both the academic arena and the arena of individual responsibility on the part of the student.

Finally, faculty members are expected to include clearly stated expectations in course syllabi, and the evaluation of instruction form addresses clearly stated expectations for courses and for assignments as well as classroom policies.

Prospective nursing students are given the Highland Community College Nursing Department's Information Booklet. It clearly describes the admission process for the HCC Nursing Program. It also has a FAQ section, Nursing Entrance Test and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) information, and Practical Nursing Certificate (PN) and Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program information.

#### **1P6 Determining and Documenting Effective Teaching and Learning**

Highland Community College has identified the assessment of student learning as a project for AQIP as part of the college's reaccreditation process with the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission. The goal of this project is to make significant improvements in the college's efforts to assess student learning.

Phase One Performance Targets established for the AQIP action project have been met yet continue as on-going activities. Additional quantitative data have been collected for the general education outcomes and competencies not previously measured. Program outcomes have been identified for all college academic programs. The assessment cycle timetable has been included in the updated Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning.

The college completed the Phase Two Performance Targets it established for the AQIP action project in December 2005. Data were collected, analyzed, and compared to previously collected data where applicable. Processes and timelines are in place to identify and implement instructional and curricular changes. Faculty and academic staff were surveyed to assess knowledge of and satisfaction with the assessment process.

A component of the Assessment Committee, the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee gathers and analyzes data related to writing performance across the college, presents options for enhanced writing in courses across the curriculum, and manages an on-going program in Writing Across the Curriculum. The Data Committee investigates and implements additional

data gathering activities related to the general education outcomes. With guidance from the co-chairs of the Assessment Committee and the chief academic officer, the Data Committee shares results with all faculty for further discussion or action.

Finally, a four-part process for the evaluation of faculty has been linked to the improvement of student learning. Faculty provide a self-assessment, deans conduct classroom observations, students evaluate instruction, and then the dean and faculty member meet to discuss results and set goals, where appropriate, for improved teaching and learning.

### **1P7 Effective and Efficient Course Delivery System**

Administrators are charged with making course delivery decisions at Highland Community College by developing the schedule each semester. Delivery decisions are based on multiple factors—availability of instructors or content specialists, state licensing requirements, placement scores, general education requirements, and much more. Deans and associate deans consider the appropriateness of different delivery modes in light of demand for the course, the rigor of the material, and the qualifications of the instructor. Options include traditional modes of delivery, telecourses or other distance learning options, and field courses. The number of sections needed and day/evening offerings are tracked across semesters, and community needs for courses offered off-campus are evaluated.

The Business/Technology division is primarily guided by state licensing agencies and their requirements. When there are no outside set standards, new course or program development frequently includes an advisory committee, instructor input, and other content specialists. The Illinois Employment and Training Center provides data to assist in decisions regarding the viability of specific programs. Course scheduling depends on many variables. For example, cosmetology must be a day program in order to have clients, and welding is scheduled primarily as an evening course since most of the students and instructors are part-time. Availability of facilities can also affect course delivery times.

Placement test scores drive the developmental courses. All classes are offered day and evening to accommodate students. Scheduling must balance the needs of the students, the availability of instructors, and the availability of rooms.

New courses are developed in response to student interest, faculty interest, and need for new programs or enhanced programs.

Deans and associate deans bear the final responsibility for the schedule. Meetings are held each semester with academic advisors to review the schedule for conflicts and gaps from the perspective of building student schedules. A mismatch has been identified between room assignments and the technology needs of the instructors since not all classrooms have or need equal resources and not all instructors have similar technology needs. For optimum course delivery, faculty should be assigned to classrooms equipped with the appropriate technology to support their teaching methods.

### **1P9 Determining Learning Support Needs**

Highland Community College has extensive support services involved in determining student and faculty needs for learning support and in the student learning and development processes. Placement tests, the Learning Assistance Center, library services, and student resources/academic advising are key components.

Placement Tests: Accurate placement testing is essential to determining students' needs for support. The COMPASS placement test from ACT has been adopted by the college, and the reliability and validity of the instrument have been established. Student skills in mathematics and reading are measured, and course placement is mandatory in accordance with cut-off scores that have been aligned with the college curriculum. The writing sample is holistically scored by trained readers, primarily the full-time English faculty. Readers of writing samples are trained in the scoring practice each year to insure consistency of placement. Placement results from this instrument are also mandatory. The college has also recently adopted ACT scores as sufficient for placement.

Walk-in placement testing is offered approximately sixty times each semester. Additional testing is coordinated with all of the district's sixteen high schools. Alternate forms of the test are available for students with documented disabilities. A customer service survey measures attitudinal aspects of testing.

A task force of faculty from mathematics, English, developmental education, and accounting worked with representatives of the Learning Assistance Center and Admissions and Records to develop the placement policies and procedures manual. This task force meets as needed to review the policies and procedures and to evaluate the effectiveness of the process of skills assessment upon entry into the college.

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC): The LAC is a primary learning support provider at HCC. Open from 8 a. m. to 6 p.m. daily, its focus is to promote independent learning, provide support for existing student needs, and provide reinforcement for—not take the place of—classroom learning and instruction. Tutoring in math, reading, and writing is available on a walk-in basis for more than 95 percent of time the center is open. Tutoring is available in other academic areas by appointment. Tutors are peer tutors recommended by faculty for the courses being included in the program. Paraprofessional support is provided in occupation courses, primarily cosmetology. The effect of the tutoring program is evaluated each semester based on grades earned by those receiving academic support. Consistently, over 90 percent of the students who access tutoring earn a grade of C or better in that course. There is concern, however, that consistently 90 percent of the students earning a grade of D, U, F, or I have never requested academic support from the LAC.

The Learning Assistance Center supports student retention by identifying classes with higher failure rates for tutorial support, encouraging instructor referral to the academic support services, and working with academic advising on a formal response to students failing at midterm and on academic suspension/probation. Instruction in study skills, note-taking, and basic computer skills for students is available upon request. Staff can provide individualized counseling for test-anxiety and diagnosis in reading skills. Proctored testing is also available for faculty who request this support.

Also provided through the LAC, the College Success Skills course helps students develop the academic and personal strengths necessary for success in college. The content for the course includes study skills, time management, research skills and other skills necessary for the transition from high school to college, knowledge of campus resources and how to access them, and personal growth topics such as diversity in society, financial planning, and wellness. Student evaluations each semester demonstrate that 90 percent or more of the student completers believe that the course achieved its purpose. Ratings on each course component as "personally beneficial to me" range from 75 to more than 90 percent. Retention for course completers is also tracked; 77 percent of the course completers are retained fall to fall with 67

percent successful at a GPA of 2.0 or higher. This compares to a retention rate for non-completers fall to fall of 44 percent with only 39 percent achieving a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

Clarence Mitchell Library: Library staff meets with individual instructors, instructors at division meetings, College Success Skills staff, and English instructors to identify information literacy needs and to evaluate the effectiveness of previous presentations that were customized for individual courses and assignments. Post-surveys are given to College Success Skills students as follow-up to the course's unit in information literacy and college research. Library staff additionally uses focus groups with students/faculty/staff, individual questions of library users, informal observations of trends in problems experienced by library users, and the library suggestion box for continuous quality improvement. The feedback is used to drive library purchases, guide changes to the library resource design, and determine the groups and training to be offered.

Approximately 75,000 items (reference and circulating) in a variety of formats are available to students, faculty, staff and general public. Resources are available to navigate material at the local library and at several other area libraries. Adaptive equipment is available to facilitate learning among patrons with disabilities. Instructional reference training and instruction on how to research specific resource-based assignments are provided to individual students and groups of students. A reference librarian is available to individual students approximately 70 percent of the hours the library is open. Online reference support is available to individual students 100 percent of the time.

Academic Advising: Academic advising is the fourth component in providing learning support for students and faculty. While the college has no formal written plan for student retention, advisors have focused their approach on empowering students to make scheduling, life and career choices. Student needs are addressed on an individual basis during regular course-scheduling appointments. (Approximately 3000 individual advising appointments took place between January 1 and December 31, 2005.) Evaluation forms provide students with an opportunity to offer feedback regarding their experiences with advising.

Advisors encourage students to explore options and decide for themselves. Advisors look for red flags and attempt to provide guidance for those who might be "heading in the wrong direction" when selecting courses. Lists at midterm identifying students who have grades of D,U, F, or I are often used as a means for identifying those students who might be "high risk." These students are encouraged to talk with their instructors and seek help from the Learning Assistance Center if they are not currently utilizing that service.

Faculty members are invited to attend monthly advisor training sessions to review course delivery and academic expectations with advisors and to voice concerns and ask questions. Additionally, faculty concerns are often addressed in an ad hoc fashion, during division meetings or individual conversations.

### **1P11 Determining Processes for Student Assessment**

As previously noted, Highland Community College has a long history with the assessment of student academic achievement, with the college's first Assessment Plan being submitted to the North Central Association in the spring of 1995. The plan was clearly linked to the institution's mission, purposes, and goals. The plan provided for broad institutional participation, especially by full-time faculty, and it established an assessment committee, chaired by faculty, which included administrators and data support personnel. It emphasized data collection, analysis,

and feedback loops to impact curriculum, and it provided timelines. It has been updated twice, in 1999 and in 2005 in conjunction with the AQIP Action Project addressing student learning.

While the college has continued to be involved in the assessment of student learning since 1992, there have been stumbling blocks and barriers. In the spring of 2002, the Assessment Committee wrote a self-evaluation, identifying strengths and weaknesses and creating a vision. Designating the assessment of student learning as an AQIP project became a way to reemphasize assessment, focus resources on assessment, and establish clear goals and timelines.

Responsibility for the assessment of student learning now resides with two co-chairs who are recommended by the chief academic officer and appointed by the college president. One co-chair is faculty, and one is an academic dean. Previously, an Assessment Committee of twelve to eighteen members was charged with implementation of assessment activities. The revised plan has given the Assessment Committee co-chairs responsibility for oversight of independent committees with specific assignments. There are two standing committees. As previously noted, the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee deals with writing performance across the college, and the Data Committee is concerned with gathering data activities on general education outcomes.

Implementation is at the level of the academic division. Faculty involvement is “frontline,” as they identify program outcomes and design, implement, and analyze assessment measures. Feedback loops occur as program faculty review the results of assessment measures as indicators of student learning related to program outcomes.

Co-chairs and deans meet quarterly as a team to review the status of assessment and to identify additional areas in need of assessment. Annual reports are prepared by the supporting committees and submitted to the co-chairs. An annual report is prepared in the spring by the co-chairs, submitted to the chief academic officer, and shared with the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for review and comment.

### **1P13 Measures of Student Performance**

Attempting to assess thirty-one competencies within the six general education outcome areas has proven to be more than challenging. Consequently, in Fall 2005, the college’s Assessment Data Committee identified six key competencies that were of a nature that they could be assessed using existing imbedded assessments within various courses. These are:

- 1.1 identify main ideas, facts, and opinions from texts or oral presentations
- 1.3 transmit information and opinions in writing using correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation and appropriate organization and style
- 2.1 analyze and evaluate evidence in order to make inferences and generate conclusions
- 2.3 perform basic arithmetic operations (+, -, x, /) and apply them to fractions, decimals, and percentages in real applications
- 2.5 interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, tables, and graphs
- 3.1 select and apply the appropriate procedures, tools, and other technologies to complete a task

In addition, four key competencies that could be assessed using instructor and student surveys were selected:

- 3.3 demonstrate a willingness to find and use procedures, tools, and technologies effectively
- 4.3 demonstrate a willingness to apply effective interpersonal and inter-group behaviors
- 5.4 appreciate social and political diversity
- 6.3 engage in an informed discussion of questions regarding personal, professional, social, and global issues

All occupational programs have identified program outcomes and measures. In the programs in Accounting, Agriculture Management, Business Administration, Early Childhood Education, Industrial Manufacturing, Information Systems, Information Technology-Healthcare, and Web Design, rubric-graded student portfolios will be the assessment measurement method. In the programs of Autobody Repair and Auto Mechanics, completion of NATEF competencies at identified levels are the assessment method. In the Cosmetology/Nail Technology Program, completion of 100% of required competencies and passing the state licensure examination are the assessment measures. Practical nursing students and students completing their first year of the associate degree in nursing are assessed with a test developed by Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI). The exam has been developed using Highland's nursing syllabi and is normed nationally. The tests provide students with immediate feedback, and results are used for program review. In addition, the student pass rate on the nursing licensure exam is used as an assessment measure.

Areas identified for transfer program assessment are mathematics, natural sciences, humanities, fine arts, communications, and social science.

*Mathematics:* Calculus III has been identified as a capstone course for this assessment. Test questions covering key concepts in Calculus I and II have been identified. Student work was gathered in spring 2006 for analysis fall 2006 for student mastery of these key concepts.

*Natural Science:* Program outcome has been identified as the ability to state a core concept in a science field the student has studied and then to discuss it in an interview with an instructor. A rubric has been developed for scoring the interview and a cohort identified; initial interviews took place in spring 2006. Results will be analyzed in the fall.

*Humanities:* Program outcomes are in place and embedded questions have been developed for assessment. Faculty in identified courses with students from the cohort are gathering student responses to the embedded questions. A scoring rubric is being developed, and the student work will be evaluated in the fall 2006.

*Fine Arts:* A vocabulary test covering terms common to all of the fine arts has been developed as a pre-test/post-test. Data collection began spring 2006.

*Communication:* Program outcomes and assessment measures are under development.

*Social Science:* Program outcomes and assessment measures are under development.

Students in developmental reading and writing are assessed at the end of the course for mastery of the course outcomes on exit exams.

### **1R1 Results of Common Learning Objectives and Program Learning Objectives**

To date, assessment activities and the analysis of data have indicated the following results.

The mid-curricular exam in practical nursing and associate degree nursing (HESI) indicated a weakness in math calculations.

Data gathered from a sophomore Capstone course in the spring semesters in 1999, 2000, and 2002 on the application of general education outcomes identified weaknesses in oral and written communication (a focus on facts with few conclusions drawn or supported), weaknesses in integrating numerical information and other data into argument, weaknesses in participating in in-depth discussion of social and global issues, and weaknesses in the ability to critique work in progress and that of others.

**Figure 1.1 Results for Gen Ed Competencies**

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Time Frame/ Measure Type</b>	<b>Results</b>
1.1: Identify main ideas, facts, opinions	Spring 2006/ Imbedded Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 414 students in 16 sections averaged 80.34%</li> <li>• Considered baseline and satisfactory (exceeding 70%)</li> </ul>
1.3: Written communication	Spring 2005/ Pre/post Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling-essentially no change (1.1%)</li> <li>• Grammar, punctuation, style-modest improvement (12-18%)</li> <li>• Organization/development-significant increase (65%)</li> </ul>
2.1: Analyze and evaluate for inference and conclusions	Fall 2005/ Imbedded Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 235 students in 7 sections averaged 82.23%</li> <li>• Considered baseline and satisfactory (exceeding 70%)</li> </ul>
2.3: Basic arithmetic operations and application	Spring 2005/ Pre/Post Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic arithmetic completers achieved an average 51% higher score on post-test</li> </ul>
2.5: Identify and draw inferences from mathematical formulas, etc.	Fall 2005/ Imbedded Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97 students in 5 sections averaged 82.11%</li> <li>• Considered baseline and satisfactory (exceeding 70%)</li> </ul>
3.1: Select and apply appropriate procedures, tools, and technologies	Spring 2006/ Imbedded Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 213 students in 11 sections averaged 84.31%</li> <li>• Considered baseline and satisfactory (exceeding 70%)</li> </ul>
3.3: Willingness to select and apply appropriate procedures, tools, etc.	Spring 2005/ Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students indicated a 4.34 average (5 point scale)</li> <li>• Instructors rated students at a 3.88 level (10.5% less)</li> <li>• Considered satisfactory (both above 3.5)</li> </ul>
4.3: Willingness to apply effective interpersonal and inter-group behaviors	Spring 2005/ Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students indicated a 4.21 average (5 point scale)</li> <li>• Instructors rated students at 4.29 level (1.9% higher)</li> <li>• Considered satisfactory (both above 3.5)</li> </ul>
5.4: Appreciation of social and political diversity	Spring 2005/ Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students indicated a 4.12 average (5 point scale)</li> <li>• Instructors rated students at 3.75 level (9.0% less)</li> <li>• Considered satisfactory (both above 3.5)</li> </ul>
6.3: Ability to engage in informed discussions	Spring 2005/ Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students indicated a 4.15 average (5 point scale)</li> <li>• Instructors rated students at 3.29 level (20.7% less)</li> <li>• Not considered satisfactory (instructors below 3.5)</li> </ul>

### **1R2 Evidence of Student Learning Required by the College and Other Institutions**

Highland Community College uses the results of licensing exams, the transfer monitoring report provided by the state's universities, employer feedback, and alumni surveys to provide evidence that students have acquired the knowledge and skills required by it and its stakeholders.

State licensing examinations are administered to four groups of graduates at this time. Students in nursing are assessed for LPN or RN licensure prior to employment in the field. Students in cosmetology are scheduled for the State Board of Regulation examinations on completion of the HCC program. Cosmetologists must pass the examination prior to full employment in the field. The Illinois Secretary of State's office or the appropriate office in



another state examines those who complete the Commercial Truck Driving course. The values shown in Figure 1.2 reflect pass rates of HCC graduates tested in calendar years 1999-2004. Medical Coding certification examinations are conducted through the American Academy of Professional Coders. Highland certification rates for that certificate will be benchmarked in 2005.

Figure 1.2 **Licensure Exams**

Pass Rates by Program	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	State Average
Nursing LPN	100%	93%	94%	92%	92%	96%	87%
Nursing RN	100%	100%	95%	91%	87%	100%	92%
Cosmetology	92%	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	81%
Truck Driving	N/A	N/A	98%	98%	98%	96%	43%

The transfer monitoring report is prepared each year by the Dean of Arts, Sciences, and Learning and the Transfer Coordinator using data provided by the university system. Data in Figures 1.3 and 1.4 track trends in transfer enrollments and compares Highland's transfer students' performance to other transfer students at the state's universities.

Figure 1.3 **Transfer Student Completion Rates /Transfer Hours Generated**

	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
Number of students with Transfer Major	1206	1062	1447	1468	1173	1169	1195
Number of Completers	185	183	171	163	161	162	161
Total Hours Generated	46795	45281	49226	51004	49155	50159	52570
Transfer Hours	7221	26931	27402	28400	27984	28696	29609
% of Total	58%	59%	56%	56%	57%	57%	56%

Figure 1.4 **HCC Transfer Students**

<b>Fall 2003</b>	<b>Total HCC Students</b>	<b>HCC GPA</b>	<b>Other 2-yr Transfer GPA</b>
Illinois State University	41	2.78	2.84
Northern Illinois University	128	3.10	2.91
University of Illinois-UC	4	2.95	3.14
Western Illinois University	56	3.25	2.85
<b>Spring 2004</b>	<b>Total HCC Students</b>	<b>HCC GPA</b>	<b>Other 2-yr Transfer GPA</b>
Illinois State University	34	2.82	2.89
Northern Illinois University	115	3.11	2.92
Western Illinois University	53	3.23	2.91
<b>Fall 2004</b>	<b>Total HCC Students</b>	<b>HCC GPA</b>	<b>Other 2-yr Transfer GPA</b>
Illinois State University	34	2.75	2.83
Northern Illinois University	120	3.10	2.92
University of Illinois-UC	3	3.32	3.44
Western Illinois University	64	3.00	2.87

The Illinois State Board of Education, with recommendations by the Business, Industry, and Labor Workplace Skills Advisory Committee, developed the Illinois Workplace Skills Assessment to measure six critical areas of performance as determined by employers. Although discontinued in 2003, the Workplace Skills Assessment provided useful data to predict the performance of the college's graduates in the workplace. Six areas were identified by the state committee as critical to the success of every worker: communication, adapting and coping with change, work ethics, problem solving and critical thinking, teamwork, and technological literacy. The assessment has been administered annually to career and technical students. Scores for each of the six critical areas become composite scores for the college, program, and individual. See Figure 1.5.

**Figure 1.5 Illinois Workplace Skills Assessment**

	1999		2000		2001*		2002		2003	
	HCC	State	HCC	State	HCC	State	HCC	State	HCC	State
Average Score	63	62	66	63	59	62	61	60	65	64
Standard Deviation	12	11	9	12	14	13	10	11	10	12
Lowest Score	29	1	54	11	26	15	32	17	38	12
Highest Score	87	96	90	91	90	90	79	93	90	92
Number Tested	57	2296	21	1308	162	2931	125	1390	55	709
Pass Rate	N/A	N/A	100%	79%	69%	78%	85%	77%	89%	77%

\*2001 data include high school students

The HCC Alumni Survey provides placement data for respondents by discipline (degree or certificate). Item #4 of the survey asks for current employment status. Additional discipline-specific respondent information by individual major on salaries, employment goals, and employment while in school is available in the Alumni Survey. The composite responses in the various employment categories are given in Figure 1.6.

**Figure 1.6 Graduate Placement**

Spring Semester	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Employed Full-Time	42%	42%	37%	40%	36%	35%
Employed Part-Time	14%	7%	14%	14%	16%	19%
Continuing Education	41%	49%	44%	42%	38%	35%
Unemployed/Retired	3%	2%	5%	4%	10%	11%

The Illinois Community College Board has compiled data from community college reports, university databases, Department of Employment Services, Department of Defense, and other assets. These data are used to evaluate progress under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Technical-Education Act. Of the measures available, three are used to post-assess the preparation of the college's occupational program graduates. Using the Peer College Cohort format established by the Illinois Community College Board, Highland achieves the following results.

Figure 1.7 **Occupational Attainment:** Percentage of occupational majors who completed an occupational certificate or associate degree or who are still enrolled or have transferred within five years of enrollment.

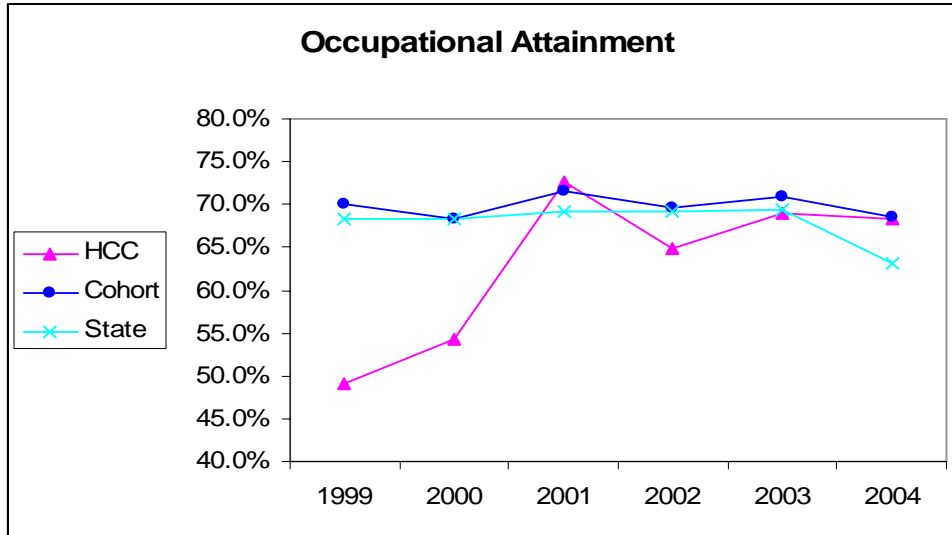


Figure 1.8 **Employment or Continuing Postsecondary Education:** Percentage of program completers in a given fiscal year who were employed in the third quarter after graduation and/or who were enrolled in the Illinois public higher education-shared database in the academic year following program completion.

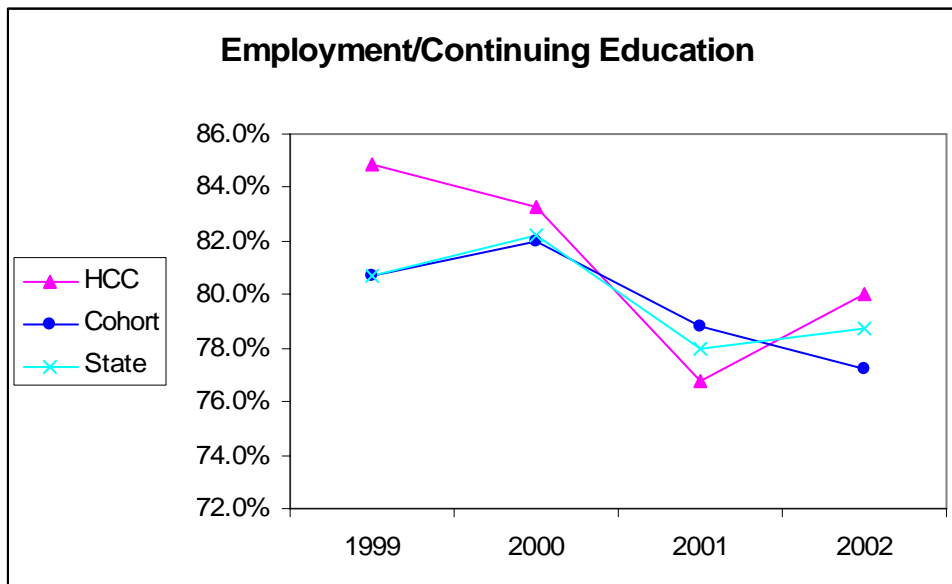
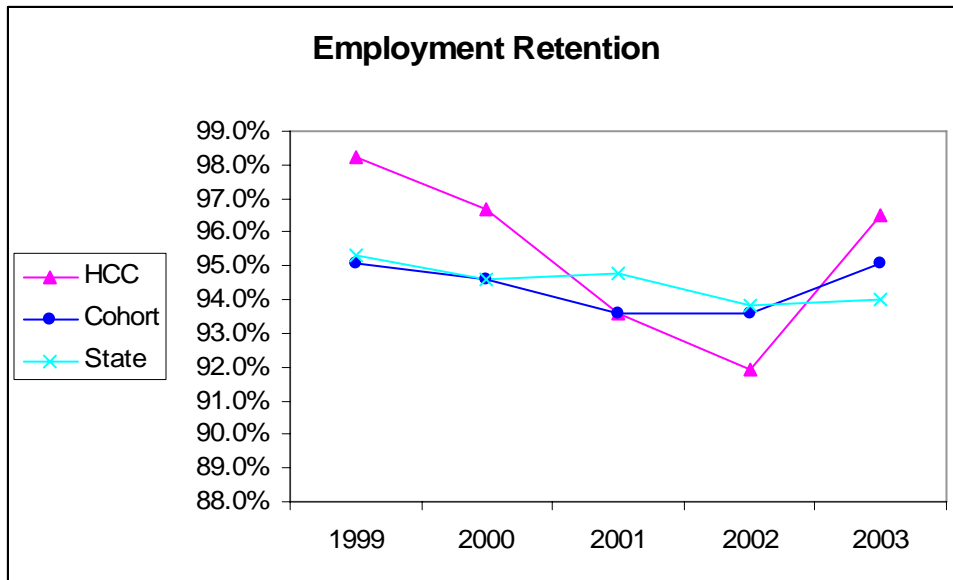


Figure 1.9 **Retention in Employment:** Percentage of program completers that were employed in the 3rd quarter and still employed in the 4th quarter after program completion.



## Category Two: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

### 2C1 Explicit Institutional Objectives

In addition to Helping Students Learn (Category 1), Highland has articulated the following objectives as ways to carry out the broader mission objective of “encouraging the personal and professional growth of the people of Northwest Illinois.”

- Providing community education designed to meet local cultural needs and encourage lifelong learning
- Providing opportunities that enhance cultural understanding through international education
- Supporting economic development through partnerships with business, industry, chambers of commerce, units of local government, and other educational institutions
- Providing community access as an open-door institution to all college services and facilities

These distinctive objectives can be classified using six thematic categories: *Access, Civic/Community Responsibility, Cultural, Financial Resources, Outreach Activities, and Partnerships*. Each theme is represented by a number of Highland's services or programs. In several instances, a service or program falls into more than one category.

Access: Highland West and other district locations; Columbia College on main campus; ADA accessibility, with the main campus a fully ADA-compliant campus for over ten years; University of Illinois Extension (all counties of the district); Clarence Mitchell Library; YMCA on campus  
Civic/Community Responsibility: Leadership Programs (The Leadership Institute, The Jo Daviess Leadership Forum, The High School Servant Leadership Program), Boyer Colloquium, Baumgartner Forum; League of Women Voters' Forums; Global Taskforce; Service on Community, State, and National Boards

Cultural: Fine, Visual, and Performing Arts Areas (Summerset, Major Poets, Beckman-Smith Collaboration, Children's Chorus, Community Band, Community Orchestra, Chorale, Children's Theatre, Juried Art Shows), Global Taskforce

Financial Resources/Development: Highland Foundation

Outreach Activities: Outreach centers (primarily in Jo Daviess County), especially HCC West; Sports Camps; RSVP (Grant Program); Americorps (Grant Program); Leadership Programs; Athletic Programs; Stephenson Area Career Center/CareerTec

Partnerships: YMCA, Columbia College, University of Illinois Extension Office, Partners for Employment with Sauk Valley Community College, Critical Skill Shortage Initiative with Rock Valley College, Freeport Health Network partnership for an evening Associate Degree in Nursing Program, RSVP, Americorps, High School Servant Leadership Program

All of these services and programs help Highland promote and sustain efforts toward Other Distinctive Objectives that support the educational mission and build and maintain critical community support across a wide spectrum of interest areas. (See also Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships)

Not only is the college the primary source of transfer and occupational education in Northwest Illinois, but it is also a major source of cultural activities and civic leadership training as well. The programs or services in these areas represent the components of Highland that make it unique as a small rural comprehensive community college.

The six thematic categories (*Access; Civic/Community Responsibility; Cultural; Financial Resources; Outreach Activities; and Partnerships*) align with three of the themes that were selected by the Strategic Planning Council in 2003:

- Develop competitive programming and instruction that optimizes accessibility.
- Build key partnerships that support the College mission to serve the wider community needs.
- Pursue long-range strategies and opportunities to increase funding from all sources that will assist the College in meeting its mission and strategic goals. (Strategic Plan, Prologue, p. 2)

The Strategic Plan also identified some complex issues as corollaries to the six themes:

- The need to minimize expenditures and effectively utilize the College's shrinking resources while needing to invest in new market opportunities in order to capitalize on any potential enrollment growth.
- The need to effectively implement cost-effective programming while maintaining community services and programs that are not considered to be revenue generating.
- Finding a balance between facilitating the provision of programs and services provided by other organizations and originating programs and services. (Strategic Plan, Prologue, p. 2)

One of the underlying mechanisms that promotes and nurtures Highland's forward thinking capacity toward "other distinctive objectives" is the support of the communities of the Highland district. This support has allowed the college to develop into a truly comprehensive community college and not exclusively a liberal arts community college, a performing arts community college, or a technical/trade college .

## **2C2 Aligning Objectives with Mission, Vision, and Philosophy**

These distinctive objectives flow out of the supporting elements of the college's mission statement. Because these objectives broaden the experience of those served by Highland, they clearly support the college's vision of "partner[ing] with learners in successfully shaping their futures." These objectives also reflect the vision of the college founders and the dedicated legion of donors who contribute money, time, and talent to the Highland Foundation. It is these donors who have chosen their legacy to be contributions to support specific elements of the college mission through bequests that have allowed both the development of the unique and the maintenance of the distinctive.

## **2C3 Support of Processes and Systems for Helping Students Learn**

The six focus areas of Other Distinctive Objectives serve as the critical underpinning of Helping Students Learn.

Access: Highland's accessibility to disabled students and to all students in spite of the rural nature of the college district supports the central objective of student learning.

Civic/Community Responsibility: The results of an employee survey on community involvement indicate that Highland employees are very active in their role as responsible citizens. The various Leadership Programs also demonstrate the college's commitment to developing good citizens. These programs not only support and complement student learning but provide learning as well.

Cultural: Highland's Visual and Performing Arts programs provide much of the cultural enrichment available in extreme northwest Illinois. The long legacy of the musical and drama departments for students and community members stretches back to the earliest days of the college. The hugely popular Summerset Series has featured high quality theater productions for more than thirty years. The Royal Scots, the Highland Chorale, the HCC Children's' Choir, and

the Jazz and Concert Bands all represent high quality creative outlets that both support and supplement student learning. The visual arts department also has many unique relationships with area artists such as juried art shows and featured artist shows in a small college gallery. *The Prairie Wind* literary magazine remains a unique contribution as an outlet for the creative spirit of students, faculty and staff, and district residents. All these programs teach and broaden the experience of participants and audiences.

Financial Resources/Development: The support provided by the Highland Foundation both directly and indirectly supports student learning by providing funds for educational programs, cultural events, scholarships, and buildings.

Outreach Activities: These various efforts both support and complement student learning in numerous ways. For example, sports camps train young athletes and allow them to experience the college campus, and the opening of HCC West makes services more available to students of the college district.

Partnerships: The variety of partnerships again directly and indirectly support student learning. The HCC/YMCA partnership is one example that directly supports students. The Partners for Employment collaboration with Sauk Valley Community College supports student learning by providing financial assistance to students for additional education or training and by generally promoting area economic development.

### **2P1 Determining Other Distinctive Objectives**

From the founding of the college, distinctive objectives have been determined by the vision and financial support of donors with a specific interest in combination with college faculty and administration. More recently, the college's strategic planning process has been utilized to help the college set its overall future direction and help ensure that all areas of the mission are included in the resource allocation process (see Category 8P1). Since the college does have finite resources, the Highland Foundation is the source of start-up or continuing support for many of these objectives, but local, state, and federal grant sources also play a role in this process.

### **2P3 Determining Faculty and Staff Needs**

Most needs relating to "other distinctive objectives" are determined by direct communication between the administration and the leadership of each particular program or partner. These meetings occur annually or more often and make possible a comprehensive assessment of current and future needs. Annually, all college departments are asked to compile a list of unmet needs to present to the Highland Foundation for funding consideration. The items requested either directly or indirectly support classroom instruction or provide resources for a critical program need, service or piece of equipment. These requests have allowed the college to try to keep pace with needs in times of ever decreasing state funding.

### **2P5 Measures of Accomplishment**

Measurement systems do not exist for an across-the-board systematic analysis of this category outside of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Program Review Process conducted on an annual basis. In many cases, the only common indicator of accomplishment is participation numbers. If the program or area generates revenue, then that measure is available (i.e., sports, theater, concert revenue generation). The Leadership Programs compile data on participation for all components. Theater and musical performances have attendance and revenue information. The success of Columbia College on the Freeport campus is tracked by graduation numbers. One specific area of distinctive service is the college's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). This program tracks the number of volunteers as well as the hours of service contributed and the related cost savings to various non-profit agencies realized by using the volunteers instead of paid employees. Employee survey data on civic/community service gives

a snapshot view of the percentage of employees who serve on boards at the local, regional, or state level as well as an indication of the number of employees who have been elected to serve in some official capacity in their community or the college district.

## 2R1 Results for Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Participation numbers and other collected results of various measures are given below:

Figure 2.1 Leadership Programs Participation

Year	Stephenson County Leadership Institute	High School Servant Leadership Program	Jo Daviess County Leadership Forum
1992/1993	25		
1993/1994	19		
1994/1995	20		
1995/1996	24		
1996/1997	24		
1997/1998	38	31	
1998/1999	36	40	
1999/2000	40	49	
2000/2001	34	57	17
2001/2002	22	65	24
2002/2003	26	74	19
2003/2004	22	90	15
2004/2005	23	106	17
2005/2006	24	116	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>107</b>

Figure 2.2 Fine Arts Programs Attendance

Fiscal Year:	2002	2003	2004	2005
Summerset	2797	1180	1449	2144
Royal Scots	878	672	1435	1292
Chorale	1160	1041	1042	1578
Total	4835	2893	3926	5014

Figure 2.3 Columbia College Graduates

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Graduates	20	26	26	21	29	34	34

Figure 2.4 RSVP Volunteers, Service, and Value

Fiscal Year	Volunteers	Hours Served	Value Wage
2005	403	72,475	\$515,736.00
2004	390	74,508	\$530,192.00
2003	399	73,415	\$521,380.00
2002	407	68,592	\$498,892.00
2001	390	59,997	\$411,399.00

Figure 2.5 Foundation Scholarship Awards

	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004
\$1000s	244.6	275.7	276.4	300.8	270.2



Figure 2.6 **Foundation Endowment Fund**

	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005
\$ millions	15.3	14.2	11.9	11.8	12.8	14.2

A survey during the 2005-06 academic year provided information about Highland employees' community and organizational service over the past ten years. Thirty-five per cent of employees had served on a local, regional, state, or national board, with 31 percent having held an office on a board. Fifty-seven percent believe that college employees have an obligation to serve on boards and provide leadership to local and regional organizations, and 56 percent of that group believe that the college mission is better served if employee service on local or regional boards has a direct connection to a person's Highland position.

### **2R3 Strengthening Institution and Enhancing Relationships**

The accomplishment of these objectives enhances the college's relationship with the communities of the college district because the mission as a comprehensive community college is met through the fulfillment of these objectives. Accessibility makes all the services of Highland available to district residents. Through the Leadership Programs, participants improve their own skills and learn more about their communities. Unique programs such as RSVP further demonstrate that Highland has programs that proactively demonstrate its belief in and support of community involvement. Additionally, Highland's Fine Arts program is a source of cultural enrichment for the entire college district. Through these and other activities that constitute Highland's "other distinctive objectives," the communities of the Highland district support the college, and Highland supports the communities.

### **2I1 Improving Processes for Other Distinctive Objectives**

Examples of other distinctive objectives that have been identified in 1C1 are the college's Leadership Programs, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Fine Arts Programs and Financial Resource Development. In almost all instances, improvements are made to these programs by gathering input from those served by these programs or by those providing service in these programs.

The Leadership Programs use a mix of methods to identify potential improvements. The Jo Daviess Leadership Forum has an advisory committee which monitors that program and provides input. This program, as well as the Leadership Institute, has participants evaluate the program at the conclusion of each program year. The High School Servant Leadership Program uses mentors from each high school to assist the participants and also to provide program input.

The RSVP program has an advisory committee composed of representatives of the various sites the program serves as well as some of the actual program volunteers. This group makes suggestions for program improvement. The volunteer sites are surveyed each year to determine program satisfaction and possible improvements. Every two years, the volunteers are surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the program and potential improvements.

As has been stated, the college's foundation is a major factor in funding some existing distinctive objectives and in helping to fund new initiatives. Needed improvements in the foundation-college working relationship are identified primarily in two ways. The college president and a vice-president serve as ex-officio members of the foundation executive committee. This membership allows for regular discussion of potential improvements. In addition, at least twice a year, the chairperson of the college Board of Trustees and the

chairperson of the foundation, along with the college president and foundation director meet to discuss the relationship and any needed improvements.

The methods to identify needed improvements described above are representative of how the college is able to improve its ability to successfully achieve its other distinctive objectives. The basic tool is regular communication with those serving and being served by these programs.

## Category Three: Understanding Students and Other Stakeholders Needs

### 3C1 Key Groups of Students and Other Stakeholders

The mission statement mandates service to a very broad number of constituencies. To better assess the nature of services to this stakeholder population, the college segments its many students and other major stakeholders into two broad categories of direct and indirect stakeholders. Each major category is further segmented into much narrower subcategories based on the type of services required and the nature of their relationship to the college. This results in a large number of non-exclusive segments with similar, but distinctly different, criteria. In general, however, HCC has identified the following categories of students and stakeholders and their short- and long-term service expectations.

**Direct vs. Indirect Stakeholders:** Direct stakeholders are viewed as the individuals and groups who receive HCC services directly in a student-based manner. Indirect stakeholders are those who have some specific familial, economic, social, governmental, or cultural interest in the success of the direct stakeholders.

**Direct Stakeholders:** The college routinely categorizes direct stakeholders based on several demographic factors including address, age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as academic factors including academic success, preparedness, academic intent and other factors.

For the purposes of this study, student stakeholders are listed by educational intent, indicating the broad range of life-long learning opportunities offered by the college and include both credit and non-credit students. Educational intent includes students seeking degrees or certificates, planning to transfer to a baccalaureate institution, exploring career options, upgrading job skills, obtaining basic literacy skills through HCC's ESL/ABE/ASE (English as a Second Language/Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education) program, or pursuing coursework for personal interest. In addition, two special populations are included in the study. The first is underprepared students: those who require exceptional preparatory work prior to attempting college-level coursework. The second special population includes those who have a disability that must be addressed to assure the best access to educational opportunity.

Direct stakeholders segments in this study, developed from interviews with college personnel in small group forums, are:

- Potential Degree or Certificate Students
- Current Degree or Certificate Students
- Non-credit or Training Students
- Adult Education Students
- Under-prepared Students
- Special Needs Students

**Indirect Stakeholders:** Needs of indirect stakeholders are more complex, as they represent widely disparate groups, often with limited direct contact with HCC. Each stakeholder has one or more contacts with HCC personnel who maintain a relationship with them attending meetings, presenting informational updates, or primarily acting as the focal point of contact with the college. This gives them the ability to assess the needs of that stakeholder group and to respond internally with actions to meet those expressed needs. With state, local, and governmental agencies, contact is more diverse. The college typically becomes aware of their needs by direct request from them for information and/or resources to accomplish a project necessary to that agency.

### 3C2 Requirements and Expectations of Students and Stakeholders

Direct stakeholders include individuals typically thought of as students. These student groups may be placed into different segments for a variety of reasons based on differing criteria. It is important for HCC to assess the needs of the different categories of students and to develop processes to meet those differing needs. The following table identifies direct stakeholder segments and the service responsibilities for those stakeholders.

Figure 3.1 Direct Stakeholders

Type of Student	Stakeholder Expectations/Services
Potential Degree or Certificate Students	Degree, program information and availability, class schedule and course availability, career outlook, academic advising, financial requirements, available assistance, campus activities and environment, learning assessment/support, technology resources, admissions and registration, transfer articulation agreements, accredited programs.
Current Degree or Certificate Students	Same as prospective students, plus progress assessment, timely information, goal progress, path to degree, certificate completion, online registration.
Non-Credit Students	Comprehensive, flexible schedule; workforce job information; certification and credentialing.
Under-prepared Students	Counseling and assistance, individual needs assessment, availability of targeted assistance.
Special Needs Students	Specialized counseling and support services, ADA compatibility

Indirect Stakeholders are partners who have a stake in HCC yet who may not be direct recipients of college services. The following table identifies indirect stakeholders' segments and services.

Figure 3.2 Indirect Stakeholders

Type of stakeholder	Stakeholder Expectations/Services
State Agencies (ICCB, IBHE, DCEO, etc.)	Compliance with state code and expectations thereof, audit compliance, accurate reporting.
Other Government and Non-profit Organizations	Training, labor force information, preparation, participation in strategic planning.
Local/Regional Employers	Properly prepared potential employees.
HCC Board of Trustees/Taxpayers	Prudent fiscal management, cost control.
HCC Employees	Supportive workplace environment, payroll, personal and professional development.
Universities or Other Transfer Institutions	Properly prepared potential students.
Local/Regional school Districts	Articulation and transfer viability, support for community education.
Alumni	Opportunities for participation in college activities, potential to participate in fundraising, potential for continuing education.

Parent/Family of Students	Financial information, career awareness, academic preparation.
Profession or Industry Associations	Current job training and retraining, quick response, qualified available instructors, assistance with IDED resources.
Donors	Recognition, financial planning information.

### 3P1 Identifying Changing Needs of Students

In order to directly determine how the changing needs of students are assessed, the college surveyed its personnel. The respondents were 40 percent faculty, 18 percent management, 21 percent student services, and 21 percent support personnel. The following table identifies the tools used.

Figure 3.3 Tools for Identifying Changing Needs of Students

	Potential Degree or Certificate Students	Current Degree or Certificate Students	Non-credit or Training Students	Adult Education Students	Under-prepared Students	Special Needs Students	Respondent Total
Course Evaluations	58% (25)	86% (37)	51% (22)	40% (17)	56% (24)	63% (27)	43
Focus Groups	76% (13)	76% (13)	71% (12)	47% (8)	47% (8)	35% (6)	17
Enrollment Data	63% (19)	80% (24)	53% (16)	50% (15)	43% (13)	47% (14)	30
Placement Test/Assessments	79% (26)	76% (25)	52% (17)	45% (15)	70% (23)	61% (20)	33
Needs/Interest Surveys	73% (22)	77% (23)	67% (20)	50% (15)	60% (18)	60% (18)	30
Satisfaction Surveys	56% (19)	82% (28)	59% (20)	50% (17)	50% (17)	56% (19)	34
Industry/Licensing Standards	56% (9)	94% (15)	44% (7)	38% (6)	38% (6)	38% (6)	16
Admissions Data	68% (17)	84% (21)	52% (13)	44% (11)	56% (14)	48% (12)	25
Financial Aid Application Data	75% (6)	88% (7)	75% (6)	38% (3)	50% (4)	50% (4)	8
Employment Placement Data	67% (10)	87% (13)	60% (9)	47% (7)	47% (7)	47% (7)	15
Transfer Performance Data	92% (12)	92% (12)	31% (4)	15% (2)	31% (4)	31% (4)	13
<b>Total Respondents</b>							<b>72</b>

Analysis of the various tools used for identifying student needs is dispersed rather than centralized. Individual departments or units use the information applicable to their particular student services to make changes or additions to those services.

### **3P3 Identifying Changing Needs of Other Stakeholders**

Because of the varied nature of the services the college provides to indirect stakeholders, it is more difficult to directly determine their needs. The following are some of the tools used to recognize the changing needs of other stakeholder groups:

- Focus Groups
- Needs/Interest Surveys
- Industry/licensing Standards
- Financial Aid Application Data
- Employment Placement Data
- Transfer Performance Data

### **3P6 Complaint Information**

Complaint information from students and some stakeholders such as parents are collected as a byproduct of our academic and other student academic complaint processes. Sometimes parents initiate a conversation about a complaint that is later properly initiated by a student. Students may appeal a charge of violating the student code of conduct (College Catalog 2006-09, p. 20) or may make a complaint about their treatment in other academic matters (College Catalog 2006-09, p. 23) by first talking with the appropriate administrator. If the issue is indeed serious, they are asked to submit their appeal in writing to that administrator. That administrator then investigates the issue, speaks with other parties to the issue, such as other students and/or the course instructor, and then communicates a decision in writing to the student. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, then he or she may appeal in writing to the Academic and Student Services Vice President. The vice president responds to the student appeal in writing in a timely fashion. If the student is not satisfied with the vice president's decision, he or she may appeal in writing again, and that appeal is reviewed by the student judicial review committee. This committee is comprised of students, faculty, and administrators. The decision of this committee is final and is issued to the student in writing. Harassment complaints based on legally protected classes are investigated by the college's Affirmative Action Officer. If these complaints involve students, then the Academic and Student Services Vice President is kept informed of the investigation and outcome. Complaints that are serious enough to come to the attention of the vice president are documented in student complaint files and then tabulated for periodic review by the vice president and others as appropriate with respect to complaint type and resolution.

### **3P7 Determining Student and Other Stakeholder Satisfaction**

The instruments used to assess the changing needs of the college's stakeholders are some of the same measures used to determine stakeholder satisfaction. They afford feedback of stakeholders' satisfaction, documenting personal, professional, institutional, or government requirements for competence or achievement. Specific examples are listed below:

- Student Evaluation of Instruction
- Student Senate
- Enrollment Data
- Alumni Survey
- State License Exams
- Perkins Employment Retention Data

Measures are collected, analyzed, and regularly reported to the college administration, faculty, or Board of Trustees as required.

**3R1 Results for Student Satisfaction and  
3R3 Results for Other Stakeholder Satisfaction**

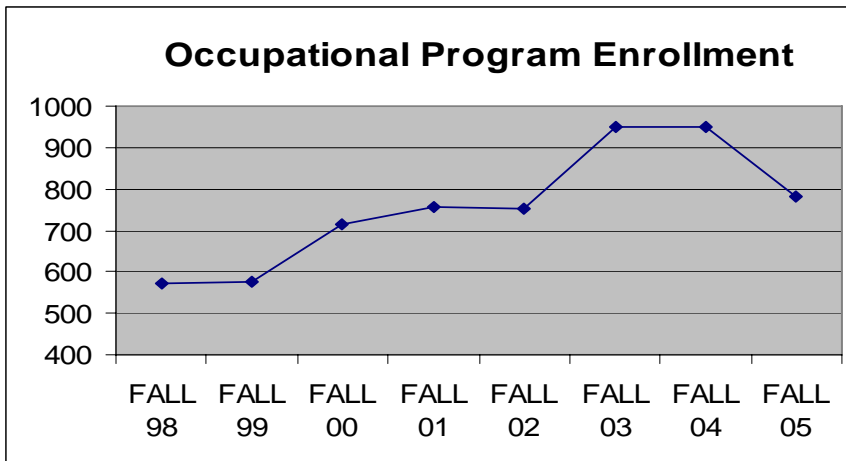
Of the several student and stakeholder satisfaction assessments available, the following exemplify the types of measures and the typical results obtained from those the instruments or techniques.

*Enrollment Data* provide a broad indication of student satisfaction. The figures below provide general enrollment numbers (Fig. 3.4) and the total enrollment (headcount) for all HCC occupational programs Fig. 3.5).

Figure 3.4 **General Enrollment Data**

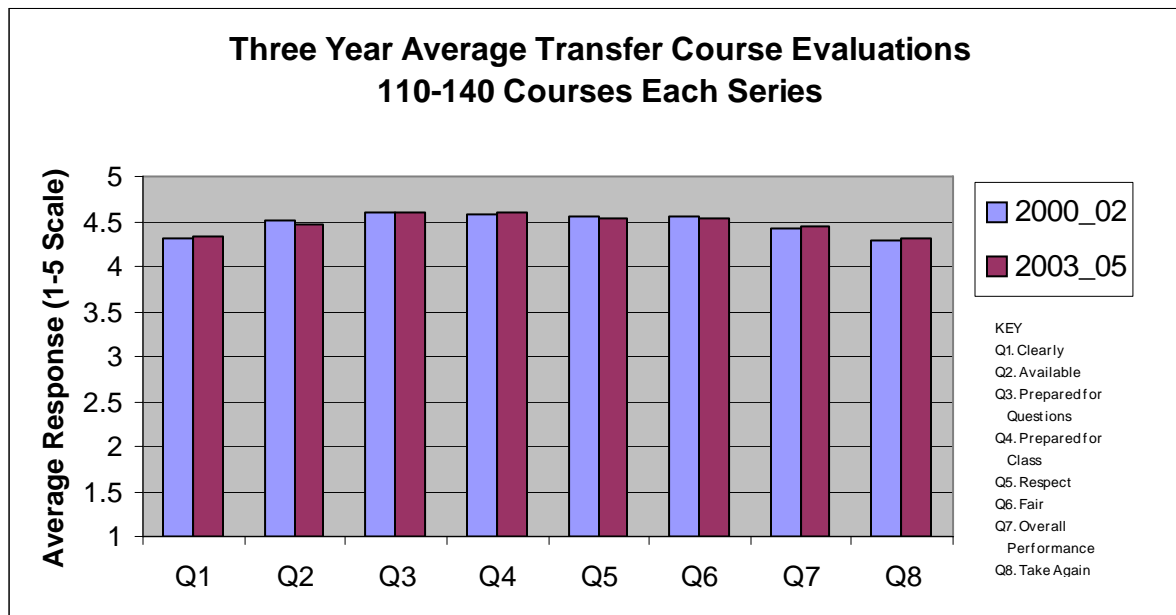
Year	Unduplicated Students	Degrees/Certificates	GED/ABE Students	GED Completers
FY2005	6046	348	704	157
FY2004	5736	339	720	138
FY2003	6143	336	546	91
FY2002	6271	353	702	135
FY2001	6836	338	654	142
FY2000	6466	282	602	129

Figure 3.5 **Occupational Enrollment**



*Student Evaluations* of instruction are routinely administered to provide faculty and academic administration with qualitative feedback on student satisfaction with classroom and curricular activities. The following graph (Fig. 3.6) gives results from transfer course evaluations.

Figure 3.6 **Student Evaluation of Instruction**



*Employment retention* is seen as a measure of career preparation satisfaction. These data are useful for measuring both student and stakeholder satisfaction. See 1R2, Figure 1.9.

*Student Senate* feedback to faculty and administration is an informal process as a focus group. The college sponsors Student Senate functions and provides faculty advisors to this representative body.

*Student Complaints:* The following table identifies the number of serious student complaints per year submitted to the Academic and Student Services Vice President and also to the Student Judicial Review Board.

Figure 3.7 **Student Complaints**

Year	2003	2004	2005
Cases to Vice President	7	8	4
Cases to Jud. Rev. Brd.	1	1	1
Final Outcome	Appeal Denied	Appeal Denied	Appeal Denied

*Alumni Survey* responses provide a direct indication of student satisfaction. In the FY04 survey, as shown in Fig. 3.8, the listed services were rated as being satisfactory or very satisfactory by the percentages indicated.



Figure 3.8 **Alumni Survey Results** (Executive Summary)

<b>HCC Service</b>	<b>Satisfactory/Very Satisfactory</b>
Classroom Instructors	97.8%
Course Offerings	89.2%
Individual Assistance	93.3%
Classroom Facilities	95.7%
Lab Facilities/Equipment	85.2%
Independent Study	78.1%
Library Services	93.4%
Class Scheduling	86.1%
Admission Counseling	74.5%
Academic Advising	75.7%
Career Counseling	69.9%
Transfer Counseling	55.9%
Financial Aid	58.1%
Registration Procedures	91.0%
Bookstore Services	82.6%
Food Services	43.2% (31.4% no opinion)
Recreational Facilities	58.3% (36.4% no opinion)
Student Clubs	32.8% (61.1% no opinion)
Student Senate	23.7% (71.0% no opinion)

*Licensure Rates:* Success in licensure is used as a measure of constituent satisfaction in professional preparation. These data are useful for measuring both student and stakeholder satisfaction. State licensing examinations are administered to five groups of graduates at this time. Students in Nursing are assessed for LPN or RN licensure prior to employment in the field. Students in cosmetology are scheduled for the State Board of Regulation examinations on completion of the HCC program. Cosmetologists must pass the examination prior to full employment in the field. The Illinois Secretary of State's office or the appropriate office in another state examines those who complete the Commercial Truck Driving course. The pass rates of HCC graduates tested in calendar years 1999 – 2004 are shown in 1R2, Figure 1.2. Medical Coding certification examinations are conducted through the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC). Highland performance rates on AAPC certification will be newly benchmarked in 2005.

### **3I2 Targets for Improvement**

#### A More Centralized System

As in Category 7P7, Measuring Effectiveness, those conducting this review realized that the college has no formal institution-wide process to build targets for improvement. The AQIP process is helping focus on the need for improvement of those information sources. Although a structured process is not yet developed, the team believes it should be guided at the institutional level and executed at the division or operational department level to ensure program-responsive needs analysis.

With the reestablished Director of Institutional Research position, it may be timely to revisit methods that are currently used to gather data from stakeholders, both direct and indirect, across all college functional areas. The committee recommends that the college qualitatively examine the type of surveys, techniques, and frequency of the data compilation across the institution. Improving the coordination in compiling and disseminating data to the various users is a worthwhile priority. The data are widely dispersed. One department often does not know

what the other is doing. Encouraging greater responsiveness and cooperation from key offices to share collected information could have a positive effect on all program input.

One of the current AQIP action projects concerns Data Decision Making (DDM). The outcomes of this task force/project will help facilitate better decision processes and improve stakeholder service. In addition, the adoption of the WebFOCUS report generation software will make data compilation and reporting a much easier process within departments as well as across the institution.

#### Increased Awareness

The college would benefit from additional staff development directed at helping staff better understanding our students' and stakeholders' needs. Activities could focus on increasing awareness of each employee's constituent service role through more visibility of the mission statement on campus, supervisors engaging and educating their respective departments, and reinforcing activities at college in-service days. Divisions and operational areas within the college could develop their own mission statements both to communicate to stakeholders and to remind their members of their crucial roles.

#### Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

Highland's students' and other stakeholders' needs should drive the strategic planning process. Regular research in strategic information sources is recommended. Another formal activity related to the HCC strategic plan is the yearly development of college-wide goals. Regular and consistent input from direct and indirect stakeholders is needed so that the various divisions and operational departments have guidance in preparing division goals and contributing to the college-wide goal development and to meeting the outcomes expressed in the strategic plan.

## **Category Four: Valuing People**

### **4C1 Organization of Work Environment to Strengthen Student Learning**

Highland Community College is organized into four major academic and administrative units to best serve its students and achieve its mission. Academic and Student Services encompasses all of the traditional academic departments in Business and Technology, Natural Sciences and Health, and Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, this unit contains the academic support and auxiliary departments of Enrollment Services (Admissions and Records, Advising), Learning Resources (Library, Audio Visual, and Academic Computing Support), Career Services, Athletics and Physical Education, Disability/ADA Services, Student Support Services, and Learning Assistance. This organization provides excellent communication and coordination to support student learning opportunities in the transfer and occupational areas.

The second major unit, Institutional and Community Development, provides more non-traditional college educational experiences to some college district residents. The departments in this unit include the Business Institute (Industry Training), Adult Education (ESL, Basic and Secondary Education – GED), High School and Community Leadership Training, Upward Bound (High School Student Pre-College Experiences), Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, and Community Education, Institutional Research and Grants. This organization, along with interactions with Academic and Student Services, provides excellent communication and coordination to support community and workplace education.

The third major unit is Administrative Services that include the support departments of Accounting, College Bookstore, Financial Aid and Veterans' Affairs, Information Technology Services and Physical Plant and Maintenance. This organization, along with Community Relations and Special Services, the fourth major unit, provides processes to support the actual learning opportunities within the college.

The chief administrators of each of these four units report to the college president. Additionally, the director of the title 1B workforce investment act grant program and the director of the Human Resources Department also report directly to the president. The president is the chief executive officer of the college and reports to the elected college Board of Trustees.

### **4C2 Key Geographic and Institutional Factors**

HCC serves the northwest corner of Illinois encompassing an area of 1,640 square miles. Within the approximately three and a half college district counties reside a population of approximately 90,000. The geographic extent of the college district raises challenges in provided desired services throughout the district. In FY05, the college served approximately 6.6 percent of this population and generated 55,913 credit hours. A 6.6 percent service rate is nearly identical to that of the state community college average. Besides the main campus in Freeport located in Stephenson County, the college operates three other course sites; the largest, HCC West, is located in Elizabeth in Jo Daviess County. This site and the main campus are networked together, providing effective data communication and internet service. The college district's racial, age, educational attainment, and income distributions are shown in the following Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

Figure 4.1 Racial Distribution

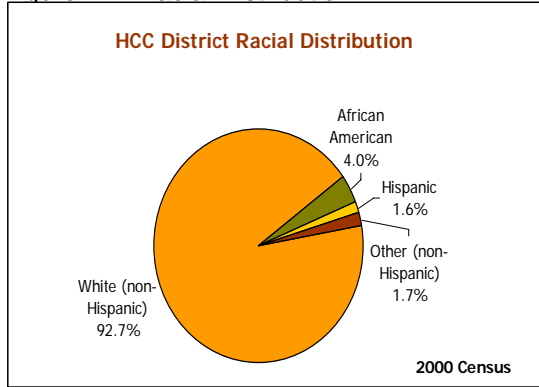


Figure 4.2 Age Distribution

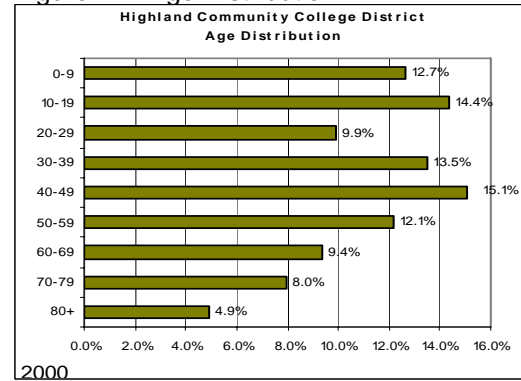


Figure 4.3 Education Attainment

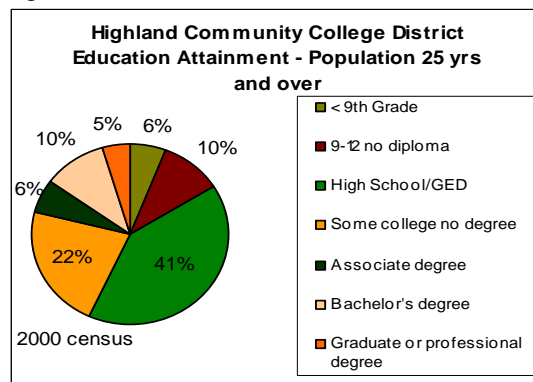
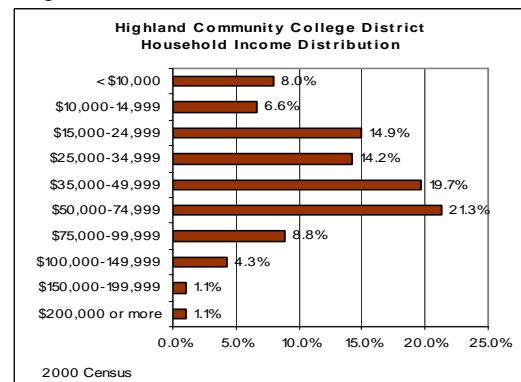


Figure 4.4 Income Distribution



The college's workforce is summarized in Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8. These include the full-time and part-time employee distribution, ethnic distribution, educational attainment, and gender distribution. Figure 4.5 indicates a significant number of part-time instructors compared to full-time instructors. However, only approximately half of the part-time instructors are teaching college credit courses. The remainder of these instructors are in areas such as Adult Education, Business and Industry Training, and Community Education. The employee ethnic distribution indicated in Figure 4.6 is quite similar to that of the college district population. That is, the college's employees are racially representative of the college's service district. However, this district ethnic percentage is only half of the value in Stephenson county, site of the college's main campus.

Figure 4.5 Employee Groups

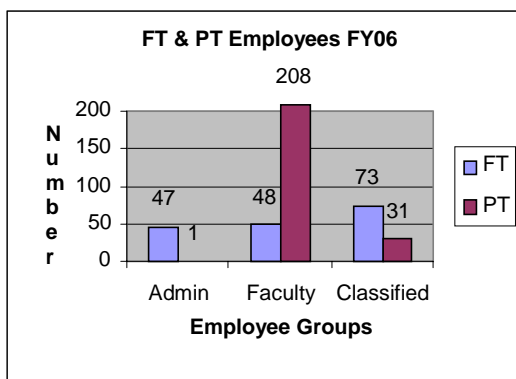


Figure 4.6 Ethnic Distribution

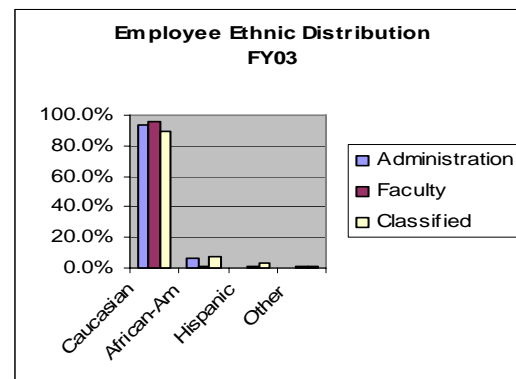


Figure 4.7 Employee Education

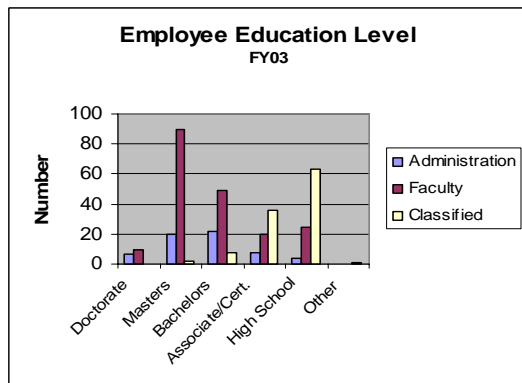
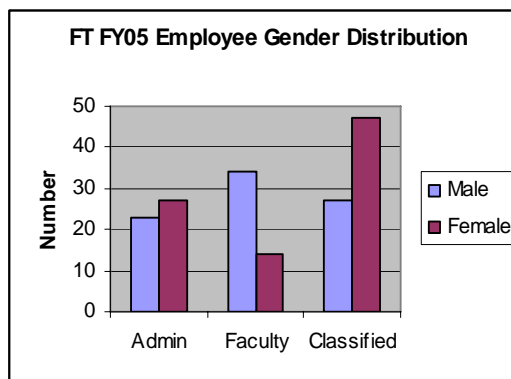


Figure 4.8 Gender Distribution



Part-Time Employee Contributions – Part-time employees are used extensively in the instructional area and to support operations in almost all college departments. Part-time (PT) instructors provide scheduling flexibility and instruction on an as-needed basis from semester to semester to meet varying student course needs. In FY05, PT instructors comprised 78 percent of the instructional college credit staff and generated 41 percent of the college’s credit hours. PT staff in many other departments provided needed services in a cost-effective way. In addition, student workers are critical to the operation of most college departments. In FY06, 228 student workers provided many tens of thousands of hours of service throughout the college. This service includes answering questions, assisting with computer use, doing clerical work, assisting with financial aid applications, working in the library, assisting faculty in labs, maintaining college grounds, and others.

**4C3 Demographic Trends Reviewed that Impact Workforce Needs**

HCC, in its strategic planning process, reviews demographic data to assist with strategic goals. The data reviewed includes age distribution, racial distribution, numbers of persons with and without high school degrees, number of persons in high school graduating classes, and wage and employment trends. Between 1990 and 2000, HCC’s district has had very little population growth, with two counties growing only 2 percent and one county decreasing by 1 percent. Little if any growth has occurred in the part of the college district in Ogle County. High school enrollments in the district are declining. The district has not had any significant economic growth from 1990 to 2000. In fact, almost all major employers have downsized significantly.

These demographics highlight the need to insure that the college’s workforce changes so as to serve the underserved adult population, the underemployed, and the regions of the college district relatively far from the main campus. Since January 2004, the college has added twenty-one staff to serve these populations and regions. The majority of these additional staff are intake and advising staff involved in the college’s WIA Partners for Employment grant program. The program supports the retraining of unemployed or underemployed persons in this WIA region. In the instructional area, the college’s academic program review process considers employment rates for occupational programs as a factor in program viability. Changes in needed staffing occur primarily through the use of part-time instructors or full-time instructor retirements.

**4C4 Key Training Initiatives**

HCC’s key training initiatives are either ongoing and routine or special initiatives to help meet college goals or needs. These initiatives now fall under the umbrella of the college’s new Employee Enhancement program completing its development as an AQIP action project.

Examples of the first type are mandatory safety trainings such as Hazardous Communication and Bloodborne Pathogens. Examples of the second type are harassment training, servant leadership training, training for implementing AQIP re-accreditation, and training on major college policy changes. The college also has initiated "Discussion of Instructional Practices" training sessions as part of its assessment of student learning.

#### **4P2 Hire, Retain, Orient Employees and Plan for Needed Personnel Changes**

HCC's recruitment and hiring process for full-time faculty and administrative employees is summarized in the step sequence below.

1. Review position justification/need
2. Revise the job description if appropriate
3. Obtain approvals to advertise and for requested search committee membership
4. Seek Highland Board approval for revised job description if new or changed
5. HR Director reviews the screening process with the search committee
6. Search committee chair discusses with the committee the position requirements/goals
7. Advertising is initiated and applications are collected
8. Applications reviewed by search committee and HR
9. Search committee develops interview questions; questions reviewed by HR for legality
10. Committee selects candidates to interview with EEO/diversity considered
11. HR Director reviews applications and interviewees for fairness and consistency
12. Interviews take place; telephone interviews may initially occur if many interviewees are out of state
13. Reference checks done on top candidates
14. If a security-sensitive position, criminal background checks are done (custodial and maintenance and those with contact with young children)
15. Based on the background check outcome, candidate is identified for job offer
16. Obtain approvals to hire desired candidate
17. Position offer is made (pending Board of Trustees approval for administrative and faculty positions and pending fingerprint checks if one is required)
18. If position offer is accepted, request to hire acted on at next board meeting. If position offer is not accepted, repeat step 15 for next candidate, etc.
19. Search committee, internal and external candidates notified that position is filled
20. New employee begins employment and completes employment and benefits paperwork

Similar but modified processes are followed in the hiring of part-time faculty and staff, classified staff, and grant-funded staff.

HCC effectively retains its employees by implementing a number of employee support activities which loosely comprise a retention process. These activities are listed below in no special order.

- Human Resource Department orients the new employee to the college
- New full time (FT) employees have a private "welcome lunch" with the president, college board chairperson, and vice presidents
- New FT employees are introduced to individual departments and staff during tour of the campus with their supervisor
- New FT employees are introduced to the trustees at a board meeting
- All new employees are introduced to the college staff during an all college meeting at the start of the fall and spring semesters
- New FT faculty are assigned a tenure committee to assist them during their first three years
- Special orientations are held for PT instructors
- An open, friendly, family atmosphere is encouraged by recognizing birthdays and holding occasional potlucks
- Employees have access to needed training and professional development so they feel comfortable with their job assignments
- Employees have opportunity for input through many committee membership opportunities

- Annual excellence awards given to selected FT and PT faculty, administrator, and classified staff member
- Performance evaluation allows employee an opportunity to identify barriers to job satisfaction
- Tuition waivers encourage professional and personal growth
- Monetary award given for attainment of another degree
- Summer hours – college is closed on Fridays during the summer months
- College has an extended Christmas break from just before Christmas through January 1
- When employees leave the college, an exit interview is held to identify potential negative causes

New employees are oriented to the college and to their individual department/division using the following processes.

#### College-wide Orientation

1. Meet with HR staff to review and sign-up for benefits, complete employment paperwork, discuss policies, etc.
2. Informed of required safety training if position requires
3. Supervisor takes employee on college-wide tour to visit other departments and meet other staff
4. New employee attends next college board meeting to be introduced to the board members
5. HR director checks with new employee after one week and one month as to satisfaction
6. Sexual and Other Harassment Training and Customer Service/Marketing Training occurs at 1-3 months; Ethics Training occurs annually
7. New employees introduced to entire college at college-wide meeting at start of fall and spring semesters
8. Feedback Questionnaire to employee as to how job is progressing at six month point

#### Department/Division Orientation

1. New employee and supervisor complete and sign-off on 21-point orientation checklist including performance expectations, department policies, accounting procedures, keys, inclement weather procedures, etc. The faculty handbook is reviewed with new faculty
2. Department orientation facilitates additional employee questions, input and clarification
3. In certain positions, special training is given on equipment use or safety issues
4. In certain positions, mentoring occurs for several weeks, up to a year
5. Supervisor and peers provide advice to new employee as needed

HCC plans for changes in personnel using the input process below.

- 2003-2008 Strategic Plan identified goals requiring additional personnel/personnel changes
- College Diversity Committee identified goal of additional personnel/personnel changes
- Recommendations of program advisory committees or business and industry may identify need for additional personnel or personnel changes
- Individual departments provide input as to staffing needs early in the budget cycle
- When an employee leaves the college, the supervisor and department staff review the job description and current department structure to determine if staffing changes are needed
- Workgroups may brainstorm problem solutions which identify needed staffing changes
- Early in the budget cycle, all staffing recommendations are prioritized
- Additional positions are approved based on the available budget and the position priority

#### **4P4 Training and Development of all Staff for Effectiveness**

Prior to 2005, training and staff development has been relatively decentralized and training needs have been primarily identified by the individual employee or their immediate supervisor. All employees have had some access to development dollars, although most of these resources have gone to full-time faculty and administrative staff.

One of the college's selected AQIP Action Projects for the 2003-2006 period is "Employee Enhancement and Development." This action project developed a four-focus model of staff development, emphasizing personal, departmental, college-wide and interdepartmental appreciation development needs. Personal or professional growth activities are mutually

interrelated and reinforced in making the college workforce more effective as individuals and as an entire mission oriented team.

In the new staff development model, the focus areas of personal and departmental development are similar to what has been the practice in the past with the employee or supervisor identifying training or development needs. The college-wide staff development focus identifies training needs that impact progress on the goals of the college's strategic plan or its annual goals. The interdepartmental appreciation development focus identifies staff development opportunities that would expand awareness among different departments and divisions to reduce "silo" thinking and promote the broader vision of all employees having important roles as members of the college team in meeting its mission.

The new staff development model will better provide for staff development for continuing and improving effectiveness using the following process.

1. Annually survey employees, departments, and college leadership on employee enhancement needs and wishes,
2. Develop a central database containing each employee's ongoing enhancement activities and annual training requests (by employee or supervisor),
3. Develop an annual master college training calendar based on database information and annual college goals and priorities,
4. Advertise and recruit for each enhancement or training opportunity,
5. Evaluate employee satisfaction with training activities,
6. Measure overall effectiveness of implemented training by surveying staff.

#### **4P7 Alignment of Recognition, Rewards, and Compensation with Category 1 and 2 Objectives and Employee Benefits and Support**

In 2006, the College Board of Trustees began to develop a compensation philosophy in order to make concrete its recognition of the role of appropriate compensation in successfully meeting the college's various missions. This philosophy will recognize that a compensation and rewards system is critical to the recruitment, retention and motivation of excellent employees of all job categories and that these excellent employees are crucial to the college's achievement of its mission.

##### Recognition, Rewards, and Compensation Components

1. A compensation committee in 2005 recommended a consultant to study college compensation practices and to make recommendations for improvements for non-union staff
2. Full-time faculty and custodial/maintenance staff are unionized, and salary and fringe benefits are negotiated periodically.
3. A wide variety of programs have been designed by the college to foster integrity and recognize, reward, and compensate employees, such as faculty and staff Service and Excellence Awards, the Burt Taverner Award, and the Opel Award, all of which are awarded annually to committee-chosen candidates, both full-time and part-time.
4. Employees are also recognized for their successful attainment of a degree and rewarded with a Degree Achievement Award.
5. Award recipients are announced and recognized at annual campus-wide gatherings, such as Opening Day Ceremonies, as well as on and off campus by a variety of communication tools employed by the community relations department, such as CougarNet—a recently designed campus-based electronic internal communication tool.
6. Employees are also recognized for their outstanding service by other means, such as by communication between faculty members and their deans or staff employees and their supervisors during evaluations.



**Supporting Employees with Benefits and Services**

The college has in place numerous services designed to support and benefit all employees, including but not limited to the following:

- Appropriate and specific job related services outlined and offered by Human Resources
- A safe and secure environment (Deputy Sheriff on campus)
- Personal growth opportunities, such as YMCA membership, wellness activities, educational and life-long learning workshops, Support Staff professional and personal development activities
- Employee input; survey, discussion, and committee opportunities
- Tuition Waiver for employees and their families and Educational Assistance and Tuition Reimbursement
- Annual Awards

**4P10 Valuing People Measures**

The following three measures are primarily used to monitor the college’s efforts to value its workforce.

- Annual Employee Survey Questions
- Employee Retention Statistics
- Employee Exit Survey

**4R1 Valuing People Results**

The data for the valuing people measures is shown in Figures 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11.

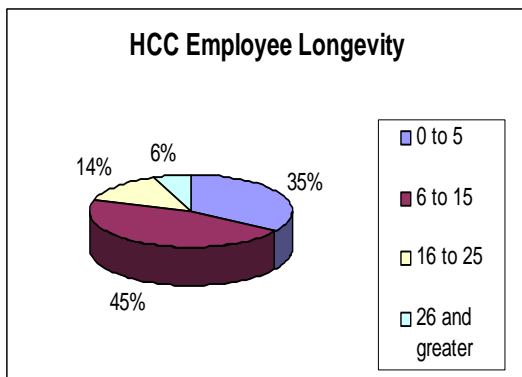


Figure 4.9

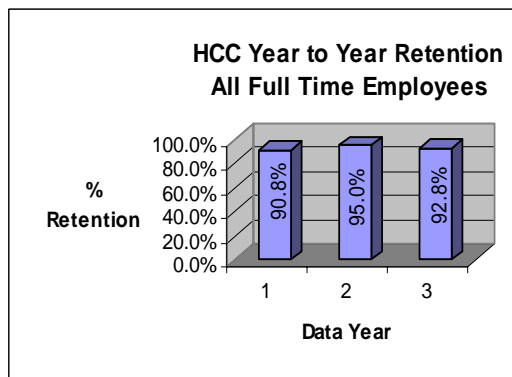


Figure 4.10

The data for retention of employees is shown in figure 4.9 and 4.10. Figure 4.9 shows retention by percentage of college staff with various years of employment. Figure 4.10 shows the year-to-year retention rates for faculty, administration and classified employees for years 2002-04. As can be seen from figure 4.9, 65 percent of the full-time employees have stayed at the college for more than six years. The actual average longevity for full-time employees is approximately 9.6 years. Figure 4.10 shows that the year-to-year retention of full-time employees has stayed above 90 percent for the three years shown. The average year-to-year retention is 92.9 percent for the three-year period 2002 through 2004. These numbers are interpreted to mean that college employees are generally well pleased with the college as an employer.

### Valuing People Results

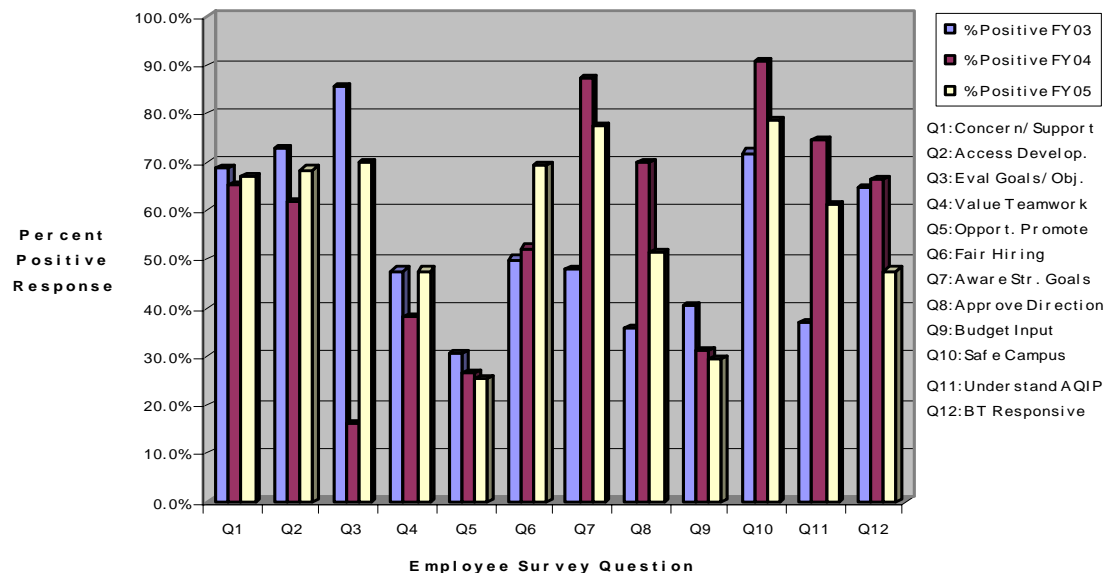


Figure 4-11

The twelve questions charted from the FY03-05 employee surveys in figure 4.11 clearly show that improvement can be made in all areas, but of greatest concern is Q5, employees feeling that there are opportunities for promotion at the college, and Q9, employees feeling they have input in the development of the budget. Although with other questions there are slight declines over previous years, Q6 indicates improvement in employees' perception of the fairness of hiring practices. The general slight decreases may all be related to a senior administration issue that was resolved in October 2005.

#### 411 Improvements Targeted Based on Current Measurement Results

Based on the reviews of the various processes identified in this Valuing People category, the college has identified a number of improvement initiatives that it will undertake. These initiatives are to

- improve the budget process so that employees have greater involvement
- promote college conversation regarding promotion opportunities
- improve college communications so as to reinforce that employees are valued
- implement the improved employee development process
- identify additional or better "Valuing People" category measures

## Category Five: Leading and Communicating

### 5C1 Leadership and Communication Systems

The Highland Community College Board of Trustees is elected at large by voters in the Community College District #519 to serve six-year terms. The trustees are representative of the district with at least one board member currently serving from each of the four counties. The trustees are committed to and have approved a servant leadership philosophy for college operations and have also adopted portions of the Carver Policy Governance Model to guide their service and interactions with the college president and staff.

The Board of Trustees delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the president. The president relies on a Leadership Team as well as the Cabinet to assist with the implementation of college-wide goals and priorities. The Leadership Team is composed of the president, the vice presidents, the Director of Community Relations, the Director of Human Resources, the president's administrative assistant, and the Highland Foundation director (ad hoc). The Cabinet is made up of the college's Leadership Team, academic and student support services deans, and representation from each employee classification and the two unions.

Highland also works within Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Board of Higher Education guidelines. These relationships allow the college to stay abreast of legislative changes and their impacts. Highland relies on ICCB expertise and guidance on a variety of issues, as well as the opportunity ICCB provides to learn from and benchmark the institution against other colleges.

The college has a number of standing committees, task forces, and ad hoc project teams that are assigned responsibility for developing long-term operational plans, submitting recommendations to the Cabinet or Leadership Team, and implementing a variety of goals and activities. The Cabinet reviews the list of committees and committee membership each year. The committee structure varies from group to group, depending upon the assigned chairs or co-chairs. For example, the enrollment management committee developed a clear purpose several years ago and has set about refining its membership and priorities to coincide with the overall direction and college strategic plan. Every academic year, priorities are established and regular meeting dates are arranged. Other committees meet infrequently on an as-needed basis, and membership may or may not be determined by the committee's purpose. College employees serve on a number of task forces and committees. To provide an example of this diversity, a recent informal survey of the faculty revealed that faculty are represented on seventy-one unduplicated committees, task forces, or project teams, supporting the college's philosophy of involving as many employees as possible in college operations and decisions. Current standing committees and task forces with their purposes are listed below:

#### Standing Committees

*Accreditation:* Guides the college's accreditation efforts as it seeks its continuing accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

*Affirmative Action:* Assures compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

*Cabinet:* Provides a forum representative of all employee groups and organizational units for providing information sharing, discussion, results of periodic research, and input into decision-making related to administrative and management issues that cut across the institution.

*Curriculum and Instruction:* Identifies and reviews curriculum and instructional issues.

*Diversity:* Provides educational opportunities and programs that explain the value and need for a diverse workforce.

*Enrollment Management:* Develops and implements enrollment management and marketing strategies that maximize enrollment and credit hours, both short-term and long-term, of targeted and general audiences in targeted and general programs with the involvement of faculty and staff.

*Leadership Team:* Serves in an advisory role to the president on college administrative and management issues.

*Outcomes Assessment:* Improves student learning by collecting meaningful data on learning and making that information available to improve teaching methods and curriculum.

*Policy Review:* Evaluates the need for changes in the Policy Manual and recommends action.

*Safety:* Oversees campus safety programs.

*Support Staff:* Provides a forum for input related to improving methods and techniques in delivering exceptional support.

*Technology:* Identifies current and future campus technology concerns to remain current with the legal issues involved with the college's technology structure. Coordinates various technology initiatives in order to identify and encourage collaboration where appropriate and to avoid unnecessary duplication.

*Wellness:* Encourages and assists the employees and families of the college to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle as they define it.

#### Task Forces

*Global:* Encourages all aspects of international education.

*Health Insurance:* Studies, evaluates and recommends health insurance strategies to provide competitive health insurance benefits to employees.

*Placement Test:* Monitors and reviews the placement test policies and procedures and implements change as needed.

*Recycling:* Monitors and recommends methods to reduce the campus waste stream.

*Sick Leave Bank:* Oversees the operation of the Sick Leave Bank.

*Student Judicial Review Board:* Participates in the process or procedures related to discipline that ensure due process for students.

HCC utilizes a number of communication tools to provide up-to-date information to the students, internal constituents, and community. The methods have changed over time as the college has adapted to new leadership styles, and some tools have evolved over time. For example, the college implemented a new Internet based website, CougarNet, to provide faculty and staff with an electronic newsletter and information source that allows all faculty and staff to contribute calendar items, news, and events. The college also relies heavily on e-mail as a broad internal communication tool for both students and staff. Students also have access to daily updated announcements when they login to any computer on campus. The community relations office oversees external communications and provides regular news and information updates to the district's news media. In addition, the community relations office and a number of contributing departments maintain the college website with up-to-date news and information.

Two regular all-staff and faculty meetings are held annually at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. The two-day events include updates on important college initiatives such as AQIP, an avenue for gathering feedback from the entire campus such as identifying core values, and an in-service opportunity for education and training. The recently appointed president also re-implemented regular communication meetings, which had been a part of the college culture in previous years. Although attendance at these optional meetings has not included a majority of employees, attendance seems to be growing, and some employees feel this is an important opportunity for face-to-face communication.

## **5C2 Leadership System Alignment**

Highland ensures that its leadership systems are aligned with the views of the board, senior leaders, and oversight entities because all of these practices are comprehensive. None of these practices are autonomous; they are all interrelated. For example, the college-wide goals are developed based on the information that was gathered by the Strategic Planning Committee.

In addition to college-wide goals, the Board of Trustees has adopted several aspects of Carver's Policy Governance Model, including the development of ends statements. Highland currently has ends statements addressing four major areas: occupational preparation, workforce development, transfer, and recruitment and retention. Reports are shared with the board on an annual basis. Key indicators are reviewed and, where available, compared against state and national indicators.

The Board of Trustees also reviews the mission and vision statements on a regular basis and determines whether or not the statements continue to align with the institution's philosophy, and changes are made as necessary.

In order to keep abreast of what is happening not only at the college but also within Highland's four-county district, the Board of Trustees receives regular updates at its monthly meetings. Two routine items on the monthly board meeting agenda are a "Status of the College Report" and a "Community Report." The Status of the College Report is an opportunity for college personnel to provide the trustees with a presentation on a specific division or department, while the Community Report presentation is an opportunity for the board to hear from a business, industry, or non-profit organization which has a relationship with the college. Items discussed during the Community Report presentation include how the college has been involved with the organization and for how long and opportunities for future collaboration.

As a public institution, Highland is responsible to external entities, including funding sources, taxpayers, and constituents, as well as businesses and industries. To gather input from external representatives, the college has instituted several advisory boards, including agriculture, business/accounting, early childhood education, cosmetology, information systems, manufacturing, auto tech, auto body and computer tech. The advisory boards are comprised of business and industry leaders with a background in the specific program that the advisory board oversees.

Another method of gaining input from the community is through community forums. Community forums have been held in the past to gather input on the financial future and strategic direction of the college, as well as during the process to select the college president.

Highland Community College is recognized by many organizations. The college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation; is a member of the North Central Association; and is recognized by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

The college also receives oversight from many other organizations. The organizations that provide regulation and oversight include the Occupational, Safety, and Health Administration (OSHA), the Illinois Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (I-OADN), the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (N-OADN), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF).

### **5C3 Ethics, Equity, Social Responsibilities, Community Service and Involvement**

Highland Community College has a long history of valuing and promoting ethics, equity, social responsibility, and community service involvement. These institutional values were reaffirmed at several all-college work sessions in fiscal year 2005. The entire college community was charged with the task of identifying core values that the college community would seek to adhere to as it works to achieve its missions. The three selected core values are integrity, respect and compassion. Inherent in the commitment to integrity is the expectation that college staff will interact with others in an honest and fair manner. Thus the college and its staff uphold academic freedom, promote academic honesty, follow due process in complaint situations, and adhere to laws, policies and contracts. The commitment to respect is demonstrated by the expectation that college staff will value and seek to understand, with common courtesy, other people and other points of view, without necessarily accepting all of their beliefs or actions. Thus the college and its staff offer and expect equity concerning different races, creeds, genders, marital status, economic status, social status, etc. Also embodied in the value of respect is opposition to harassment and threat. Compassion is valued because of the expectation that college staff have and exhibit sensitivity and empathy to others as they face life's many challenges.

As noted in the Overview and elsewhere in the portfolio, HCC has had a long-standing commitment to the principles of servant leadership. This collaborative kind of leadership, exemplified by Highland's Leadership Programs, has become the accepted view of the college community.

In carrying through these institutional values, the college administration has always encouraged staff participation in community service organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and others. College staff are members of many of these types of organizations across the district. In addition, college faculty and staff regularly share their expertise with district organizations of all types. The college's commitment to its RSVP program also results in many thousands of hours of volunteer service throughout the college district.

Highland Community College's ethical and equitable expectations are formally described in several policies and documents. These materials, which address the college's policies regarding employees' ethical standards and characteristics, sexual harassment, and guidelines, are accessible to employees. To ensure that all employees have a sense of shared desired behaviors and attitudes, these topics are discussed at various college-wide meetings. These expectations are also reinforced, as they are included in specific documents and in select meetings, as listed below.

- Policy and Personnel Manuals
- Faculty Contracts
- Core Values Statement
- Servant Leadership re-adoption & training at opening days
- Mission, Vision statements
- Student Code of Conduct – catalog
- Employee Characteristics – “Employment at Highland”
- Carver Model for Policy Governance
- Presidential Search brochure
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty In-service
- Strategic Planning
- Baumgartner Issues Forum
- Core Values

### **5P3 Decision Making**

At Highland, decisions are made both formally and informally using a variety of methods. Most recommendations are made after a collaboration of committees, teams, and/or task forces. The Leadership Team or Board of Trustees then approves the decisions. For example, when hiring a full-time administrator or faculty member, a committee is formed to select interview candidates and to recommend a candidate for the position (See 4P2). Ultimately, the board must give its approval in order for the hire to be complete.

On the other hand, decisions can also be made informally on campus with ad hoc committees or grass roots efforts, when some individuals see a need and then take the initiative to meet it. When these efforts impact budget or staffing, they require a more formal approval process. As examples of informal decisions evolving into formal initiatives, several staff felt the need to involve students in recruitment. After this need was identified, the Student Ambassadors were created. Students are now recruited and trained to assist in recruitment activities as a regular component of the recruitment plan. In an effort to assess student achievement, several assessment committee members created a Capstone Course. They developed the course, taught, and evaluated its content.

### **5P5 Using Information and Results**

Downward communication: Face-to-face, downward communication from the executive level happens twice a year at opening days, monthly communications meetings, and periodic campus-wide meetings to update everyone on appropriate news and events and discuss various issues at the college. Discussions may include annual college-wide goals and projected budgets. The current board chair addresses the campus employees on a quarterly basis. Downward communication, in general, often happens in print or electronically. For example, Human Resources sends employee news and job postings in e-mail, Community Relations has set up an internal website (CougarNet) for departments to post announcements, and the president and board chair occasionally send campus-wide e-mails about timely information, issues, and concerns.

Upward communication: Again CougarNet serves as a place for upward communication as it is a central location for college news and updates to be posted. Upward communication may also happen in meetings where there is two-way communication (see below). In recent years, the college has also installed suggestion boxes throughout the campus and has implemented an employee survey; both serve as upward communication tools. In addition, upward communication can occur through informal, personal communication among college personnel. This type of conversation is not formally regulated, and because of the size of the college, the amount of informal communication may be equal to the formal communication. Finally, upward communication from students has happened at the semi-annual "Pizza with the President" event where students are invited to ask questions and discuss issues. The Student Trustee, elected to the Board of Trustees by the student body, also serves as a liaison between the student body and the college administrators and trustees.

If an issue deserves discretion, and college employees and/or students are uncomfortable communicating in a public forum, Highland's Employee Handbook and the college catalog explain the processes of filing grievances and/or concerns confidentially. This process usually begins with contacting immediate supervisors/faculty and then continues to upper administration levels if necessary.

Two-way communication: Two-way communication on campus occurs at board retreats, administrative retreats, Leadership Team meetings, Cabinet meetings, division meetings,

departmental meetings, committee meetings, and individual meetings. For example, the president formally meets with the faculty union president regularly as well as informally whenever issues arise. The Board of Trustees has held a series of small group discussions with the college president and vice presidents. CougarNet also has a discussion board feature which permits open communication. An example of two-way communication is when an issue with administration arose and was apparent in the employee surveys, the Board of Trustees initiated focus group discussions with faculty, staff, and administration in an effort to resolve the matter.

### **5P7 Encouraging, Developing, and Strengthening Leadership**

Highland Community College has adopted a servant leadership philosophy based on the writing of Robert Greenleaf. The HCC Board of Trustees is dedicated to this philosophy and has pledged to foster this spirit within the organization. The philosophical tenets of servant leadership are distributed to faculty and staff upon hiring and are reinforced at staff development workshops. Highland is also home to a Leadership Institute, which develops and sustains a network of college and community leaders. Highland College personnel regularly participate in the Leadership Institute. Highland is actively investigating ways to encourage and strengthen staff leadership skills. One of Highland's AQIP Action Committee projects is Employee Enhancement and Training. This action committee is identifying areas that will be beneficial to staff, including general knowledge and technical skills. Focus groups were held with faculty and staff to discuss training opportunities, and the Human Resources Department examined exit interview summaries and information from the annual feedback process to identify recurrent themes. As a result, a supervisory training track has been identified as part of the Employee Enhancement and Training project.

All deans, directors, vice presidents and the college president participated in an intensive two-day leadership training retreat in 2005. Administrative retreats also provide a venue to communicate leadership best practices, knowledge, and skills.

### **5P9 Measuring Leadership and Communication**

The annual HCC Employee Survey provides the college and the Board of Trustees with information such as employee satisfaction, morale, climate, and improvement suggestions. The information is collected and distributed to all employees of the college. The Leadership Team analyzes the results in order to make recommendations and improvements. Other means of collecting information about leading and communicating include supervisor surveys, feedback sessions, alumni surveys, graduate surveys, occupational surveys, student life surveys, and exit interviews. Highland also uses advisory boards and strategic planning to analyze information and implement changes. A survey was conducted in 2005 to examine student life and communication issues. This survey was analyzed by Cabinet members. Annual feedback session summaries and exit interview data are collected and analyzed by Human Resources to look for recurrent points. Administrative feedback forms are completed by staff and submitted to their manager's superior. The senior managers analyze, summarize, and share improvement suggestions with supervisors. The feedback form includes a section of communication and interpersonal relations questions. Administrative feedback or job performance rating questionnaires are recommended but not required.

### **5R1 Results for Leading and Communicating**

All Highland employees are invited to complete an employee survey each fall. In an attempt to gather more accurate information, the survey questions changed from a yes/no model to a Likert-scale model in the fall 2004. Because the survey changed formats, it is difficult to accurately compare the results. Now that the Likert-scale model has been implemented, the college will analyze the statistical data in the future. See 4R1, Figure 4.11.



The Leadership Team reviews annual results of the employee survey in an effort to gauge employee satisfaction with leadership decisions, systems and communication. In addition to analyzing the results, methods to improve employee satisfaction in given areas are discussed and implemented. Some of the improvements that have been adopted include the development of a decision-making model, an administrative retreat to promote leadership training and team building, and college-wide involvement in establishing the institution's core values.

Following the fall 2004 survey, the Board of Trustees expressed concern regarding the level of morale among college employees. They conducted a series of focus groups during the spring semester with representation from all employee groups. Following the focus groups, the trustees worked with the president to implement several improvements in the communication and decision-making processes. In the fall of 2005, the president and Board of Trustees reached a separation agreement. The college remains fully committed to the principles of AQIP and continues to work at further developing an AQIP culture in the organization. Although this leadership change occurred recently, the new president has implemented a number of communication strategies, the results of which will be measured in the 2006 Employee Survey.

In addition to the employee survey, employees were asked to rate the college on the extent to which it embodies the AQIP principles. Improvement was noted in all of the categories from the 2005 and 2006 surveys, including in response to "the college has leaders and leadership systems that support a quality culture." See survey results in 8R1, Figure 8.1.

### **5I2 Improvement of Current Processes and Systems**

The Board of Trustees or the president generally sets targets for improvements in leading and communicating, and the president, Cabinet and Leadership Team may identify specific improvement priorities, which are communicated to faculty, staff and administrators at a beginning of the semester meeting. However, Highland has no systematic procedure for regularly and consistently evaluating leadership and communication at different levels of the college or for setting, addressing, or communicating improvement targets and priorities.

Specific improvement priorities in this category relate to how Highland uses the data collected and analyzed about leading and communicating activities. Before specific targets for leading and communicating can be set, a routinely repeatable process for collecting and analyzing data needs to be implemented. The items to address include reviewing the annual employee survey for question adequacy in the areas of leading and communicating; call out specific survey questions about leading and communicating for analysis; identify clear, specific strategies from the data; and clearly and regularly communicate, to all employees, the improvement goals, strategies, measures and progress. In other words, the college will focus on how to use information from the survey to evaluate leadership and communication at all levels of the organization and to set clearly identified and visible behavioral remedies which are shared with employees.

Even though Highland collects and analyzes information about its leading and communicating practices regularly, the college has identified the need to improve the communication of this analysis. After analyzing the results of the employee survey, the Leadership Team designs strategies for improvements; however, these changes and improvements are not readily transparent to college employees. That is, they are implemented without in-depth explanation to the entire campus. For example, the budget building process was changed based on feedback from employees, but it was not clear to the employees that this change was tied to the results of the employee survey. The college leadership needs to communicate how strategies for change

are directly tied to employee feedback. When these goals are communicated throughout the organization, the employees have an opportunity to contribute to the design and success of the change.

Because Highland is a relatively small institution, traditionally, a great deal of information has been disseminated from the president's office. This has become an unrealistic expectation of both the president's office and the college employees. Formalizing the accountability of communication to supervisors could improve communication efforts. Communication should be evaluated in the administrative feedback surveys.

As previously mentioned, Highland has a well-established Leadership Institute, which develops and sustains a network of college and community leaders. The college is investigating ways to initiate an internal leadership program to develop leaders and leadership skills.

## **Category Six: Supporting Institutional Operations**

### **6C1 Key Student and Administrative Support Service Processes and Needs**

All processes in place at Highland Community College exist for the purpose of assisting students in meeting their educational goals. Administrative processes support these goals as well. All processes ultimately are designed to provide the appropriate environment, resources, procedures, and assistance to help students and staff succeed. Processes can be divided into three major categories:

#### Student Services

- Admissions and Records
- Financial Aid
- Accounts Payable and Receivable
- Bookstore
- Career Services
- YMCA
- Learning Assistance Center
- Information Technology Services
- Academic Advising
- Graduation Services
- Alumni Resources
- Food Service
- ADA Support and Compliance
- Student Clubs and Activities

#### Learning Resources

- Library
- Audiovisual Services
- Academic Computing Support
- Adult Education
- Learning Assistance Center

#### Administrative Services

- Instructional Technology Services
- Community Relations
- Institutional Research
- Physical Plant
- Security Services
- EEO Support
- Human Resources
- Copy Services
- Purchasing
- Accounting

In addition, the college provides administrative, fee-based support for the University of Illinois Extension Service, Columbia College, the Highland Foundation office, the Children's' Center and the YMCA. There is an interagency agreement with the Freeport School District and the YMCA to share maintenance of the loop road that runs around the college campus. Payroll services and personal counseling are outsourced to other agencies.

### **6C2 Key Student and Administrative Support for Category 1 & 2 Processes**

Student Services and Learning Resources have the most direct impact on the processes involved in Helping Students Learn. For example, the Learning Assistance Center assesses

students to assure their correct placement in classes and provides tutoring, the library and academic computing support assure that students have the bibliographic and software support to be successful, and academic advising provides students with assistance in choosing and enrolling in appropriate classes. These areas also assist students with financial concerns, with supplies and books they need for classes, with on-campus jobs, with tutoring, and with many other services.

Administrative Services support the learning environment by providing a stable, clean, and safe infrastructure for the college. For example, Accounts Receivable and other financial support services provide a steady stream of revenue from tuition and tax sources. The Human Resources Department assures that new employees are qualified, and the EEO Office attempts to assure an equitable and diverse workforce. The Office of Institutional Research collects and analyzes data that feeds into the decision-making process across campus.

The college has several distinct objectives that are supported by administrative support services, including the Leadership Programs, the Columbia College affiliation, and the YMCA partnership. Funding, registration, security, and physical plant provide seamless support for these distinct objectives.

### **6P1 Identifying Support Service Needs of Students**

Each area identified in the context review (6C1) has different processes in place for identifying support needs of students. They range from the formal, as in the case of the Marketing Department's written and telephonic surveys and the Academic Computing Support Team's written requests for information, to the less formal, such as the library's individual discussions with students to determine their needs.

Direct contact with students provides insight into their needs. Placement testing is an important component in determining the needs of students who enter the college from whatever source. All full-time students must take placement tests. These tests are reviewed by Learning Assistance staff, faculty, and advisors to determine what level of developmental courses a student might need to be successful. Advisors meet with students both on campus and at district high schools to register and schedule classes. Time permitting, intrusive advising occurs in an attempt to best determine the individual needs of the student. Financial aid counselors meet with students to determine their financial requirements. The college has a vigorous ADA compliance office that works with the EEO officer to support the special needs of students with learning and physical disabilities. Periodic training programs assure that faculty are aware of, and can help implement, the services required by ADA and to assure a non-hostile learning environment.

Additional efforts are made to determine student support service needs. A task force has been convened, and is working on, a common intake process that would systematically provide assessment of student needs, goals, and desires, and how to address those issues. The Highland Foundation and Community Relations Department survey alumni on a regular basis. This data is presented to the Cabinet for review and analysis. The Enrollment Management Team conducted a life issues survey of students to collect data on what students believe is good about Highland and what improvements can be made.

### **6P2 Identifying Key Stakeholder Support Service Needs**

The identification of the administrative support service needs of the college staff occurs primarily through the reporting structure in the organizational chart. Individuals identify perceived needs to their supervisor who facilitates solutions to the problems in a timely fashion or, if a more

complex issue, brings it to the Cabinet and Leadership Team for budgetary and college-wide support. In addition, each context area reports needs through a hierarchy that leads to the Cabinet.

The Leadership Team consists of the president, the vice presidents, the president's administrative assistant, the Director of Community Relations, the Director of Human Resources, and the Executive Director of the Highland Foundation (ad hoc). The Cabinet is a representative group whose membership varies but generally consists of the president, vice presidents, deans, directors, union representation, and classified staff representation. The Leadership Team surveys employees on an annual basis to determine general employee satisfaction.

Physical plant personnel, for example, analyze requests for temperature adjustment in the buildings and relate changes needed to the master plan and an established wish list. Recommendations are then brought to the Leadership Team and/or Cabinet. Depending on whether funding is available, the changes are proposed and then acted upon with the support of the Leadership Team.

Sometimes recommendations can come from ad hoc committees. One such team looked at how space is utilized on campus. During the course of their review, in addition to space recommendations, they determined that Highland is currently not organized for optimal efficiency and that there was a need to reexamine current structure, processes and planning. This group made several recommendations that have been included under the Improvement section of this category.

Annual employee evaluations are structured to discuss barriers as well as support for optimum performance. Individual supervisors use this information differently; there is no systematic approach to collecting this information, but many supervisors use the information collected at evaluation time to make adjustments in work flow and responsibilities to encourage productive performance.

### **6P3 Day-to-Day Management**

Individual supervisors work independently within the context of the servant leadership philosophy adopted by the college in 1998. The servant leadership philosophy values inclusiveness and working as teams with the overarching philosophy that those served will grow as persons and become "healthier, wiser, freer and more autonomous" (Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader*, 1991).

All institutional policies are guided by the mission, core values, and policies defined by the Board of Trustees, state and federal mandates and the strategic plan. These policies are interpreted, and procedures developed, through the Cabinet and Leadership Team.

Generally, issues flow upward through supervisors to the Cabinet or Leadership Team, where resources are allocated if available. Data is collected and used in the decision-making process, but the perception of how it is used varies. (See 6I1) Individual departments are charged with the responsibility for documenting processes.

### **6P4 Using Information and Results to Improve Support Services**

There are numerous data collection mechanisms in place, but analysis revealed they are lacking in a systems approach. Despite being collected by many administrative entities, there is no systematic approach to data collection and analysis. Recently, an institutional researcher

was hired to work on this issue. What information *is* collected is used to improve or change services, but results are rarely referred to other entities/groups or administrative support services on campus. (Section 6I1 recommends the development of a communication plan to address this issue.)

### **6P5 Measures of Student and Administrative Support Service Processes**

Some of the data collected by individual departments include the following:

Measures of Student Support Service Processes:

- Alumni Survey
- Placement tests
- Academic assessments
- Learning Assistance Center needs assessments
- Library users surveys
- Library circulation studies
- Students at risk reports

Measures of Academic and Administrative Support Services:

- Faculty evaluations
- Faculty student evaluations
- Tenure reviews
- Program reviews
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Software needs assessments
- AQIP systems portfolio
- AQIP action projects
- State required reports
- Employee exit interviews

### **6R1 Results For Student Support Service Processes**

Student Support service processes are measured by many different departments.

- One example of how processes are measured is the extensive use of data by the Learning Assistance Center, which measures many aspects of student performance and uses the data to tailor instruction and determine correlations of student success. For example:
  - In the Spring of 2003, 98 percent of students taking the COMPASS course placement test placed into developmental reading classes. Students completing the developmental classes scored, on average, significantly higher on the post-test (16 percent) but still below the cutoff for exit out of developmental reading (average post-test score of 78.)
  - The same tests conducted in the spring of 2004 revealed pretest scores *below* those of the spring 2003, but *higher* post-test scores, a 29 percent increase with an average score of 81 with 44 percent of those taking the post-test not requiring any further developmental reading. A faculty statistician reviewed the data and has determined that the increase in scores is statistically significant.
- Individual faculty members are engaged in reviewing student placement in their classes to see whether there exists a relationship between placement scores and student success in their classes. This helps determine whether prerequisites might be needed to ensure student success. This has been particularly true in the area of accounting, where the instructor has collected data over the years in order to adjust placement of students.

## **6R2 Results For Administrative Support Service Processes**

Analysis of employee and student satisfaction with administrative support has been conducted in several ways and over a period of time in order to develop benchmarks and improve services. For example:

- Employee satisfaction surveys are conducted annually and distributed to employees.
  - Over the last two years, the number of responses from employees increased by 51 percent.
  - 32 percent of the staff have worked at Highland for more than 10 years.
  - 45 percent felt their performance evaluation was not based on measurable goals.
  - 48 percent did not feel they were sufficiently recognized for their good work, but 60 percent said they always knew what was expected of them.
  - In FY 2005, 87 percent were aware of the college's strategic goals, and 69 percent were satisfied with the strategic direction of the college in FY 2004. Of concern, however, is that in FY 2005, those satisfied with the strategic direction of the college fell to 30 percent.
- Data collected by the Information Technology department show that while most employees understand the concept of measuring effectiveness, it is not something they do, and most decisions made are not data driven.
- Generally, employees are satisfied with the direction of the college and the support received to perform their duties, although the survey did show a dip in those indicators for FY 2005. The Leadership Team looked at the results and made some changes in areas that needed work. The budget process (only 9 percent felt they had direct involvement in building a budget) was revised based on results from the survey.

## **6I1 Improvement Of Current Processes And Systems**

During the process of studying support services at HCC, it was discovered that many processes are informal in the majority of departments. Sometimes, where needs have been identified, cost has been a factor in preventing the need from being met. That being said, HCC has no formal process in place to prioritize needs nor are needs necessarily linked to the strategic plan. Therefore, to improve current practices, HCC needs to

- Develop formal processes in all support service departments to measure needs.
- Develop a process to prioritize identified needs.
- Create a strategic process that formally links prioritized needs to the strategic plan and budgetary process.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan to convey the results and background of decisions that have been made.
- Implement the recommendations of the Spacewalk Team:
  - Form a Quality Improvement Team to review archiving college materials and develop a process to determine what to keep, for how long, and how to store what is kept.
  - Review the process for room scheduling. Gaps and overlaps were discovered preventing maximal use of classrooms and teaching time.

## Category Seven: Measuring Effectiveness

### 7C1 Collecting and Storing Information and Data

Information and data are collected at many levels and in many forms as determined by the needs of the stakeholders. Stakeholders consist of but are not limited to students, faculty, staff, state and federal entities, the community, other educational institutions, financial supporters of our institution, and HCC Board of Trustees.

The present HCC information system is comprised of a multi-faceted network of systems. The largest of these consists of the SunGard Banner (formerly known as SCT) administrative data system that encompasses student, finance and financial aid modules. Other campus systems include various department-specific, independent data systems that are proprietary to the work and data needs of the area. These varied systems are in response to changing information needs and reporting requirements. The information systems are designed not only to meet the needs of the specific users who must access data in carrying out daily tasks, but to make data as accessible as possible to general users and satisfy a varying array of departmental, institutional and classroom needs. To accomplish this, an infrastructure exists that employs web-based products and services for off-campus access. The system currently in place is monitored, maintained, and updated by a relatively small administrative Information Technology Services (ITS) staff.

**Table 7.1 Data Collection and Management:** The table below shows the relationship between usage and equivalent transactional systems to supply the user with data.

System	Transactions
Faculty	The SunGard Banner system allows faculty grading, reporting, and academic data inquiry. In the spring of 2006, the college transitioned to a fully online grade reporting system. In addition, some faculty use Blackboard, a course management software, for grading and distribution of course-related information
Finance	Financial data is recorded and tracked using SunGard Banner administrative software. Procedures are in place in SunGard Banner to assure that confidential data is not available to those not authorized to see or use it. Purchasing is also done using SunGard Banner. All expense reports and accounts are managed through the SunGard Banner administrative software.
Data Mining/Research	A sophisticated reporting tool, WebFOCUS, is available to permit easy access to information from the SunGard Operational Data Store that is refreshed nightly. Selected individuals have been trained to run and develop reports using WebFOCUS. The college is in the process of converting and providing on-line access for all menu reports that exist in legacy menu reporting systems. This puts the information in the hands of the users based upon their needs and time frame. It provides critical data to a core of users who will be able to use data in the decision-making process.
Communications	The ITS department manages the internal email and calendaring system that is accessible via the web. In addition, web-based access to individual workspace is provided for network users when away from campus PCs.



Student	The SunGard Banner system allows students the flexibility of performing many registration and demographic updates via the SunGard Banner Student Self-Service module. The Admission and Records staff perform all other student related updates directly to the SunGard Banner administrative software.
Financial Aid	The Financial Aid staff performs all financial aid related updates directly to the SunGard Banner administrative software.
Facility Management	Classroom and facility use is coordinated through a separate application that monitors use and availability.
Library	All library transactions are initiated and tracked through a union catalog and online circulation system through the Prairie Area Library System. A recent merger will enhance the system and provide online access to the collections of more than 130 libraries in northern Illinois. Banner is used for budgetary, financial, and student data needs.
Human Resources	Payroll and Human Resources data is maintained in a stand-alone system provided by ADP, a commercial payroll service.
Physical Plant	The Physical Plant utilizes SunGard Banner for financial and budgetary data.
Foundation	The Highland Foundation office tracks donors using a program called The Raiser's Edge in coordination with Crescendo, a "planned giving" software program. These do not interface with SunGard Banner.
Alumni	A spreadsheet is used to logs calls. Information is not linked to the Banner system nor the Highland Foundation office software.
Adult Education	The same basic data (demographics, goals, test scores, student schedules) is entered into three different database programs: STAIRS, a program required by the state; IDMS, a program developed in-house for tracking students; and Banner, required by HCC.
Fine Arts Department	The Fine Arts Department uses Microsoft Access to track patrons and for a mailing list database program. A program called Tick-It is used to print and control ticket sales.
Learning Assistance Center	Placement tests use COMPASS software loaded on two administrative machines and several in the testing room. The plan (finances permitting) is to use an Internet version of COMPASS to eliminate the necessity of loading it on district high school machines that often do not have the appropriate technology to run the software successfully. Reflections, stand-alone software for institutional reports, is used to compile student data and track student success.
Occupational Programs	These programs use information collected from SunGard Banner and state databases to compare and analyze program effectiveness.
Project Succeed	Project Succeed (a federal TRIO program) uses a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to track and maintain data collected about their students. This data is separate from the SunGard Banner system and not integrated in any way.
Upward Bound	Upward Bound uses a program required by TRIO (the federal Upward Bound oversight agency) to record and store data collected about their students. This does not interface with Banner, and except for financial functions, Banner is not used at all.

## 7C2 Key Institutional Measures for Tracking Effectiveness

Each area of the college has unique data needs. These are broadly summarized in the following table.

Figure 7.2 Institutional Data Needs

Function	Data Need and Use
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial data for trends and financial stability</li> <li>• Enrollment for trends and budgeting</li> <li>• Performance data</li> <li>• Instructional programs</li> </ul>
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student evaluations</li> <li>• Grades and student performance</li> </ul>
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library usage</li> <li>• Student/Faculty needs</li> <li>• Circulation studies</li> <li>• Electronic database usage</li> <li>• IPEDS (Federal statistical reporting)</li> </ul>
Academic Computing Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online enrollment for planning</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>
Board of Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary data for trends and planning</li> </ul>
Foundation Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni Survey for analysis and marketing</li> </ul>
Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni Survey</li> <li>• Business climate survey</li> <li>• Career and Tech Ed Follow-up Survey</li> </ul>
Learning Assistance Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement testing</li> <li>• Student performance data to help determine student placement needs</li> </ul>
Occupational Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement testing</li> <li>• Student performance data</li> <li>• Employment data</li> </ul>
Business Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce surveys to determine community needs</li> </ul>
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPEDS (Federal statistical data)</li> <li>• FISAP (Federal statistical data)</li> </ul>

## 7P1 Selection, Management, and Use of Information and Data

Highland Community College depends on a constant flow of accurate and timely information in order to support student learning and to meet its overall institutional objectives and improve its performance.

Data is collected through a variety of systems (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). If appropriate, the results are brought to the Leadership Team and the Cabinet for general college discussions and action. More typically, individual departments act upon and make decisions using data collected by individual departments. Departments use a team approach to identify measures and data related to strategic actions.

Computers, servers and supporting equipment are purchased through a centralized process that ensures compatibility and security. College employees and students are given GroupWise email accounts and off-campus access to personal data through NetStorage, a web-based data retrieval program. WebFOCUS, a reporting tool accessing a data warehouse, can be used by selected personnel who have been trained on use of the reporting tool and data architecture.

Periodic program reviews have used data retrieved from both SunGard Banner and external sources to make determinations as to the viability of programs. These reviews are performed quintennially, with a portion being completed every year. As a result of several initiatives, the college is making an effort to inculcate data-driven decision-making in all areas of administration.

The evolving nature of the information system design at HCC challenges users to remain informed about the data resources that are available to them and the ways in which the data can be accessed.

### **7P7 Measuring Processes Used to Measure Effectiveness**

In 7C2, several dozen measures were identified that the college uses to track its effectiveness. The college evaluates the effectiveness of these measures and the overall system of measuring effectiveness by how it is viewed in achieving its missions by its students, by its employees, and by its key external regulating agencies. In particular, the college pays close attention to reviews and input from five sources, the Higher Learning Commission (accreditation), the Illinois Community College Board (recognition status), college auditors (fiscal practices), college employees, and students. If these reviews and input match the results of our internal measurements, then the college believes its effectiveness measures, listed in 7C2, are effective.

- Accreditation Reports
- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Visits and Reports
- Audits of Funds and Grants
- Employee Surveys
- Alumni Surveys

### **7R1 Results of Measuring Effectiveness**

The following information identifies the results of the above five measures.

Highland Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association. This accreditation documents that the college provides sufficient evidence that it meets the criteria for accreditation. Highland Community College had its last comprehensive evaluation in 1995-96. The college was given an unconditional ten-year accreditation with only three issues of concern identified. These issues concerned improved marketing, expanding revenue options, and improved research and planning. In 2003, the college was accepted into the AQIP program and has to date satisfied the requirements for continued accreditation.

The ICCB sets standards for Illinois community colleges. During each five-year recognition cycle, the college's compliance with as many as a dozen or more of these standards are reviewed. The ICCB 2006-2010 Recognition Manual with standards to be reviewed during that time period may be viewed at <http://www.iccb.org/HTML/publications/manuals.html>. The college measures its effectiveness in meeting these standards via periodic "Recognition" reports to, and visits by, the ICCB. Recognition feedback from the ICCB indicates that the college is on sound footing and that the college typically meets or exceeds standards, noting only a few minor recommendations for change. In the most recent recognition, in 2003, the ICCB confirmed that HCC continues to be in compliance with ICCB recognition standards. The report noted that while data has been submitted late in several instances, timeliness of data reporting has improved (this has become a major college goal). And, as a result of the ICCB's recommendation to clarify the program review process and to utilize labor market information in

support of those program reviews, the college integrated those recommendations into its program review process. There were no deficiencies found with regard to finance or facilities.

Highland has historically received unqualified auditor's opinions on the annual independent auditor's reports that cover its various funds, assets and grant compliance. These unqualified opinions attest to the college's long track record of properly and appropriately managing its fiscal responsibility. State-required reports on which the college has received unqualified opinions are the Report on Compliance with State Requirements for ICCB grants and the Report on the Schedule of Enrollment Data. The college, as fiscal agent for Partners for Employment, also undergoes an annual State Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) review. In FY05, no findings were reported. In FY06, the college immediately responded to and implemented necessary procedures to address the very few findings resulting from the review by DCEO. Federally-required reports on which Highland has consistently received unqualified independent auditor's opinions are the Report on the Schedule of Federal Awards, the Report on Compliance and Internal Control Over Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards, and the Report on Compliance With Requirements Applicable to Each Major Program and Internal Control Over Compliance in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133. However, for the years FY04-05, this report identified two isolated financial aid errors involving the lack of signed tax returns. These errors were corrected and the importance of accurate processing emphasized.

The results of the annual employee satisfaction survey are given in 4R1, Figure 4.11. The data cover a three year period during which significant dissension existed among various employee groups due to perspectives concerning senior administration. It is believed that the employee satisfaction data accurately indicates employee concerns about such issues as valuing teamwork, awareness of strategic goals, and responsiveness of the college's Board of Trustees. Many employees were not satisfied with the college environment and so indicated. The college does believe that the high degree of employee longevity and low employee turnover at the college, as shown in the 4R1 figures 4-9 and 4-10, indicate a great degree of overall employee satisfaction with the operation of the college.

The results of the FY04 Alumni Satisfaction Survey are listed in 3R1/3R3, Figure 3.7. Many of the survey items are at a high level of satisfaction, greater than 85 percent, and some are at a relatively low satisfaction level, less than 70 percent. Many of the lowest response areas involve the general area of student intake into the college, and the college acknowledges this issue and is in the process of developing an AQIP action project to address this issue. However, there is a high degree of student satisfaction with the central college function of instruction, course offerings, facilities and library services. The college believes that this high degree of satisfaction with the college's core mission supports the notion that its effectiveness measurement system is indeed effective.

The college believes that the five measures described above do indicate that the college continues to operate in a fashion so as to achieve its missions and that its various measures of effectiveness, in 7C2, guide it toward improvement by accurately reflecting its strengths and areas of needed improvement.

#### **711 Recommendations for Improvement of Measures of Current Effectiveness.**

A recent survey of college employees revealed a need for the college to improve its internal measures of effectiveness. This survey identified that the college lacks a system for training staff in the use of data and how to access data that is currently available. Sufficient data is available; the college must improve its use and staff access. The college is fortunate to have

knowledgeable staff and would benefit from helping employees understand how their duties and efforts are used to support the overall college goals and mission. Practical, short-term goals include training on how to use data and making the data more accessible through the Operational Data Store. With the recent addition of the Institutional Research position, the college must provide training for the new reporting tool and the administrative software to ensure that this critical position has the capability to generate an accurate picture of the college to our stakeholders. A systematic review of what reports are needed for operations, planning, and executive decision-making would make data more useable and valuable throughout campus.

## **Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement**

### **8C1 Five to Ten Year Institutional Vision**

The college's vision statement is "Highland Community College partners with learners in successfully shaping their futures," and its mission statement is "Highland Community College is committed to shaping the future of our communities by providing quality education and learning opportunities through programs and services that encourage the personal and professional growth of the people of northwestern Illinois." These statements are periodically reviewed by the college's governing Board of Trustees and are currently accurate statements of the college's near and long-term vision, a vision of providing quality education and service to the citizens of the college district to assist them in achieving their educational hopes and aspirations.

This vision is also reflected in Highland's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan. The plan outlines six themes to be the strategic directions for the college to follow during this five-year period to better realize its vision and to achieve its mission. These themes are:

1. Build an integrated quality assessment culture that encompasses all areas of the college.
2. Develop competitive programming and instruction that optimizes accessibility.
3. Enhance the college's market opportunities and likewise strengthen its communication and marketing efforts.
4. Build key partnerships that support the college mission to serve the wider community needs.
5. Ensure the ongoing strength of the academic programs and services by supporting the development of those persons employed by the college.
6. Pursue long-range strategies and opportunities to increase funding from all sources that will assist the college in meeting its mission and strategic goals.

### **8C2 Short and Long-Term Strategies and Alignment with Mission and Vision**

The 2003-2008 Strategic Plan identified five issues as key challenges that the college must successfully confront if it is to continue long-term to achieve its mission and vision.

1. The college's commitment to access for all constituents and its need to provide quality services to off-campus, evening and adult students contrasted with the prioritization of the traditional, on-campus, daytime students in its operations and program development.
2. The need to minimize expenditures and effectively utilize the college's shrinking resources while needing to invest in new market opportunities in order to capitalize on any potential enrollment growth.
3. The need to effectively implement cost-effective programming while maintaining community services and programs that are not considered to be revenue generating.
4. The college's comprehensive mission and desire to serve multiple constituency groups while experiencing limited resource growth.
5. Finding a balance between facilitating the provision of programs and services provided by other organizations and originating programs and services.

Short- and long-term strategies to meet these challenges as well as strategies to positively impact the themes of the Strategic Plan are well aligned with the college mission and vision due to the mission and vision being guiding principles in the development of our 2003-2008 strategic plan. Also note related response in 8P2.

However, there is a disconnect in the understanding of the vision and direction of the college within the college community. A questionnaire was distributed to the internal customers of the

college, and the members of the college's Leadership Team were interviewed individually. The results from these two groups showed a disconnect between what the Leadership Team views as the direction of the college in the next five to ten years and a professed lack of knowledge of the direction the college is headed by the other internal customers. The Leadership Team acknowledged that there is a five-year plan, the strategic plan, but that it needs to be better communicated to the college community as a whole.

### **8P1 Planning Process**

In the fall of 2002, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed, comprised of a representative of the Board of Trustees, as well as representatives of Highland's faculty, staff, and constituents in the four-county district. The committee, co-chaired by a former Highland trustee and Highland's Director of Community Relations, met on a regular basis to develop the strategic plan document for 2003 – 2008. During the process, six strategic directions were identified: Assessment, Delivery of Programs and Services, Competition and Marketing, Building Key Partnerships, Strengthening of College Resources, and Resource Development. The document is the basis for building annual college-wide goals, which address each of the six strategic directions. The Leadership Team drafts the college-wide goals, with input from Cabinet members. Prior to finalization of the goals by the Leadership Team before review by the Board of Trustees, Cabinet members are asked to review the draft with their divisions and departments for input, thus gaining input from faculty and staff. Once the goals are finalized, the Board of Trustees receives periodic updates on progress made on each of the college-wide goals.

### **8P2 Development Of Short and Long-Term Strategies**

The long-term strategy for addressing the key challenges identified in the strategic plan is to have annual goals focused on some aspect of these challenges and tightly related to the strategic plan areas. The strategic plan, as indicated in 5C2, was developed using inclusive teams of college staff, students, and other stakeholders from throughout the college district. The college mission and vision were guiding principles in the strategic plans development.

Currently the college uses primarily annual (short-term) strategies to impact the Strategic Plan themes. These annual strategies are labeled the annual college-wide goals. The process for developing these goals has evolved between 2003 and 2006. In 2003, the goals were essentially top down. They were developed by the president and his Leadership Team as action strategies to positively impact the strategic plan themes. Lack of appropriate input and involvement in goal development by much of the college community was acknowledged, and in 2004 and 2005, attempts were made, with limited success, to improve this involvement. In 2006, the new college interim president initiated a new process geared to increased college wide input and involvement. Once the annual goals are developed, they are reviewed and approved by the Cabinet and then the Board of Trustees. Individuals are then assigned responsibility for individual goals. The responsible individual(s) then seek volunteers and/or select staff to serve on a committee whose charge is to work to achieve the assigned goal.

Additionally, the college has a number of standing committees that are charged with specific areas of responsibility (listed in 5C1). Ad hoc committees are formed when an issue arises that merits exploration. Committee members are chosen in a variety of ways; they can be appointed by the president, a division dean/associate dean, chosen by the Faculty Senate president, self-selected, or asked to participate by the chair of the specific committee.

### **8P3 Development of Key Action Plans**

Staff are assigned responsibility for specific goals depending on their area of responsibility, interests, or college needs. These individuals then assemble a team to develop an action plan

to achieve the assigned goal. This team can be formed by a variety of means, and minutes of their meetings are forwarded to the designated Leadership Team member. The staff person(s) assigned responsibility for the assigned goal report quarterly to a Leadership Team member on progress toward achieving the goal. At the end of the academic year, Leadership Team members submit to the president summary reports of goal achievement in their areas of responsibility. The president's office compiles the status of the yearly goals achievements and prepares a report to the college's board. This information is then shared across the college district and to its stakeholders in a broadly distributed annual report.

### **8P7 Ensuring Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Professional Development**

A real strength of the organization has always been the ability of the staff to work together for the good of the college. If help is needed, information sought, or hands-on assistance is required, one needs only to ask and help is there. If the resource needed is monetary, those requests are sent to the president through the appropriate administrative channels.

The development and nurturing of faculty, staff, and administrators has largely been the responsibility of the immediate supervisors to discern talents and abilities and encourage the development of them. Supervisors encourage staff to obtain more education or credentials through the Highland tuition waiver program for full-time employees. If soft skill development is the issue, supervisors can send staff to seminars and in-services as time and limited monetary resources allow. Support staff is key to the college's success, and supervisors include support staff members in all activities and decisions that are made in their area of responsibility. Supervisors can nominate staff for an excellence award that is awarded annually to one person.

This staff development issue is also being addressed by a committee as one of the college's AQIP action projects, "Employee Enhancement and Development" summarized in the narrative of section 4P4.

### **8P8 Planning for Continuous Improvement Measures**

The college status and its achievements are reported using data in annual reports, monitoring reports, performance reports, program reviews, employee satisfaction surveys, alumni surveys, AQIP action project updates, and year-end annual college-wide goal reports. Each of these documents and the included measures are for the most part mandated and varied. In total, there are a tremendous number of performance indicators and measures that the college tracks annually. However, key measures are not compiled in a fashion that is easily understandable or useful. The college's institutional researcher is working to develop a "balanced scorecard" of key measures that will be of greater value in tracking the college's effectiveness.

### **8R1 Results for Accomplishing Institutional Strategies and Action Plans**

The results achieved since the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan was developed and annual college-wide goals focused on these themes are categorized below by theme as defined in question 8C2. Results of selected employee survey items are shown in 4R1.

#### **1. Build a Quality Assessment Culture**

- Accepted into the AQIP accreditation program in August 2003
- Employee perception of college attainment level of ten AQIP Principles of High Performance Organization has increased between 8 to 26 percent from 2004 to 2006 (see employee survey and results figure 8-1)
- Made reasonable progress on three AQIP action projects (see action project summaries in 1P6, 4P4, and 7P1.)
- Hired a full-time institutional research director in August 2005



2. Develop Competitive Programming and Instruction
  - Opened new site (HCC West) in western region of district in 2004: 2004-05 unduplicated headcount 135; credit hours 828, 2005-06 unduplicated headcount 270 (100 percent increase); credit hours 1444 (74 percent increase)
  - Dual enrollment/dual credit (headcount) increased approximately 245 percent from 211 to 730 from spring 2004 to spring 2006
  - Received Illinois Board of Higher Education approval for a paraprofessional educator certificate and associate degree
  - Initiated test preparation course to help satisfy the paraprofessional educator certification requirement
  - Received Illinois Board of Higher Education approval for an associate of arts in teaching degree in secondary mathematics
3. Enhance the College's Marketing and Communication
  - Upgraded technology, including revamped college website and online student registration
  - Developed new internal website for improved internal communications
  - Expanded distance learning opportunities
    - a. College online course enrollment (credit hours) increased 95 percent from 2003-04 to 2005-06 to 1201 credit hours, and college online course sections increased by 74 percent to 40 sections in the same time period
    - b. HCC student use of Illinois Community Colleges Online (ILCCO) courses increased 8.6 percent (credit hours) to 402 credit hours from 2003-04 to 2005-06
  - Provided career and college planning software (Career Cruising) and training support to 100 percent of the college district's secondary school systems in 2005-2006
4. Build Key Partnerships
  - Developed in fiscal year 2004 a partnership with Sauk Valley Community College and the local Workforce Investment Board that resulted in the college becoming fiscal and program administrator for WIA Title 1B funds of approximately \$2 million per year
  - Developed a partnership in 2003 with the Freeport Health Network (FHN) to initiate an evening associate degree nursing program in which costs would be shared over a five year period with total project budget approximately \$500,000
  - Received agreement in 2005 from the Highland Community College Foundation for a multimillion-dollar fundraising campaign for the building of a new nursing addition to the college's science and health facility. From 2000 to 2005, the Foundation donated an average of \$272,000 for student scholarships and between \$132,000 to \$1.15 million per year based on return on investment, unrestricted fund level, and college request
5. Ensure Strength of Programs and Services by Development of Staff
  - Developed and held comprehensive part-time instructor orientations in 2005 & 2006
  - Completed AQIP action project "Employee Enhancement and Development" (see 4P4)
  - Diversity Committee work/results
    - a. Hired first ever full-time African American science instructor in August 2005
    - b. Held "Diversity Summit" in Spring 2006
    - c. Developed a Minority Outreach Program Spring 2006 (funding pending)

6. Pursue Long-Range Funding Opportunities

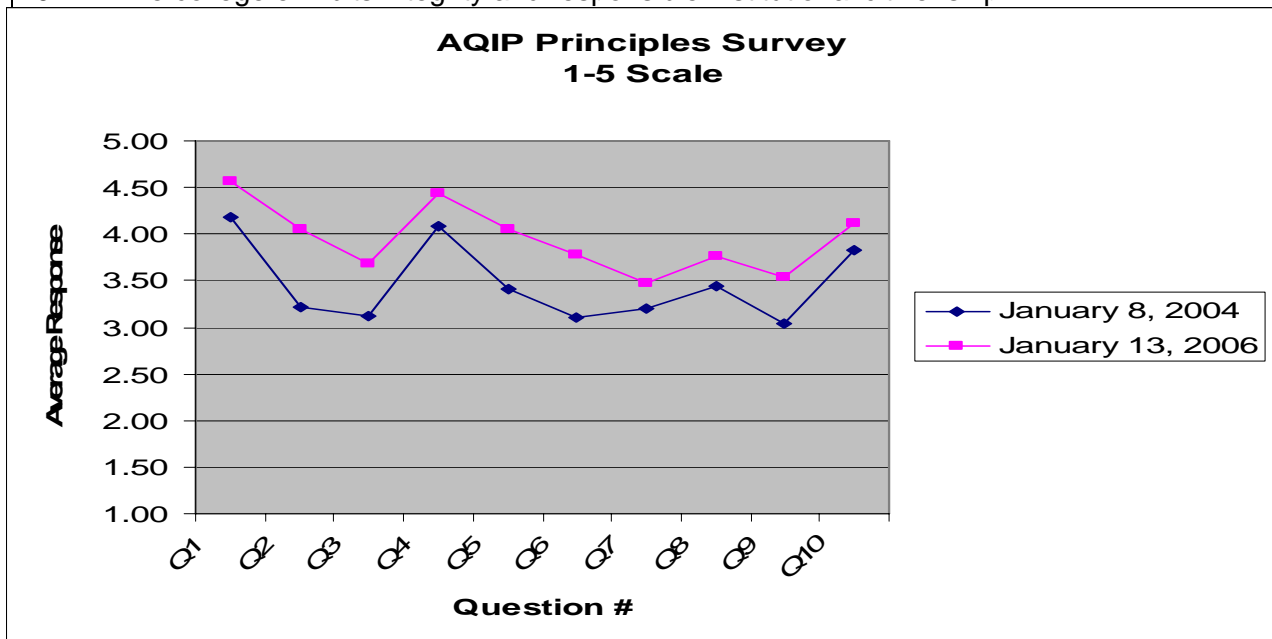
- Passed a tax referendum in 2004 that provides the college an additional \$1.5 million per year; issued funding bonds in 2006 of \$2.8 million
- Receives approximately \$160,000 per year as fiscal and program administrator for the WIA Title 1B grant

The following shows the results of two administrations of a survey of college personnel at two opening days sessions.

Figure 8.1 **AQIP Principles Survey and Results**

**AQIP Principles Survey**  
 Please rate on a scale of A to E the extent to which Highland Community College exhibits/embodies the following AQIP principles. (A) represents the opinion that you strongly agree that the college exhibits/embodies the principle and (E) represents the strongly disagree opinion.  
 (A) Strongly Agree (B) Agree (C) Neutral (D) Disagree (E) Strongly Disagree

1. The college has a mission and focus on serving students' and other stakeholders' needs.
2. The college has broad-based faculty, staff and administrative involvement.
3. The college has leaders and leadership systems that support a quality culture.
4. The college is a learning-centered environment.
5. The college has respect for people and a willingness to invest in them.
6. At the college there is collaboration and a shared institutional focus.
7. The college can be described by agility, flexibility, and responsiveness to changing needs and conditions.
8. The college plans for innovation and improvement.
9. The college exhibits fact-based information gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision-making.
10. The college exhibits integrity and responsible institutional citizenship.



## Category Nine: Building Collaborative Relationships

### 9C1 HCC's Key Collaborative Relationships

The college has developed key collaborative relationships with educational institutions, businesses, community organizations, and the Highland Community College Foundation. The following offers brief descriptions of each.

Key educational relationships are categorized as administrative, student destination, and student transfer. Highland maintains collaborative administrative relationships with the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Higher Learning Commission. These relationships confirm that the college has resources and expertise to offer approved programs that meet the needs of district residents. The college also partners with sixteen public and private in-district high schools, three vocational delivery systems, and other out-of-district public secondary schools located nearby. Highland is an educational opportunity for high school graduates with support from scholarship programs, academic enrichment programs, Tech Prep, Career Tech, life-long learning, dual credit courses, and various articulation agreements. Additionally, the college has developed cooperative agreements and articulation agreements with several two- and four-year institutions in Illinois and Wisconsin to provide district residents with certificate, associate degree, and transfer degree opportunities. The college has also formed a partnership with Columbia College of Columbia, Missouri, as an on-campus site for baccalaureate level degrees.

For decades, business representatives have partnered with the college through advisory committees to direct the development of office technology, nursing, automotive technology, and other occupational programs to meet local needs. These relationships have resulted in corporate donations of scholarships, equipment, materials, and expertise to support program development. Businesses have also joined with the college to extend learning beyond the classroom by hosting student interns. The college's Business Institute works with district employers to provide customized training in safety, computer applications, and other technical subjects to employees on site and on campus. A strong alliance with Freeport Health Network allows collaboration, sharing of materials, and teaching and learning opportunities. With support from a local bank, [the Highland Leadership Institute was created to develop and sustain a network of local leaders.](#)

Other examples of college partnerships have similar characteristics. In the 1970s, the college began an association with the Family YMCA of Northwest Illinois that resulted in the construction of a YMCA facility on campus. These organizations share a facility that hosts YMCA programming, HCC athletics, community events, and commencement in inclement weather. The college campus also hosts the local University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service office and its programming for district residents. The local Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has a center on the college campus and collaborates with approximately seventy non-profit organizations throughout the region. Through a memorandum of understanding, the college has been designated as the medical distribution site in case of a medical emergency in Stephenson County. This collaboration with the Stephenson County Health Department, Stephenson County Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross, and other regional service providers has proven effective.

HCC's partnership with the Highland Foundation is also very important. The Foundation is the key to accomplishing many institutional objectives. One of the oldest community/junior college foundations in the nation, it was established in 1962 as a 501(c)3, with an endowment currently in excess of \$14,000,000. The Foundation provides the critical link between donor wishes and

the accomplishment of objectives and initiatives that allow Highland to retain comprehensive community college status. At the same time, the Foundation provides the seed money and support to allow our small rural community college to develop a unique identity and traits along with certain truly unique programs and services.

### **9C2 Collaborative Relationships and the College's Mission**

HCC's mission is a commitment to "shaping the future of our communities by providing quality education and learning opportunities through programs and services that encourage the personal and professional growth of the people of northwest Illinois." This strong commitment is evident in these strategic college goals:

- Develop competitive programming and services that optimize accessibility.
- Build key *partnerships* that support the college mission to support the wider community needs.

For example, the college has partnered with the CareerTEC high school vocational system to provide dual credit manufacturing courses to high school juniors and seniors. Because students in this program do not have access to local industrial production environments, they cannot work with industrial grade equipment. This mutual arrangement provides access that students need to reach their academic goals.

Another partnership is the Lifelong Learning Coalition, a group formed around the common goal of providing short term learning opportunities. The partnership includes Highland College, RSVP, the Stephenson County Senior Center, the University of Illinois Extension Service, Freeport Health Network Top 50, Farm Bureau, Freeport Park District, Stephenson County Historical Society, and the Freeport Public Library. The group's first offerings began in the spring of 2006.

### **9P1 Creating, Prioritizing and Building Relationships**

The college creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships based on the needs of students, the communities served by the college, and businesses within the district. The highest priority relationships are those that support and are essential to the college's stated mission to provide educational preparation to students transferring to a baccalaureate-degree-granting institution, completing a vocational degree or certificate, seeking to upgrade workplace skills, and striving to meet individual developmental or general education goals.

The college does not have a standardized process for creating relationships with its partners. Some relationships, for example, were formed long ago as a result of the need to collaborate with state and federal entities to secure financial resources. Similarly, partnerships were formed with local school districts to provide a smooth transition for students from secondary to post-secondary education. Over time, these relationships have evolved to meet the demands of legislation, scheduling, geography, and other influences.

Other relationships have formed because a business or community group identified a need and approached the college to develop a plan to meet the need. These relationships often developed in unique ways, depending on the personalities and characteristics of the individuals involved in the initial partnership activity. More recent relationships have formed or evolved when surveys and other analysis tools have pointed to new directions in building partnerships. An example of this is the dual credit curriculum of courses offered on the main campus, Highland West, and in various high schools. This program offers high school students an opportunity to earn college credit while they are juniors and seniors in high school.

### 9P2 Ensuring That Partnership Needs Are Met

The responsibility for ensuring that the needs of the college and each partner are being met lies with the partners themselves. The president, vice presidents, deans, and directors of each college division often meet with partners to make certain that all aspects of the college's relationships are functioning well. For example, Highland administrators send reports to state level partners and meet with administrative partners in Springfield and in other locations to be sure that the college is in compliance with administrative rules and procedures. Representatives of area high schools and vocational systems meet regularly with college personnel to review joint activities, exchange ideas, and develop solutions to identified problems in Tech Prep programs, course articulation, and other areas of common interest. Advisory committees meet to review the college's programs and make adjustments to the curriculum. College staff members also interact with community groups and agencies to identify areas of common interest, plan responses to identified needs, and evaluate the results of joint activity.

### 9P3 Creating Relationships Within the Institution

Relationships within the college are developed both formally and informally. Formal relationships are embodied in the committee structure that includes the cabinet and standing committees for curriculum and instruction, enrollment management, and other academic and administrative areas. Support staff and other groups with common interests have also created formal relationships within the college community. In addition, the college has also launched an internal website, CougarNet, used to communicate information and build relationships between members of the college community. Throughout the process of seeking an initial association with AQIP, the internal college communication has been enhanced. Recently, communication meetings hosted by the president have been reinstated.

Some of the most effective relationships on campus are informal relationships that address individual needs. Many tasks are handled between departments without the need for a formal structure, in large part because the campus is small and the staff is dedicated. For example, academic advisors may send a new student to meet with the instructor to learn more about a program or class without the need to schedule visits during an instructor's sometimes limited office hours. The division and department secretaries and others responsible for many day-to-day services have developed personal and professional relationships with each other, and as a result, the college's business is often handled more rapidly and effectively than it would be under a typical formal structure.

### 9P4 Measuring and Assessing Collaborative Relationships

Highland Community College uses various processes and measurements to analyze the effectiveness of efforts to build relationships. A representative sample of indicators for assessing the results of collaborative relationships with partners is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Relationship Partners and Success Indicators

Educational Institutions	Percentage of high school graduates attending HCC Number of students on dual credit courses Transfer rate and academic success at transfer schools
Businesses	Business Institute business survey Freeport Health Network, student academic progress Advisory committees' feedback
Community Organizations	RSVP Volunteer Survey HCC Strategic Plan Community Focus Group goal attainment Highland Community College Foundation financial report

## **9R1 Results of Collaborative Relationships**

The following are examples of the results of collaborative relationships:

**Educational Institutions:** Between 2002 and 2006, the college enrolled an average of 28 percent of our district's high school graduates, a figure that has been maintained for many years despite increasing competition from other post-secondary institutions. To maintain this level of enrollment, the college has organized a recruitment program for high school students including high school visits, distribution of materials, and financial aid workshops. This program involves keeping high school guidance counselors aware of Highland's opportunities. The year ends with a counselor luncheon with information provided about students who enrolled at Highland.

Retention rates and transfer rates are also used to measure effectiveness and satisfaction of current students as they move through the system to other colleges. Retention rates have been robust, at a figure of 85 percent from fall to fall, with a 35 percent graduation rate after three years. Students who graduate from Highland with the desire to enroll at a four-year institution do so at a 65 percent rate.

**Dual Credit Partnership:** All sixteen schools in our district have students participating in the dual credit/dual enrollment program (students attending the Freeport campus and HCC West). As a result of this partnership, from the summer of 2002 to the spring of 2005, 399 students have received college credit while attending high school. This number has increased each year since 2001 when the program began. Since 2001, participation in dual credit offerings has increased by 41 percent, and many participants have transferred to HCC to further their education.

**The Highland Community College Foundation:** Since its establishment in 1962, the Foundation has been a key collaborator and recipient of many financial and in-kind contributions. Among these financial gifts are student scholarships, funding for program enhancement, and building and grounds improvements. Since the college opened, over \$3.5 million dollars has been provided in scholarship support to the college, and over \$7 million in grants have been received. This does not include other restricted gifts.

**The HCC/Freeport Health Network Partnership:** This relationship evolved as a way to address the current and future shortage of registered nurses in our communities. The partnership includes a new evening Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program and two newly created full-time nursing faculty positions designed to accommodate the evening students. The curriculum is identical to the ADN program that has been in place since 1978, and the faculty teaches in both programs to ensure that the same academic standards are in each program. All students in the initial graduating class passed their state board exams. Recruitment efforts for this program encompass the tri-state area.

**RSVP:** In 2005, 439 volunteers enrolled in the program for 72,475 hours of work. The dollar value wage for these hours served was \$515,736. RSVP volunteers prepared over 72,000 pieces of mail, collected 173 tons of newspapers and magazines for recycling, and 5,427 pounds of aluminum for the same purpose. Volunteers in this program enabled twenty-five clients of the Provena-St. Joseph adult daycare center to ride buses to and from the building. And, through Freeport Library, RSVP volunteers selected and delivered 850 large print books to seniors each month.

**Business Institute:** In 2005, 64 percent of Business Institute classes were customized for 108 companies. Technical, management, computer, and safety training offered by these companies helped generate a marked increase in the number of clients Highland served in 2005. In the

four previous years, beginning in 2001, the average number of clients served was seventy-seven. In 2005, the Business Institute served 1,723 students, in 208 classes or seminars. The number of credit hours generated was 670 in a period between July 2004 and July 2005. Honeywell, Freeport Health Network, and Highland Community College offered the greatest number of classes.

### **911 Improvement of Current Processes and Systems**

Throughout its history, the college has had many opportunities to reach out to the community to form partnerships, and at times, community groups and individuals have approached the college to join in a partnership. Each potential relationship is evaluated by college administrators in terms of the relationship's connection to the college's mission, available resources, costs and benefits of the relationship, and the impact that the potential relationship may have on the college and the community. In some cases, the relationship has proceeded, and in other cases, it has been determined that the relationship is not a good match for the parties involved.

Improvement in the college's collaborative relationships takes place when any partner becomes aware that improvement is necessary. A key to improvement is communication between partners. Communication is sometimes accomplished in face-to-face meetings, contact between individuals involved in the partnership, and results gleaned from surveys.

There is no uniform, campus-wide, structured process in place to improve collaborative relationships. Instead, each relationship depends on the individuals involved to determine what improvements are warranted. For example, communication with high school counselors revealed that the needs of high school students to learn about college life were not being fully met by the annual campus visit program. As a result, changes were made in developing the program to reduce student visits to in-session classes. Small group meetings hosted by individual instructors occurred instead.

As a result of continuing discussion, the Highland College community plans to document efforts made by representative collaborative relationships, establish a model process for improving relationships, and pilot the model across a portion of the college. Results of a pilot examination should lead to additional improvement.

**Index to Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation  
Highland Community College's  
Systems Portfolio  
November 2006**

**Criterion One – Mission and Integrity – The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.**

**Core Component 1a – The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.**

- The college has adopted a broad mission statement with supporting action statements that together clearly communicate Highland's mission. [O1]
- The supporting action statements of the college's mission outline the learning goals of students and recognize the various stakeholders served by the college. [O1]
- The college's commitment to other distinctive objectives is outlined in the mission statement. [2C1]
- The Board of Trustees reviews the mission and vision statements on a regular basis to assure that they continue to align with the Board philosophy. [5C2]
- The mission statement is widely available, specifically in the college catalog (both print and online) and on the college website. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog: [http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf) HCC website: <http://www.highland.edu/visitors/index.asp>]

**Core Component 1b – In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.**

- The mission and vision statements broadly state the goal of serving all the learning needs of the college district and commit the college to meeting the needs of a diverse population. [O1]
- The mission's commitment to diversity is partially carried out by the Diversity Committee, a standing committee which has input in hiring decisions and promotes awareness in various ways. [1C4, 4P2, 5C1, 8R1]
- The mission of recognizing diversity is demonstrated by its incorporation into the college's general education competencies 5.4 and 6.1 and by the assessment of 5.4. [1C1, 1R1]
- The mission documents are the basis of the recognition of the diversity of the college's learners, constituents and the greater society it serves, as shown by geographic, racial, age, education attainment, and income level diversity of the population served. [4C2]

**Core Component 1c – Understanding of and support for the mission pervades the organization.**

- Highland's 2003-2008 strategic plan is based on the vision and mission statements. [8C1]
- Ends statements addressing occupational preparation, workforce development, transfer, and recruitment and retention have been selected by Trustees based on the comprehensive mission of the community college. [5C2]



- The monthly board agenda includes a “Status of the College Report” and a “Community Report,” keeping the board informed about the wide range of activities that support the mission. [5C2]
- Collaborative relationships are built on the strategic goal to carry out the college’s mission to support community needs. [9C2]
- The college’s educational programs and common learning objectives support the college’s mission of providing quality education and learning opportunities to the people of Northwest Illinois. [1C1]
- The hiring and development of instructors and syllabi revision have been identified as central to aligning student learning with the vision and mission. [1C2]
- The college meets the needs of a diverse student population by providing a range of student services. [1C4]

**Core Component 1d – The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.**

- The Board of Trustees is committed to a servant leadership philosophy and portions of the Carver Model of Policy Governance. [5C1]
- The Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day operations to the president, who is assisted by a Leadership Team and a representative Cabinet. [5C1]
- Supporting elements of the college’s mission and the six thematic categories of other distinctive objectives serve as the underpinning of helping students learn and demonstrates support of all learning processes. [2C2, 2C3]
- Program advisory boards are used as a tool for collaborative development of programs and curriculum to meet the community’s needs. [5C2]

**Core Component 1e – The organization upholds and protects its integrity.**

- The college provides a process for investigating and resolving student complaints and keeps records of these actions. [3P6]
- The Highland catalog lists student codes of conduct and includes a complaint procedure that values due process for students and faculty. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 20-23 [http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]
- The college has developed technology guidelines for students and faculty to protect the integrity of our technology services. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 24-25 [http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]
- Many college documents address ethical and equitable expectations, as well as the verbal reinforcement that occurs at trainings and meetings. [5C3]
- The college provides training in critical areas, such as harassment. [4C4, 4P4]
- The college has published statements affirming academic freedom and a history of supporting intellectual freedom. [1C5]

**Criterion Two – Preparing for the future – The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.**

**Core Component 2a – The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.**

- The college seeks multiple methods of identifying changing societal and economic trends to make needed improvements in its services. [2I1, 3P1]
- The college's strategic planning process has led to the development of annual college-wide goals. [5C2, 8P1, 8P2]
- The college has achieved substantial positive results based on strategic planning and goal setting. [8R1]
- The college identifies and documents demographic trends that impact workforce needs. [4C3]

**Core Component 2b – The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.**

- The college foundation bolsters the resource base for support of educational programs, cultural events, facilities, and scholarships. [2P1, 2P3]
- Short and long term strategies address key issues in the 2003-2008 strategic plan that focus on the need to implement cost effective programming and developing new market bases. [8C2]
- Passage of a \$1.5 Million per year referendum and a \$2.8 Million funding bond provides support for educational programs. [8R1]
- The college supports educational programs and plans for maintaining and strengthening quality through training and staff development. [4P4]
- Partnerships with area businesses and organizations form collaborative relationships to effectively meet student needs. [9P1, 9R1]
- Property tax revenue in FY06 was approximately \$6.7 million. [O1]

**Core Component 2c – The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.**

- The college collects data to measure effectiveness of both student support services and learning assessments. [1R1, 6R1, 6R2]
- A data warehouse system has been developed to provide a system for measurement of performance. [7C1]
- Various instruments are used to measure stakeholders' satisfaction. This includes student evaluations of instruction, annual employee surveys, enrollment data, state license exams, and alumni surveys. [3P7, 5P9]
- Data on program participation and financial support help guide college planning and communication strategies. [2P1, 2R1]
- The college uses annual strategies, assigned to specific staff, to accomplish strategic goals. [8P2, 8P3]
- College effectiveness and assessment measures are reported in numerous documents. [8P8]
- Performance evaluations and exit interviews provide the college with information concerning employee's perceived barriers. [4P2]
- The college has in place a rigorous program of assessing student learning outcomes, with goals of continuous improvement. [1P1, 1P6]

**Core Component 2d – All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.**

- The college's project using Data Decision Making will facilitate better decision processes and improve stakeholder service. [3I2]
- Key elements of the 2003 Strategic Plan, especially the identified six strategic directions, guide the organization in building annual college wide goals, which in turn reflect the ongoing commitment of the college to fulfill its mission. [2C1, 2C2, 8P1, 8P2]
- Training processes, hiring and retention processes, and personnel change processes document the college's ability to align all levels of planning with fulfilling the mission statement. [4C4, 4P2]

**Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching – The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.**

**Core Component 3a – The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.**

- The college's Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning clearly establishes outcomes and competencies for six areas of general education. The college has clearly stated program outcomes for eleven AAS degrees and six disciplines in transfer arts and sciences. [1C1]
- Effective assessment has occurred internally in general education and has been validated by external agencies. [1P13, 1R1, 1R2]
- Faculty created the learning outcomes-based syllabi and is fully involved in syllabi review as well as the ongoing assessment program. [1C1, 1P1]

**Core Component 3b – The organization values and supports effective teaching.**

- Student evaluations of instruction are routinely administered to provide faculty with qualitative feedback on student satisfaction with classroom and curricular activities. [3R1]
- Policies and procedures for hiring and training personnel, recognizing and rewarding employees, and valuing people show the college's support for effective teaching. [4P2, 4P7, 4P10, 4R1]
- The college recognizes hiring and development of instructors as key to achieving its vision and mission. [1C2]
- The college determines and documents effective teaching and learning. [1P6]
- The college has services to determine faculty needs for learning support. [1P9]
- The college provides for faculty sabbaticals and additional graduate work for faculty. [1C5]

**Core Component 3c – The organization creates effective learning environments.**

- HCC staff, faculty, and administrators work together to provide extensive student support services to create effective learning environments and to create access for all students. [1C4, 1P9, 4C1]
- The Highland Community College 2006-2009 catalog lists policies and procedures related to Student Support Services (pp. 13-14), Special Services (pp. 15-17), and Student Life (pp. 19-25).  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)
- Faculty use a wide variety of technology provided by the college in support of student learning. [O6, 1C3]

- Multiple tools are used to assess changing student needs. [3P1, 3R3]
- Evidence of diversity and attention to multiple styles of learning is found in the wide range of degree and certificate programs available at Highland. [1C4]
- Community and cultural education are critical components of the college's learning environment, as are the continued belief in and support of the "open door" concept. [2C1, 2C3]

**Core Components 3d – The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.**

- The college supports student learning and effective teaching by providing numerous offices and support programs. [4C1]
- The college collects extensive evidence demonstrating student learning in general education core courses and transfer and occupational programs. [1R1, 1R2]
- The college provides extensive support services for both students and faculty through the Learning Assistance Center, library, and academic advising. [1P9]
- The college's physical plant, facilities, and technological infrastructure provide support for the academic mission. [O6]
- The HCC Foundation and Freeport Health Network partnership provides resources that promote learning and teaching effectiveness. [9R1]

**Criterion Four – Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge – The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.**

**Core Component 4a – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.**

- Support of learning both in and out of traditional classrooms is demonstrated through support and maintenance of the opportunities provided through the college's other distinctive activities. [2C1, 2C3]
- The college's employee enhancement project provides a broad plan for staff development throughout the institution. [4P4]
- The college supports faculty sabbaticals and additional graduate work by faculty and staff. [1C5]
- The college recognizes and rewards employees for degree attainment. [4P2, 4P7]
- Annual excellence awards are given to employees in several categories. [4P2]
- Students are encouraged to participate in broad learning activities through student clubs, student government, Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and annual student awards. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 19  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]

**Core Component 4b – The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.**

- The college's general education outcomes and competencies cover the breadth of knowledge and skills and support intellectual inquiry. [1C1]

- The college is assessing the level of student success in achieving its general education outcomes and competencies. [1P13]
- The college provides for training and knowledge acquisition for its employees to support its educational programs. [4C4, 4P2, 4P4]
- Highland provides tuition waivers and educational assistance for employees to enhance their learning. [4P7]
- Social responsibility is promoted through cocurricular and community programs of the college's other distinctive objectives. [2C1]
- Student organizations provide opportunities to enhance classroom learning. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 19  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]

**Core Components 4c – The organization assesses the usefulness of its criteria to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.**

- The assessment of student learning outcomes includes outcomes related to living and working in a global, diverse, and technological society. [1C1, 1R1]
- The establishment of a diversity committee and the college's continued effort to encourage diverse points of view on campus support its efforts to prepare students to live in a global, diverse, and technological society. [1C4]
- Student learning in occupational programs is assessed by a variety of external entities. [1R2]
- Various methods assess student and other stakeholder needs. [3P1, 3R1 and 3]
- Advisory boards provide the college with input from constituents. [5C2]

**Core Component 4d – The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

- College policies and practices promote a climate of intellectual freedom. [1C5]
- Processes of hiring, orienting, retaining, and recognizing employees support the responsible use of knowledge. [4P2, 4P4]
- The process of student evaluation ensures that knowledge is used responsibly in the classroom. [3R3]
- The college provides processes for dealing with complaints. [3P6]
- Highland's ethical and equitable expectations are widely available in several documents and are discussed in college-wide meetings. [5C3]
- Annual ethics training has become a part of college practice. [4P2]

**Criterion Five – Engagement and Service – As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.**

**Core Component 5a – The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.**

- The college's strategic planning process, which included internal and external constituents, has been utilized to help the college set its overall future direction and guide the resource allocation process in support of the mission. [2P1, 5C1]
- The college uses advisory boards to gather input from constituents and to create responsive, viable programs. [5C2]

- The college creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships with district groups and businesses. [9P1, 9P2]
- The college employs a variety of methods for identifying the changing needs of its constituencies. [3P3]
- The college gathers and analyzes demographic data to assist in planning. [4C3]
- Internal constituencies (employees) are surveyed and responded to. [4R1, 4I1]

**Core Component 5b – The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.**

- The college followed the Building Communities model in creating its strategic plan in 2003, with its planning council including external constituents. [5C2]
- HCC's mission is itself a strong commitment to serving its constituencies. [9C2, 9R1]
- Advisory committees and other feedback mechanisms help shape and modify programs to meet constituent needs. [2P5, 5C2]
- Highland services include established departments and programs such as Industry Training, Adult Education, Community Leadership Training, as well as numerous services under Academic and Student Services. [4C1]

**Core Component 5c – The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.**

- The college created its strategic plan in 2003. Annually, the strategic plan is used to create college-wide goals that help Highland meets the expectations of its constituents. [5C2]
- Advisory boards are issued for feedback from constituents to create responsive programs. [5C2]
- The Board of Trustees demonstrated the board's commitment to internal constituents by direct action in response to the Fall 2004 employee survey. [5R1]
- Numerous collaborative relationships show the college's responsiveness to the community. [2C1, 9P2, 9P4]
- The college provides dual credit opportunities for district high school students. [1C1]
- The college has articulation agreements with district high schools. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 31  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]
- The college guarantees the transfer of its baccalaureate courses. [HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 30  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]
- The college has transfer agreements with other colleges ([HCC 2006-2009 Catalog, p. 34  
[http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006\\_2009\\_HCC\\_catalog.pdf](http://www.highland.edu/admissions/catalog/2006_2009_HCC_catalog.pdf)]

**Core Component 5d – Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.**

- Highland developed a requested partnership with Sauk Valley Community College and the local Workforce Investment Board to become the fiscal and program administrator for WIA Title 1B funds. [8R1]
- Measurement of participation and support of programs as well as constituent feedback indicates strong constituent support. [2P5, 2R1, 2I1, 9P4]
- Value to internal constituents is indicated by high employee retention. [4R1]
- Alumni surveys provide evidence that Highland services are valued. [3R1, 3R3]
- Strong HCC Foundation support and passage of referendum demonstrate constituent support. [2P1, O8]