Category 6 – Process Management

6.1 Learning-Centered Processes

a. Learning-Centered Processes

6.1a(1,2) Key learner-centered processes (**Figure 6.1-1**) derive from the College's mission, vision, values, and design criteria (**Figure 2.1-3**). The Student Learning System (**Figure P.1-2**) and Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System (**Figure 1.1-1**) organize work and provide the focus on student learning. Teaching and learning is the heart and soul of RCTC. All other student services exist to support and advance teaching and learning. The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) asks students to rate requirements most important to them. Students rate these requirements on a seven-point scale, with 7 being most important. The categorical benchmark for Instructional Effectiveness is rated 6.11, the highest rated category of the twelve areas of requirements measured. Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) is a requirement of accrediting bodies and is increasingly important as demands for accountability escalate. Assessment of Student Learning is identified as one of RCTC's "vital few" AQIP initiatives.

The College strives to not only stay abreast but anticipate changing market needs. To this end, it carefully and systematically measures academic standards, especially via its academic program/department reviews and its community-driven development of new programs and courses. The UCR partnerships offer a unique opportunity to address changing market needs through multiple degree programs and levels. Partnerships are at the heart of UCR and designing and delivering career pathways is seminal to the vision and mission of UCR. Most of the College's occupational/technical programs also have program advisory committees. These committees are comprised of industry experts and college personnel. They provide a mechanism for informing faculty of new or emerging needs that can then be addressed in curriculum development and review.

"Activities through the Center for Teaching and Learning—and especially those coordinated by the Active Learning Advocate—provide faculty with opportunities to become involved in professional development which is faculty organized and faculty run. They have 'safe' opportunities to get student feedback about their teaching efforts, and to explore active learning that may not have been part of their own higher education experience."

6.1a(3) Fifty-seven percent (106) of the College's 187 classrooms are equipped with a computer workstation and LCD projection system. Additionally, 18 workstations are available on carts that can be moved from classroom to classroom. The computer system is equipped with the Microsoft XP suite of software products. Technology staff provides training in the use of educational technology as cited in 5.2a(1). Since 2001, internet-based enrollments have grown from 134 to over 390 FYE, accounting for nine percent of total enrollment.

"The Academic Program/Department Review process is managed through the office of the Vice President of Teaching and Learning. All RCTC programs and departments are on a three-year review cycle; these academic areas have a template of suggested study/data collection to guide their self-examination. The programs/departments are charged with reviewing their academic efforts under the following: program/department goals: progress since last review; direction from advisory committee; enrollment, graduation, and placement data; curriculum; assessment of student learning; human resources; physical resources; financial resources; marketing and recruiting; partnership, articulations, and relationships; efficiency; and anticipated needs for the next three years.

Level 1 Process	Level 2 Processes	Selected Core Measures	Figure
Teaching and Learning	Teaching Excellence	Intellectual Growth (SSI-individual indicator)	7.5-2
		Instructional Effectiveness Benchmark	7.2-14
		Academic Challenge Benchmark	7.1-8
	Student Learning	Pass Rates on Licensure/Certification Exams	7.1-1
		Student Paths After Graduation (Job placement and continuing education rates)	7.1-2
		Total Student Awards	7.1-3
		Retention (Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall)	7.1-4, 7.1-5
		Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark	7.1-6, 7.1-7
		Academic Challenge Benchmark	7.1-8
		% of Allocated Funds Spent on Direct Instruction	7.3-6
		Student-Faculty Interaction	7.2-16
		Faculty Provide Timely Feedback	7.2-14 (text)
	Academic Program Development and Review	Instructional Cost Study Performance	7.5(a)1 (text)
	Partnership Development	PSEO Enrollment	7.3-8
		Internet-Based Enrollments	7.3-7

Figure 6.1-1 – Key Learner-Centered Processes

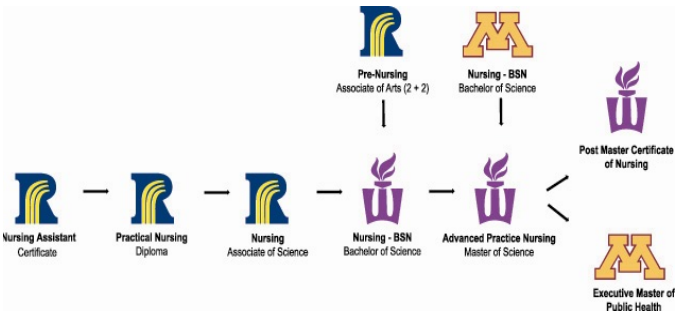

Figure 6.1-2 UCR Career Pathway Example - Nursing

As noted in the Organizational Profile, career pathways (**Figure 6.1-2**) have been established among the UCR partners. All programs have defined program plans that identify course prerequisites facilitating movement course-to-course and institution-to-institution in a specified major. Sequencing is also achieved via the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MNTC). MNTC is the result of a collaborative effort by all of the two-and four-year public colleges and universities in Minnesota to define a common philosophy toward general education. One of the goals of this effort is to help students transfer their work in general education. Completion of a defined transfer curriculum at one institution enables a student to receive credit for all lower-division general education upon admission to any other state institution.

6.1a(4) KPIs and core measures for learner-centered processes are identified in **Figure 6.1-1**. Student learning, engaging internal and external partners, and student and stakeholder satisfaction are three KPIs as evidenced by multiple core measures. For example, student success as a core measure includes a variety of summative measures which view the total educational experience including graduate/transfer success, graduation rates, number of completers, time to completion, completers by goal at matriculation, job placement, educational goal attainment, pass rates on certifying exams, and continuing education rates. External validation (i.e., certification and licensing exams, Employer/Business and Industry Surveys, etc.) are also used as a summative measure of student learning. Retention term-to-term and year-to-year is a means to determine student success in a generalized way. Grades from course-to-course are viewed as secondary indicators, but provide a formative means by which to assess if learning has occurred. Recognizing this opportunity for improvement, the College has adopted the *eLumen* achievement software, described in 6.1a(5) below.

6.1a(5) One of RCTC's values is innovation. In this spirit, RCTC is continually looking for opportunities to innovate on current practices. One such area is the Assessment of Student Learning (ASL). Improvement projects were assisted and tracked by the members of the ASL committee (**Figure 6.1-3**). It is interesting to note that while most projects were developed for assessing traditional classroom delivery methods, several were also used to assess student learning with online delivery. The ASL committee has also been active in piloting and promoting *eLumen* software in fifteen areas of the college this past academic year. This is up from thirteen last year and nine the year before that. *eLumen* software is a tool that helps faculty track measured learning outcomes in their classes. Rather than focusing on course grades, this software helps faculty assess the actual skills their classes are meant to teach. This year, departments using *eLumen* began building cross-disciplinary assessments, such as writing standards in the sciences. Being among the first colleges to use *eLumen* Achievement software, RCTC has participated in forums and conferences sharing its experiences implementing this software on campus. Discussions have centered around the technology itself and strategies and policy implications of adopting an outcomes-based approach to student assessment.

With *eLumen* software, faculty can build their own reports comparing their courses to department or institutional aggregates, or to shared achievement areas when assessments are cross-disciplinary. Results can then be re-introduced data back into the continuous improvement process so that changes can be made to improve learning. The faculty Assessment of Student Learning Committee is currently guiding the implementation of *eLumen*, including issues of security and privacy. Data collected through *eLumen* is used in the Program/Department Review process to provide numbers that can be compared from year to year, from program to program, and from department to department. Outcomes data have been used to inform continuous improvement plans.

Four representatives of the ASL committee attended The Higher Learning Commission Conference "Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy" in October, 2005. At this conference it was shared that many institutions have been struggling to integrate and embed assessment into their key processes. As HLC presenters discussed the difficulties encountered by various institutions, the ASL committee members felt they could have been sharing the "RCTC Assessment Story". While assessment has become a part of the campus culture, very few instructional areas had effectively used their student learning data to guide curriculum or pedagogical changes.

It was evident to the ASL members that a new, simpler assessment design was needed that focused on using data to improve student learning. *The focus needed to shift from simply collecting data, to collecting meaningful, useful data*. In order for this to occur, it was necessary that some programs/departments cut back on the number of outcomes that were being simultaneously assessed. Furthermore, it was also necessary to provide alternative methods of data storage and manipulation. While *eLumen* Achievement, an assessment software package, was useful for the management of shared student learning outcomes (multi-

section classes, within departments, or across disciplines), it is not considered the only valid way of recording assessment data. Because RCTC is one of the original pilot sites for *eLumen* software, this puts the College on the cutting edge of outcomes-based assessment. However, RCTC faculty have had to deal with software glitches and errors as new users put the software through its paces – all part of the normal software development cycle. While RCTC promotes the use of *eLumen*, it will not be required until the trail-blazing faculty achieve a high enough level of satisfaction with the software for universal use.

Department	Project
Business Technology	Assess student learning across several courses and compare student learning in the traditional classroom with online delivery. Develop common rubrics for Windows, Word, Access, Excel, and PowerPoint.
Human Services Technician	Identify core program competencies, develop a performance matrix, and track student performance in *eLumen*.
English	Develop sustainable assessment processes for Developmental English and Freshman Composition.
Science	Develop and implement a shared rubric for applying scientific method and gathering meaningful data from experimental results.
Surgical Technology	Develop and use a rubric for the Program Assessment Exam which all Surgical Technology students must successfully complete before graduation.
Sociology	Develop common assessment measures in Intro to Sociology; track student learning of sociological concepts in *eLumen*.
World Languages	Develop assessment tools across all three languages for common linguistic functions. Track student performance in *eLumen*.
Math	Develop and analyze common outcomes-based questions in the MATH 0098 final exam. Track student data in *eLumen*.
Chemistry	Develop shared rubrics for the grading of short and long essay exam questions in CHEM 1118: Biochemistry.
Biology	Create a "Curriculum Map" for cellular respiration. Develop a shared assessment tool and rubric to assess student learning and track student performance in *eLumen*.

Figure 6.1-3 – Sample of ASL Projects for 2005-2006

With this new outcomes-focus in mind, the ASL committee developed a simpler assessment framework directly tied to student learning in hopes that it would be more acceptable, understandable, and meaningful to faculty. The new concept was called **The Power of One** (**Figure 6.1-4**): Through the completion of pre-retreat assignments and onsite activities, faculty develop **ONE** shared assessment tool for **ONE** learning outcome with the intent of implementing it in **ONE** upcoming semester. After implementation, the faculty evaluate what was learned and propose **ONE** recommended change to enhance student learning. The results of the assessment project are summarized in **ONE** report that is submitted to the ASL Committee and attached to the Academic Program/Department Review form.

A Power of ONE one-day retreat was held in April of 2006. Twelve faculty members, representing four departments, were in attendance along with six ASL committee members. The departments were partnered with ASL facilitators and guided through the Power of ONE concept. Each department left the retreat with a newly created assessment tool and plans for its implementation. In a survey conducted at the conclusion of the retreat, 100% of the participants agreed that the Power of ONE concept simplified the assessment process and that the assessment tool that they had developed will provide valuable information about student learning. The ASL committee will continue to work with these departments in the 2006-2007 academic year to insure that the student learning data is utilized.

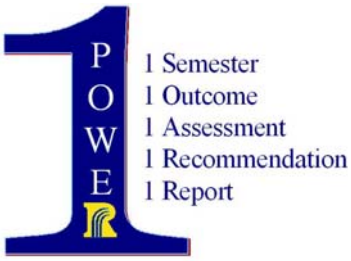

Figure 6.1-4 – The Power of ONE

In addition, the ASL committee plans to build on this success in the 2006-2007 academic year by hosting two separate Power of ONE events. The events are aligned with Teaching & Learning's continuous improvement plan. One event will focus on developing assessment tools that measure key factors in student performance and retention (T/L Goal #13, Strategy 2). The other event will focus on the development of shared, department-wide standards of student performance which can be clearly communicated to the students (T/L Goal #9, Strategy 1). These will be performed in conjunction with the continued facilitation of on-going assessment projects.

6.2 Support Processes

a. Support Processes

6.2a(1,2) The College's key Level 1 and 2 support processes are identified in **Figure 6.2-2**. Level 3 processes have been identified for each area, but are not listed due to space limitations. The Student Learning System (**Figure 5.1-1**) and Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System (**Figure 1.1-1**) define these support processes and the organization of work providing a focus on student learning. These support processes enhance the key learner-centered processes identified in **Figure 6.1-1**. Like the learner-centered processes, student ratings of importance help to define and determine support process requirements.

6.2a(3) The College is increasingly moving to providing online services to students throughout the Learner Life Cycle (**Figure 3.1-1**). In June 2004, RCTC launched Recruitment Plus (RP), a customer relationship management

software. RP has enabled traditional and electronic engagement of prospects, inquiries and applicants, facilitating the receipt of requests for information and applications for enrollment. The College has been providing, at the individual student's request, either electronic or traditional communications. As a consequence of RP, the College can provide a robust engagement of customers at various stages of the learner life cycle. In addition, students have the option to learn and obtain more information about the College from online virtual tours, online catalogs, and electronic publications. Applicants and currently enrolled students are able to obtain and submit financial aid forms electronically. Additionally, they can view their financial aid information, check grades, register for classes, pay their tuition, and view/order transcripts online. Students are also able to access the Degree Audit Record System (DARS) to verify their progress towards degree completion.

While technological advances can make for a more streamlined path through the learner life cycle, RCTC strives to maintain the human connection that is critical for success. For example, a new registration program launched in April, 2006 is designed to "create a long lasting relationship with the college" through a more personal approach. A newly admitted student is given the opportunity to meet one-on-one with an Academic Advisor to help them learn more about the college and to develop a schedule for the up coming semester. After the student takes their assessment placement exam they are directed to a registration website where they choose a program of study from a list of programs and then schedule a meeting with an academic advisor. If they enter an e-mail address an e-mail conformation is sent to them along with other important information. This new program allows incoming students to discuss their placement exam results with College personnel and then go over their short- and long-term options.

6.2a(4) KPIs and core measures for support processes are identified in **Figure 6.2-2**. Several KPIs and multiple core measures are shown. Most of the support processes have sub-processes that have been identified and flowcharted. Each area has unique measures directly linked to the processes they perform.

6.2a(6) Support processes are improved through a variety of ways. First, most support process areas have mapped their processes and identified measures to track performance. This helps direct efforts in areas of needed improvements. Second is the use of the Plan-Do-Check-Act process (**Figure 4.1-7**) to make improvements and drive innovations. For example, Admissions recently reset application deadlines as a consequence of information from the PDCA cycle: data indicated that late student applications created a cascading series of problems (late new section creation; last-minute searches for adjunct faculty, room availability difficulties, and—ironically—departure of these same students very early in the semester). In other words, the high cost in human terms of trying to cater to these 11th-hour registrations did not yield a tangible benefit to the College or to the student. In the end, Admissions learned that the College was better able to serve and retain more students if it did not spend inordinate energies on capturing the late applicant/late enrollee.

Rapid response and "Solve and Dissolve" teams have been used in several areas to drive short and longer-term improvements. For example, one Rapid Response Team was able to address the perception by students that they had not been notified early enough in the semester about marginal or unacceptable performance. The team developed a Student Success Day, during which classes would be suspended so that students could interact with faculty advisors and counselors, and participate in workshops focused on helping them learn in the collegiate setting. Since the launch of Student Success Day, student satisfaction regarding notification of student performance and faculty has increased substantially (see **Figure 3.2-2**). In response to the need to improve customer service performance, eight initiatives were implemented to empower the Student Development and Services staff to address this need (**Figure 6.2-1**).

Student Development and Services Initiatives
1. New Student Probation Plan
2. Satisfactory Academic Progress Alignment
3. Integrated Planning Process Focus
4. On-line Assessment Testing
5. New Web-based Sign up Process for Advisors
6. Counselor Care Program
7. Process Improvements for Financial Aid
8. Star Session Enhancements

Figure 6.2-1 – Student Development and Services Initiatives

b. Operational Planning

6.2b(1) The College established a strategic contingency fund as part of its annual budgeting process. Each member of the Leadership Cabinet has access to these funds which can be allocated to departmental/program continuous improvement plans. Benefit cost analysis is considered when funding new initiatives. Step four of the Integrated Planning Process (IPP) depicts the allocation process for continuous improvement plans.

6.2b(2) The College has also established a Critical Incident and Response Plan to address campus emergencies including chemical/hazardous substance spills, civil protest, criminal or violent behavior, gas leaks, fire, flood, aircraft down on campus, death on campus, etc. This has been done to protect students, faculty and staff, stakeholders and the general community from adverse impacts of college operations. As note in 1.2a(1) a plan to address the Pandemic Flu is now underway.

Level 1 Process	Level 2 Processes	Selected Core Measures	Figure
Student Development and Services	Financial Aid	Admissions and Financial Aid Benchmark	7.5-6
	STAR	Admissions and Financial Aid Benchmark	7.5-6
	Student Life	Participation Rates	At Site
	Academic Support Center	Academic Services Benchmark	7.2-10
	Admissions	Service Excellence Benchmark Concern for the Individual Benchmark Admissions and Financial Aid Benchmark	7.2-12 At Site 7.5-6
	Enrollment Services	See Admissions	See Adm.
	Registration	Registration Effectiveness Benchmark	7.5-13
	Counseling/Advising	Academic Advising/Counseling Benchmark	7.5-3
Strategic Operations	Institutional Achievement	Quality and Productivity Improvement Results Benchmark Quality Assurance Benchmark Overall Impression of Quality at RCTC Unmet Student Needs	At Site 7.4-4 7.4-3 7.2-17
	Measurement and Analysis	Measurement and Analysis Benchmark	At Site
	Strategic Planning	Strategic Quality Planning Benchmark	7.4-5
	Integrated Planning	Documented Assessments	At Site
	Communications	Web Visits, Page Views	3.2a(2) text
	Brand Management	Brand Equity (Top of Mind Awareness) Participation Rates / Market Share Relationship to the College Attribute Ratings Positive Word of Mouth/Would Familiarity With Programs and Services Enrollment	7.3-9 P.2a(1) P.2a(1) 7.5-8 7.2-7 7.2-9 7.3-4
	Community Relations	Visits to Campus	7.5-15
Finance and Facilities	Finance	Tuition Revenue Fund Balance as a Percent of Revenue % of Allocated Funds Spent on Direct Instruction	7.3-3 7.3-2 7.3-6
	Facilities	Campus Crime Statistics Lab Facilities Kept Up-to-Date	7.5-17 7.5-11
	Auxiliary Enterprises	Available at Site	At Site
	Community Partnerships	Visits to Campus	7.5-15
Office of the President	Institutional Achievement	See Strategic Operations	See St. Ops
	Communications	Available at Site	At Site
	Community Relations	Student Satisfaction Community Satisfaction Stakeholder Satisfaction Faculty and Staff Satisfaction Participation in Community Organizations Customer Focus Benchmark	7.2-1 7.2-6 7.2-6 (text) 7.4-1 7.6-2 At Site
	Leadership/Shared Governance	Top Management & Leadership Support	7.4-7
	Stewardship	Economic Impact	7.5-14
Information Technology and Media Services	Information Technology Services	Computer Labs are Adequate (SSI) Computer Systems User Friendly (CQS)	7.5-9 7.5-10
	Interactive Television	Available at Site	At Site
	Duplicating Services	Available at Site	At Site
	Media Services	Available at Site	At Site
Human Resources	Selection	Available at Site	At Site
	Faculty and Staff Development/Retention	Employee Training and Recognition Benchmark Staff Development Day Ratings Would Recommend RCTC as a Place to Work	At Site 7.4-10 7.4-2
	Ongoing HR Management	Employee Empowerment and Teamwork Faculty and Staff Satisfaction	7.4-9 7.4-1
	Affirmative Action/Diversity	Staffing Profile	At Site

Figure 6.2-2 Support Processes