

## Category 3 – Student, Stakeholder and Market Focus

### 3.1 Student, Stakeholder and Market Knowledge

**3.1a(1)** Students enrolling at the College typically come from within a 50-mile radius of campus. Competitors exist in the Greater Rochester as noted in [Figure P.2-1](#). The nearest direct competition is located 45-miles from RCTC. The UCR model is beneficial to RCTC in that the two institutions that would have been the greatest competitors for undergraduate students are instead partners in “2+2” programs with RCTC providing the lower-division and sometimes remedial education and WSU-RC and UMR providing the upper-division education. Market segments are both historical and emerging.

In early 2005 an Enrollment Management Taskforce was convened and it established a working set of principles guiding its actions. Today, Enrollment Management serves as a subcommittee reporting to the cabinet-level Strategic Operations Committee, part of RCTC’s All-College Committee structure. One of the critical tasks undertaken by the Enrollment Management Subcommittee was a rethinking of how the student population is segmented. Originally, RCTC identified thirteen key customer segments, but that list proved unwieldy for the purposes of strategic planning. The list of student market segments has been retooled to reflect eight key market segments that are precisely defined and have identifiable and measurable needs, expectations, and requirements ([Figure 3.1-2](#)). In addition to relying on research data to inform strategic planning, RCTC also makes a conscious effort to listen to the stories and experience of those personnel interacting with students on a daily basis.

While not part of this chart, there is an acknowledged, but informal ninth category: “Emerging markets.” Emerging markets refers to a growing educational need in the community that has not yet fully come to fruition either in the minds of either the potential students or the educational providers. For example, RCTC will be offering foreign languages courses in Chinese and Arabic in the coming Fall semester.

RCTC takes great care to acknowledge that even within these market segments, there still exists a variety of educational needs depending on what sub-populations of students are examined. When examining the “Top-Ten” importance indicators from the Student Satisfaction Inventory, important differences emerge ([Figure 3.1-3](#)). Some differences were not surprising, such as student of color placing greater importance on “Students are made to feel welcome on this campus” than their white counterparts or that older students placed greater emphasis on “Program requirements are clear and reasonable” than younger students. One surprising finding was the greater importance

on library resources from non-white students. This finding points to the technological divide between much of the white student population and the often poorer and immigrant students-of-color population. Not having as much access to online resources, this sub-population relies more on what is available on campus. Another surprising finding was that students attending RCTC for the purpose of seeking job or job-related training place high importance on their academic advisor being knowledgeable about their program requirements. A finding contrary to RCTC’s assumptions regarding workforce learners was that while they desire efficient knowledge-delivery, they also rank “It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus” among their top-ten items of importance. This often overlooked segment of the student population makes up a sizable segment of the RCTC student body. An indication of the growing demand for workforce development initiatives is the 500% increase in the number of students taking non-credit courses.

Pre-college learners or PSEO (Post Secondary Enrollment Option) students – high school students taking college-level courses on campus – account for approximately 8% of total enrollment. These Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) learners seek a “jump start” on their college education. This market has evolved as high school students and their parents have sought more choices. A unique education-fund recapturing method, developed at RCTC, has made the PSEO an attractive option for students and K-12 partners. This model has proven so successful that other colleges around the state are using RCTC as a model for promoting PSEO in their markets. As the College brands younger and younger, more youth-targeted programming like “College for Kids” have been developed. The goal is to make the campus a destination site for education, recreation, cultural, and social activity. Bringing area youth to campus is a competitive strategy to build awareness and familiarity, given the leveling off of the traditional-age college population in the Rochester area. According to an April, 2006 report from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, the number of high school graduates in Minnesota will decrease roughly 10% between 2005 and 2015. In Southeast Minnesota, that decrease is projected to higher: 10%-20%. Only the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area is expected to experience increases in the number of high school graduates due to the increasing migration of Minnesotans from more rural areas of the state to the Twin Cities. Because of this decrease in RCTC’s core student segment, marketing and enrollment management strategies are seeking to increase the market share of area high schools as well as exploring new populations to target RCTC’s services.

**3.1a(2)** The list of stakeholders also includes other community organizations, schools, and vendors. [Figure 3.1-4](#) lists those groups of agencies that RCTC has a relationship with, but one that is more indirect. For example, Concordia College and St. Mary’s University (SMU) are both Rochester area higher education providers

that lease space on the UCR campus. SMU is established some co-marketing and educational pathway partnerships with RCTC.

RCTC conducts both internal and external assessments to help determine the current and future needs and expectations of its key customer/student segments. Included in the long list of self-assessments are: the Community College Survey of Student Engagement; the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory; Campus Quality Survey; the SNG Knowledge & Awareness Survey; MnSCU Economic Impact Study; Student Evaluation of Teaching; Stakeholders Survey; Lost Inquiries/Lost Applicants surveys; other in-house surveys evaluating present & future policy decisions, staff development programming, etc. (Results from surveys and self-studies are highlighted in Category Seven) Survey results are available for quick viewing in our “Big Book” and online through the RCTC intranet as part of the RCTC Balanced Scorecard.

The College has established a Learner Life-Cycle (LLC), which outlines key phases of the students’ experience at the College (Figure 3.1-1). The LLC has five stages: awareness, inquiry, application, enrolled and advancement. Listening and learning approaches (Figure 3.1-6) are diverse and capture data and information driving continuous improvement plans.

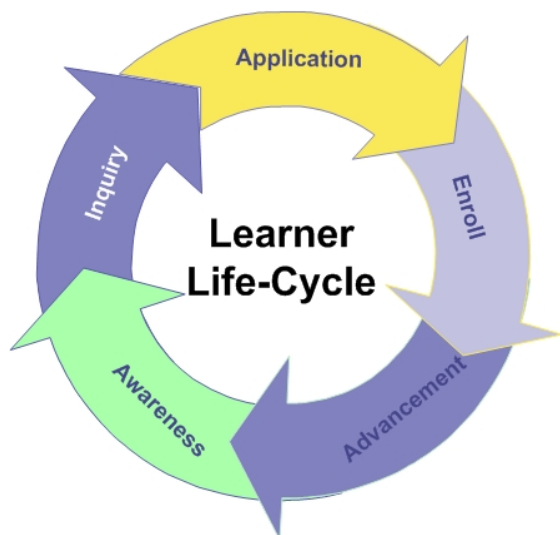


Figure 3.1-1 – Learner Life Cycle (LLC)

**The Awareness Phase** represents all the activities serving to enhance brand equity, the image, and top of mind awareness among target market segments for the College. This includes creative development, image and brand management, advertising, market research, market planning, recruiting and outreach, communications and event management. **The Inquiry Phase** is the point at which a prospect initiates contact with the College for the purpose of requesting information. All activities are aimed at converting interest to an application. This includes inquiry management, campus visit programs, data and information management (Recruitment Plus) and designing traditional

and electronic communications. **The Application Phase** represents all activities that begin once an inquiry applies to the College. The goal of this phase is to convert the applicant to an enrolled student. Activities include admissions, registration, advising, counseling, orientation, data management, assessment/placement, financial aid, and communications with applicants from point of application to actual matriculation. **The Enrollment Phase** goal is student success. During this phase the goal is to help the student achieve their intended educational goal. Activities include registration, counseling, advising, business management, retention, student life, teaching and learning, assessment, data and information management, communications, and other key activities supporting the student. Student goals include degree/certificate/diploma completion, transfer, job placement, career enhancement, lifelong learning, etc. **This Advancement Phase** focuses on the continuing success for the student and the College establishing a relationship for a lifetime. Activities include transfer, articulation, workforce and continuing education, alumni development, institutional advancement, economic development, communications, etc.

**3.1a(3)** Listening and learning approaches are reviewed continuously in efforts to improve participation rates, reduce intrusions related to survey administration and better utilize technology. RCTC periodically updates its mission, values, and goals. Key Performance Indicators and Core Measures are reexamined to determine how effective they are as quality measurements. Decisions are made regarding whether to add new measures, change existing measures, or drop measures entirely. Decisions are also made regarding what performance targets should be set on those measures.

To better inform such decisions, RCTC conducts a wide variety of research to listen and learn from key customer, student, stakeholder, and partner segments. These listening and learning tools identify student needs, expectations and satisfaction throughout the LLC. One such tool is the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). RCTC students have participated in the SSI annually since 1998, so there is a wealth of longitudinal data to put yearly results in their proper context. The SSI provides data on student needs, expectations and satisfaction. The aggregated data is further segmented by targeted populations using different demographic variables to understand differences in needs and expectations within the College’s diverse population of learners (Figure 3.1-3). Other listening and learning approaches are qualitative in nature and include focus groups and meetings. Information flows into the IPP as key performance indicators and core measures to support program and department continuous improvement planning. Recently, in an effort to contain costs related to institution-wide surveying and to minimize “survey burnout” by over-surveying the student population, RCTC adopted a plan to administering the SSI and CCSSE on alternating annual cycles. In addition to addressing the concerns just listed, the extra year between iterations of the survey instruments allows campus personnel to study the results, make

policy/program changes, and gives them time to implement those changes before the next survey cycle.

In the 2004-2005 academic year, the College adopted policy and procedures making email an official form of college communications for all students. Student email accounts are created when registering at the College, and students have access to their email accounts through the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the term following their graduation or withdrawal. For smaller, more focused surveying, RCTC has begun conducting surveys electronically via online tools such as Zoomerang and Survey Monkey. This methodology offers several benefits over paper-and-pencil surveys:

- (1) Electronic surveys reduce classroom intrusion,
- (2) Electronic surveys can be administered to larger populations at lower costs, and
- (3) Electronic surveys allow for quicker return and segmentation of results.

Larger, campus-wide surveys such as SSI and CCSSE are still conducted via pencil-and-paper. This helps ensure a greater response from the random sample of course sections

chosen to participate in these surveys. The exception to this is the Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners – a survey by the makers of the SSI, but designed specifically for online learners.

After survey administration, discussions occur with vendors and educational partners to seek new ways to be more effective and efficient in the collection and use of data and information. For example, RCTC has engaged in conversations with other MnSCU institutions using the CCSSE to share best practices. This has enabled institutions to learn from each other and find ways to improve the student experience. Currently, MnSCU is examining ways to incorporate the use of CCSSE and/or SSI into a state-wide benchmarking initiative. Also to have better comparison groups regarding Student Satisfaction, we initiated a discussion with other MnSCU institutions and Noel-Levitz to pool SSI data for the purpose of creating performance indicators at the state level. The result of these discussions was the creation of a one-time aggregate of MnSCU SSI scores covering five years. This was deemed the best solution since many of the schools who have used SSI have not done so consistently over the years.

Market Segment	Needs, Expectations, and Requirements	Source of Information
1. High School Graduate and Young Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.</li> <li>• There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.</li> <li>• I am able to experience intellectual growth here.</li> </ul>	SSI, CCSSE, faculty evaluations, advisory boards
2. Workforce Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User satisfaction</li> <li>• Employer satisfaction</li> <li>• High efficiency in knowledge delivery</li> </ul>	Custom Training Participant Survey
3. Prior College and Adult Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am able to experience intellectual growth here.</li> <li>• Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.</li> <li>• Program requirements are clear and reasonable.</li> </ul>	SSI, CCSSE, faculty evaluations, advisory boards
4. Pre-College Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.</li> <li>• There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.</li> <li>• Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.</li> </ul>	SSI, CCSSE, faculty evaluations, advisory boards
5. Lifelong Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value for the money</li> <li>• Overall organization of events</li> </ul>	Program specific surveys (e.g., CFK Parents Survey)
6. Employers/ Organizational Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency of educational delivery</li> <li>• Specific educational outcomes</li> </ul>	Custom Training Survey, Stakeholders
7. Online Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration for online courses is convenient.</li> <li>• Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.</li> <li>• Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.</li> </ul>	Priorities Survey for Online Learners (Noel-Levitz)
8. Under-represented Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program requirements are reasonable</li> <li>• Students are made to feel welcome</li> <li>• Library resources and services are adequate</li> </ul>	SSI, CCSSE, faculty evaluations, advisory boards

**Figure 3.1-2 – Market Segments and Requirement**

Indicators in each group's Top-Ten	Age: 18 and under	Age: 19-25	Age: over 25	Non-White	Seeking Job-Training
Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me	X	X	X		X
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate	X	X	X		X
The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent	X	X	X	X	X
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours	X	X	X	X	
The campus is safe and secure for all students	X	X	X	X	
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts	X	X	X	X	
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	X	X	X	X	
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields	X	X			X
There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus	X	X		X	
I am able to experience intellectual growth here.		X	X	X	
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course	X		X		
Program requirements are clear and reasonable			X	X	
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus				X	
Library resources and services are adequate				X	
There are a sufficient number of study areas on campus.					X
The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical program is excellent.					X
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements					X
Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances					X
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus					X
People on this campus respect and are supportive of each other					X

Figure 3.1-3 – Key Partners and Requirements

Other RCTC Stakeholders	Segment Description	Core Requirements
<b>Economic and Community Development Organizations</b>	Local economic, governmental, community and civic groups. Includes GRAUC, the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, and Rochester Area Economic Development Initiative (RAEDI)	Workforce training, Small Business Development Center expertise, Economic development partner
<b>UCR Partners</b>	Winona State University – Rochester Center and University of Minnesota Rochester	Transfer and Articulation, Maximizing Student Success and Satisfaction, Enrollment and Public Awareness
<b>Higher Education Institutions</b>	Public and private business and educational organizations that provide articulated or affiliated educational pathways in partnership with RCTC; includes other area higher education providers leasing space on the UCR campus	Lower division undergraduate provider, Compliance with Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, Faculty provider

Figure 3.1-4 – Key Partners/Supplier Requirements

<b>Stakeholder - Partner Segment</b>	<b>Segment Description</b>	<b>Core Requirements</b>
<b>Business Leaders</b>	Presidents and CEOs of Rochester area businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Establish local and regional collaborations</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Leaders</b>	Community and Political Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> <li>• Establish local and regional collaborations</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Profit Leaders</b>	Leaders of Rochester-area non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Foster alternative approaches for teaching and learning</li> </ul>
<b>GRAUC and UCR/ RCTC Advisors</b>	Members of the Greater Rochester Area University Center Board and those serving on UCR or RCTC departmental advisory committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Increase participation of underserved students</li> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> <li>• Establish local and regional collaborations</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Employees</b>	Currently employed RCTC faculty, staff, and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> <li>• Enhance outside or private investments and donations</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Foundation</b>	Members of the RCTC Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Alumni</b>	Graduates of RCTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Donors</b>	People who have made financial contributions to RCTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> <li>• Meet the full range of student learning needs</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Students</b>	Currently enrolled RCTC students – specifically student senators and student ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize large tuition and fee increases</li> <li>• Meet the full range of student learning needs</li> </ul>
<b>RCTC Education Partners</b>	Members of area K-12 partnerships with RCTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Develop life-long learners and engaged citizens</li> <li>• Establish local and regional collaborations</li> </ul>
<b>Citizens</b>	Citizens of Minnesota with special emphasis on those residing in the Greater Rochester region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality academic programs</li> <li>• Courses offered at a variety of times and days of the week</li> <li>• Variety of degree programs and options offered</li> </ul>
<b>Business and Industry</b>	Business and industry in the Greater Rochester region. Special focus on targeted industry groups and organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid duplication of areas of study with other regional institutions</li> <li>• Establish local and regional collaborations</li> <li>• Efficient delivery of knowledge and skills</li> </ul>
<b>MnSCU Trustees and Office of the Chancellor</b>	The 15-member appointed Board of Trustees, the Chancellor and the Office of the Chancellor Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Affordability</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Economic vitality</li> <li>• Enhances the quality of life for all Minnesotans</li> </ul>

Figure 3.1-5 – Stakeholder Segments and Requirements

Learner Life-Learner Life-Cycle Stage	Listening and Learning Approaches	Student and Stakeholder Segments	Survey Cycle	Core Measures (sample)	Figure Ref. (sample)
Awareness	Knowledge and Awareness Study Competition Study Customer Service Survey Shopper Program	Community Residents Competitors Potential Students	Annual Periodic Periodic	Community Satisfaction Ratings of Attributes Speed and content of inquiry response NA	7.2-6 7.5-8
Inquiry	Survey of Lost Inquiries	Prospects not Applying	Periodic	Ratings of Attributes	Available on-site
Applicant	Survey of Lost Applicants	Applicants not Enrolling	Periodic	Ratings of Attributes	Available on-site
Enrolled	Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)	Enrolled students	Annual	Overall Satisfaction Expectations Met Ratings Would You Enroll Again Service Excellence Benchmark Student Centeredness Benchmark Campus Climate Benchmark Unmet Student Needs-Gaps	7.2-1 7.2-3 7.2-2 7.2-12 7.2-17
Enrolled	Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)	Enrolled Students	Odd Years	Student –Faculty Interaction Ratings of Overall Experience Word of Mouth	7.2-16 7.2-7
Enrolled	Campus Climate Survey	Enrolled Students	Periodic	Welcoming Campus Climate	On-site
Enrolled	Client Satisfaction Surveys Participant Satisfaction Surveys	Clients and Workforce Learners	Ongoing	Stakeholder Satisfaction	7.2-5
Advancement	Graduate Follow-Up Survey Survey of Stakeholders	Graduates Key Stakeholders	Annual Annual	Student Success Overall Satisfaction Engagement Needs & Priorities	7.1-3 7.2-4 7.1-2

Figure 3.1-6 – Key Listening and Learning Approaches

## 3.2 Student and Stakeholder Relationships and Satisfaction

### a. Student and Stakeholder Relationships

**3.2a(1)** A number of relationship building approaches (Figure 3.2-1) are in place to foster and engage key customers and stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, email has been adopted as the official form of college communications. This supports efforts to provide rapid and timely information in a cost-efficient and desired manner. Knowledge and Awareness Study findings indicate that nearly fifty percent of the Rochester-area market prefers to receive information in an electronic manner via email or the web.

RCTC has launched a new customer relationship software called Recruitment Plus (RP). This enables the College to build traditional and electronic communication flows targeted to prospective students, applicants, and other stakeholder groups. Email, electronic collateral, and web landing pages provide the College with an ability to customize communications and build relationships with key populations. This includes the launching of electronic surveys at key decision or transactional points (e.g., the Lost Inquiries Survey).

Student Advising and Registration (STAR) sessions require students to visit campus and participate in assessment tests, orientation sessions, meet with counselors/advisors, and register for classes. One of the largest performance gaps identified in the Student Satisfaction Inventory was “early warning of college performance”. In response, a rapid-response team working with other college constituencies launched “Student Success Days” in the Fall of 2004. These have been held once in the fall and spring terms and include topical workshops, research opportunities, departmental assessment activities and opportunities to meet with faculty, advisors and counseling staff. Since its inception, student and faculty participation has been increasing, and SSI results have shown a significant improvement on this indicator (Figure 3.2-2).

**3.2a(2)** Key access mechanisms for students and stakeholders to obtain information or to make complaints include some of the relationship building approaches identified in Figure 3.2-1. Each year over 2,000 high school students from 25 area schools attend the Career Fair at UCR. The RCTC web site received nearly 1.2 million visits in 2005. This was an increase of nearly 300,000 since 2004, which was itself an increase of nearly 250,000 visitors in 2003. The average number of pages viewed by visit increased from 10.2 to 11.6. First time visitors increased 26% with 300,000 first time visitors in 2005. The increase

in web use has resulted in statistical reviews and efforts to design and make the site more contact-friendly to potential students, current students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders accessing the site. For example, the student registration web portal was redesigned in 2004 to improve the navigational structure supporting registration processes. Other recent improvements include a redesigned prospective student site, an improved “contact us” site, a new site for PSEO students, an improved international student site, and an improved site for currently enrolled students. The development of an email policy and other electronic approaches are a direct response to survey results indicating that electronic mechanisms are of increasing importance to consumers as they access information.

Relationship Building Approaches	Targeted Student and Stakeholder Segments	Frequency
Email	All Students and Staff	Ad Hoc
Electronic Communications Flows	Inquiries and Applicants	Planned Intervals
Preview Days	Potential Students and Family Members	Monthly
STAR (Student Advising and Registration) Sessions	Admitted Students	Weekly during registration periods
Student Success Days	Currently Enrolled Students	One to Two Times Annually
Stinger	Currently Enrolled Students	Weekly
The Echo	Currently Enrolled Students	Monthly
Kiosks and Message Boards	Currently Enrolled Students and Guests to the Campus	Daily
Electronic Catalog	Prospective and Currently Enrolled Students	Immediate
Special Events (Career Fairs and Middle School Fairs)	Prospective Students	Periodic
The Internet	All Student and Stakeholder Segments	Immediate
Snacking With the Senate	Currently Enrolled Students	Periodic
Staff Development Days	RCTC Employees	2-3 Days per Semester

Figure 3.2-1 – Relationship Building Approaches

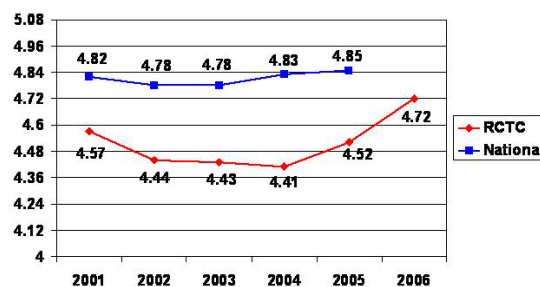


Figure 3.2-2 – “Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class”

3.2a(3) In response to research findings indicating that students desire an easier way to have their voices heard, RCTC has developed a student comment card system that will be launched this summer (2006). Plans for the online complaint card system had to address how best to sort, prioritize, and manage informal complaints. The College has worked to implement the comment card procedure for each leadership functional area. It is hoped that this method will allow a greater number of students to voice concerns/complaints and to compliment or provide positive feedback regarding their experiences at RCTC. While students are encouraged to seek informal means to have decisions reconsidered before filing a complaint or a grievance, they will still have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through the complaint/grievance process should they so desire.

A four-step Student Grievance Process (SGP) is in place if complaints cannot be managed through informal means:

- **STEP 1** – A student files a written grievance and submits it to the supervisor of the employee. The matter will be discussed between the supervisor and the student filing the grievance within five days.
- **STEP 2** – If no agreement is reached, the student may present the grievance to a Vice President within five days of the response in step one. Again, the Vice President will meet with the filing student within five days. Following this meeting a written response will be sent to the student.
- **STEP 3** – If no agreement is reached, the student may present the grievance to the College President within five days. The College President and the student will meet within five days of receipt of the grievance. The final decision of the College President is final and binding.
- **STEP 4** – If the grievance involves a board policy or the actions of the RCTC President, a student may appeal to the Office of the Chancellor to the MnSCU Board of Trustees (BOT). The decision by the BOT is final and binding. A record of all grievances and their resolution is logged and maintained by the Executive Assistant to the College President.

Beyond the forthcoming Comment Card system and the formal grievance process, there are numerous opportunities

for students to voice their complaints and compliments. Besides student publications such as the Echo, student opinions are gauged every day by faculty and staff through point-of-service contacts. Another example of an informal method students opinions are gathered is on the Graduate Follow-up Survey. In an attempt to increase the response rate, recent graduates are encouraged to include a note detailing some of their experience with their survey form. Written responses are copied and forwarded to the appropriate Vice President.

**3.2a(4)** The use of technology and its acceptance by students and stakeholders have resulted in expanding efforts to integrate technology options into all approaches and mechanisms in place to build relationships and promote access. Online catalogs, customer relationship software, enhanced web sites and online services are examples of how the College keeps approaches current with the service needs and expectations of students and stakeholders.

#### **b. Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction Determination**

**3.2b(1)** The College uses both nationally normed and locally developed surveys to determine levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with programs, services and other aspects of the RCTC experience. These surveys are identified in [Figure 3.1-6](#). Different survey tools and methods are used with various student and stakeholder segments on differing cycles of administration. Each survey measures levels of satisfaction with the College based on each person's perceptions or experiences. Some instruments ask participants to rate survey items as to their importance and then rate their level of satisfaction. The difference between the perceived importance of an item and students' satisfaction with RCTC's performance with that same item produces a gap showing either an opportunity for improvement or an area where expectations may have been exceeded ([Figure 7.2-17](#)). When gaps on the SSI exceed 1.2, they are labeled as "Unmet Student Needs" and are given a higher priority for action. For example, an area with a low satisfaction score and a low importance score would be less critical than an area with a low satisfaction score but of high importance. Determining whether or not satisfaction levels are actionable is in part determined by a data point's context. That is, RCTC has been collecting satisfaction data through the SSI since 1998, so it is clear when an indicator is slipping significantly below historical (local) and national trends. Just like in [Figure 3.1-3](#), gap analysis can be done on survey results by subsets of students (gender, race/ethnicity, age, full-time/part-time, etc.,) for more targeted actions.

**3.2b(2)** Student satisfaction determination methods ([Figure 3.1-6](#)) measure many aspects of the total college experience. These include ratings of services, utilization of services, ratings of engagement efforts, quality of relationships, and other aspects of college life. Rapid response teams and ad-hoc task forces are formed around feedback findings where gaps between levels of importance and satisfaction are

greater than 1.2 on the SSI. Trends in gaps are presented in [7.2a\(1\)](#).

**3.2b(3)** Many of the surveys utilized by the College provide comparative benchmarks. This allows the College to compare its performance to a national average. In some cases, subsets of data are available by which to compare performance to that of targeted institutions. The Student Satisfaction Inventory provides comparisons to overall college results, categorical benchmarks and item level comparisons. As mentioned earlier, last year, RCTC initiated a discussion with other MnSCU institutions to pool SSI data in order to have state-level benchmarks and/or historical Minnesota data. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) compares the RCTC to the aggregate national sample and to a subset of similar-sized institutions. This year, RCTC helped form a CCSSE Minnesota Consortium which provides state-level comparison data in addition to the national aggregate and "medium-sized" school aggregate data already provided by CCSSE. Partner institutions in the Minnesota Consortium were also allowed to include 20 state-specific questions on the survey. Client and participant satisfaction with customized or contract training provides for institutional and system-wide comparisons. Where comparative data is available it is charted and used to set targeted performance for key performance indicators and core measures.

**3.2b(4)** Technology solutions are being developed to keep satisfaction determinations fresh. Web-based survey tools and methodologies are increasingly incorporated into targeted data collection opportunities. The College conducted a Campus Climate Survey last past year via a web-based software called Zoomerang (mentioned earlier). This provided for an efficient, low cost and rapid response method with access to instant results. This approach proved successful when the College conducted a pilot Survey of Stakeholders and Key Opinion Leaders in 2004 using another web-based survey software called Survey Monkey. Since the pilot, another successful iteration of the survey was launched in the Fall of 2005. The incorporation of this new survey tool allowed for an innovative survey design that was not possible with Zoomerang. As cited in [3.2a](#), online catalogs, customer relationship software, enhanced web sites and access to online services are examples of how the College has kept approaches current with the service needs and expectations of students and stakeholders.