Category 2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Context for Analysis (C)

2C1 Other Distinctive Institutional Objectives
RCTC has identified four distinctive objectives herein referred to as “core competencies.” These competencies include:

1. Partnerships
2. Innovation
3. Comprehensive Learning Opportunities
4. Health Science/Allied Health Curricular Focus

One of the College’s values and core competencies is teamwork, evidenced by the College’s strength in developing partnerships. The faculty, staff and administration have an ongoing and strategic willingness – and ability – to create community, business, and educational partnerships; a cursory count shows more than 75 in operation at present.

An example of the College’s diverse partnerships is one it has with IBM and a project known as the World Community Grid (WCG). WCG is a non-profit organization that uses grid technology and over 500,000 volunteers from around the globe to donate the spare processing power of their personal computers to help solve humanitarian research project such as AIDS, cancer and other biomedical research. IBM is a key player and supporter of the WCG. Since they have a strong presence in Rochester and are a key partner with RCTC, they approached us to become a partner in the WCG. After reviewing the goals of the WCG, we felt it was important to become part of this project because it allows us to expand our institution’s voluntarism on critical humanitarian issues and it further strengthens the social responsibility reputation of our institution. More detailed illustration of Partnerships is provided in Category 9.

Our second strength is innovation, which translates into our willingness to be a pilot or be one of the first institutions to embrace, adopt, and test new technologies and improvement approaches. As an example, the College is in the forefront nationally for developing courses via a Learning Object Repository (LOR).

The greater Rochester community is committed to performance excellence as evidenced by the many organizations in the region that have adopted the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Performance Excellence framework and criteria.

The impetus of this innovative spirit lies in the historical legacy of Drs. Charles and Will Mayo of the Mayo Clinic. In 1990, IBM Rochester received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. This led to the creation of the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC). The RAQC mission is to promote awareness of the opportunities in quality and productivity by advocating the widespread use of continuous quality improvement processes, providing training in new quality tools and techniques, and exchanging ideas, experiences, and expertise. Over 65 local organizations comprise RAQC of which RCTC is a founding organization. In 2006, three members of the Board of Judges for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award were from the Rochester area. The Mayo Clinic is also represented on the Baldrige Foundation that oversees the awards process.

The Rochester Area Math Science Partnership (RAMSP) is another partnership that is dedicated to helping students learn and is involved with continuous improvement. The membership includes 13 area school districts, the Mayo Clinic, IBM, and the UCR partners including RCTC. RAMSP has adopted the Baldrige criteria and all its K-12 members will write a self-assessment and submit it to the Minnesota Quality Award process.

RCTC has been on its continuous improvement journey since the early 1990’s. Since 1996, the College has participated in 8 Baldrige-based self-assessments as noted in section O-1. The innovative spirit and demand for excellence of this community requires an active commitment in processes that advance continuous improvement and accountability.

Our comprehensive learning opportunities strength refers to the way in which RCTC continues to embrace the spirit of the comprehensive community college, as envisioned in the 1960’s when the community college concept was born. RCTC continues to expand youth, pre-college, post college, and adult learner needs at a time when many similar institutions have made economical decisions to focus on a more narrow educational landscape.

For four years, a working committee (CARE: Collaboration Among Rochester Educators) has been developing ways to get high school students more attuned to the idea of post-secondary education while at the same time enriching their secondary experiences. One of the most interesting initiatives has been to make space, equipment, and college expertise available so that students in a select number
of vocational areas could come to the College’s Heintz Center for a portion of their senior year. The high school students in medical careers, auto maintenance, and electronics classes have been on campus for four years with much success. For example, the 24 medical career students in the first year four years ago has since grown to 190 students. Interest in automotive maintenance at the collegiate level has been strong with many of the students enrolling in the College’s program after completing their high school class at Heintz. Animal science and plant science classes are being planned for the future, with the former likely in the fall of 2007.

Rochester Public Schools and RCTC have now begun the design for an addition to the Heintz Center, tentatively called CTECH (Career and Technical Education Center-Heintz). The idea is that new classroom space and expansion of the disciplines would be made available for about 400 high school students (some full-time but most part-time). RPS and RCTC have appropriated the funds needed to do a design plan of the facility, and several others have come forward as potential partners (Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, Migrant Head Start, and Head Start) to help fund and make use of the proposed new facility. The objective of all the partners is the same: to encourage continued education of students, with an eventual goal of having them attain post-secondary degrees. The hope is to have secured bonding money for the project in the 2008-2010 fiscal year.

Finally, a fourth strength is the delivery of health science/allied health curricular focus. Healthcare is the dominant industry in Rochester with the number of persons employed at the Mayo Clinic near 30,000 people generating an annual economic impact of over a $4B. RCTC also recognizes that about one in four of its graduates go work at the Mayo Clinic directly upon completion, and health sciences/allied health and related-courses account for nearly 20% of all credits sold.

An extension of this competency is our commitment to develop a “one stop shop” for the community’s educational, workforce, and healthcare needs. In May of 2006, ground was broken on a $12.7M Health Sciences Center. As part of the facilities renovation, the Rochester City Council voted to approve the use of $1.5M in sales tax proceeds to build a low income primary care migrant medical and dental clinic. Migrant primary care (medical) and dental clinics serve the community in Rochester and surrounding areas. This center is a part of Migrant Health Services, Inc. which is a federally funded initiative to primarily serve the health care needs of migrant and seasonal workers, but also serves the community in general.

Having a primary care clinic will allow us to meet some of the clinical needs for our academic programs, especially for Practical Nursing and Advanced Practice Nursing programs, Human Service Technician program, Health Information Technology, Medical Secretary, Medical Transcriptionist, etc. RCTC nursing programs plan to develop clinical training opportunities at the migrant clinic. RCTC dental hygiene programs plan to use the migrant dental clinic facility during the expansion and renovation of the RCTC dental clinic during fall 2007.

RCTC embraces a strategy of developing flexible and innovative educational opportunities to meet the needs of employers and the workforce. Another example of how the College is leveraging its strength in health sciences related programming is RCTCLearn.net, an online learning program for professionals and paraprofessionals in the home healthcare industry. The program currently offers 52 asynchronous online courses to home care agency employees throughout Minnesota. In addition to Minnesota, the program is offered in Utah, Iowa, Virginia, Michigan and Ohio. The project was initiated through a grant awarded by the Minnesota Department of Employee and Economic Development to assist local healthcare providers with in-service training for new and existing employees. The development led to a partnership with the Minnesota Home Care Association that recognized the value of providing online education to a very geographically dispersed industry.

Changes in the population will significantly impact the healthcare industry. As the demand for services increases there will be a greater reliance on a decentralized, home-based service delivery system. As a result, it will become increasingly difficult for employers to provide education opportunities to a geographically dispersed workforce. The quality of the healthcare system is largely dependent on the quality and availability of education. The objective of RCTCLearn.net is to provide high quality education opportunities to a geographically dispersed workforce that will improve the delivery of health care services.

2C2 Alignment of Distinctive Objectives with Mission, Vision, and Values
The Signature Review phase of the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) is where the college reaffirms or refines its mission, vision and values. In the SPP
strategic directions and goals are aligned to these foundational statements. In 2004, the Strategic Planning Task Force recommended refinements to each of the Signature Statements. The new vision statement had a greater focus on RCTC being a universal gateway to world-class learning opportunities. This reflected the College’s growth in online learning, the UCR partnership, and collaborations with the Mayo Clinic, Rochester Public Schools, and other partners. A minor change in the mission placed more emphasis on serving a growing community. The term “learner-centered” was added as a core college value. The College also align itself with the “Designing the Future” 2006-2010 strategic plan. This plan focuses on working with and partnering with other organizations to provide high quality programs and foster student success. Additionally, the plan focuses on innovation, providing multiple delivery options, and demonstrating high quality. These goals are consistent with and help to advance RCTC’s core competencies and distinctive institutional objectives.

Projects like the World Community Grid, Migrant Health Clinic, RCTC Learn, CTECH, and our AQIP and Baldrige initiatives align RCTC to the greater community and allow us to advance student success, be accountable and support our community in a socially responsible and humanitarian way, and contribute resources in any way we can. These projects support our mission of serving a diverse and growing community as well as our vision of being a universal gateway to world class learning opportunities. Our values of innovation, people-centered, and excellence are also embedded in these examples.

2C3 Distinctive Objectives Support for Helping Students Learn
The College organizes its work to directly and indirectly support Teaching and Learning, which in turn, strives via its mission and vision to be a gateway to world-class quality learning opportunities for a diverse and growing community. This organization of its work is depicted in its Student Learning System (SLS) in Figure 6C1.1. Within each of the Level 1 and 2 processes is a focus on student success, assessment, institutional achievement, and partnerships.

Processes (P)

2P1 Determining Other Distinctive Objectives
These distinctive objectives/core competencies are determined in the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) and through Listening and Learning approaches (Figure 3P1-2). In the SPP, the College used the “Magic of Three” Survey with faculty and staff to identify three things we do well as an institution. All faculty and staff had the opportunity to provide input, and the results were validated against the annual Survey of Stakeholder where 300 key College, business, and community leaders are asked to identify the College’s greatest strengths. Additionally, each year faculty, staff, and key stakeholders are asked in the Campus Quality Survey (CQS) and Survey of Stakeholders, “What in your view are RCTC’s greatest strengths?” While the College core competency model described in Category 4 aligns with our six college values, the Listening and Learning approaches helped identify the four operational strengths that RCTC should acknowledge as the core of its current uniqueness.

2P2 Communicating Expectations for Distinctive Objectives
Diverse communications mechanisms are in place to communicate these objectives to students and stakeholders (Figure 3P3-1). In addition the Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System (Figure 5C1-1) provides for regular conversations about these objectives. A third communications approach is the continuous improvement website. The site is fully transparent and open to all students and stakeholder populations.

2P3 Determining Faculty and Staff Needs Relative to These Objectives
Part of the Strategic Human Relations Plan under development (Figure 8C3) is a Workforce Learning System which will strengthen the alignment between needs assessment, development, funding, and tracking activities with the College’s strategic directions and goals. This is further described in section 4C4.

2P4/2P5 Measures for Assessing and Reviewing Distinctive Objectives
Results for core competencies and other distinctive institutional objectives thread across all categories and are integrated into the College Balanced Scorecard and divisional dashboards. These include leadership outcomes in Category 5, planning for continuous improvement in Category 8, building collaborative relationships in Category 9, and others in addition to those in the results that follow.

Results (R)

2R1 Results in Accomplishing Your Other Distinctive Objectives
Licensure and certification is a direct indication of student learning and provides evidence that graduates are prepared to work in their occupational field having met the requirements of their professional associations and state board exams. Pass rates are and have been historically at or close to 100% (See Figure 1). It is also important that RCTC’s key stakeholders know and understand the successes of the College’s graduates. Thus it is a measure of success that key stakeholders “external” to RCTC (i.e., business leaders, civic leaders, etc.,) have approximately the same impression of the quality of RCTC’s graduates as do those “internal” to RCTC (i.e., faculty, staff, administrators) (Figure 2R1-1).

RCTC, an active participant in the Rochester area community, is concerned with how it is perceived by the community at large. The community satisfaction rating, the economic development rating, and the rating of responsiveness to community and business educational needs (Figures 2R1-2 through 2R1-4) are a measurements of how well key stakeholders feel about how well RCTC is meeting the needs of the Greater Rochester area.

Overall, how satisfied are you with how RCTC serves the community as a whole?

The World Community Grid (WCG) has three measures for each team and RCTC is currently ranked first in the world on all three: results, total run time, and points. Results is the number of times we complete the work unit assigned and return the result to the WCG server. Run time is the amount of time each computer is working on the WCG application. The calculation of points is the method WCG uses to calculate our contribution to their Internet Distributed Computing projects based on the "strength" of our participating machines (CPU power, Random Access Memory, allocated and available hard disk space, and Internet throughput of our machines against the World Community Grid Comparison Device).

The RCTCLearn.net learning management system allows employees to participate in a course when and where it is convenient. Additionally, employers use...
the system to track employee progress and maintain accurate educational records. In 2006, over 900 employees throughout Minnesota participated in nearly 4500 hours of training.

Having submitted multiple National Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award applications, RCTC can track its improvements over time (Figures 2R1-5 through 2R1-7). Last year, the scoring system was adjusted, so direct 2005-2006 comparisons are difficult to make. Red denotes a drop in score from the previous year, blue denotes no change, and green denotes improvement.

![Figure 2R1-5 2004 Malcolm Baldrige Scoring Profile](image)

![Figure 2R1-6 2005 Malcolm Baldrige Scoring Profile](image)

![Figure 2R1-7 2006 Malcolm Baldrige Scoring Profile](image)

2R2 Results Comparison
RCTC is the only institution in the MnSCU system engaged in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program. Additionally, organizations applying to Baldrige are not made public, therefore comparisons are difficult. The Survey of Stakeholders is an instrument that RCTC uses exclusively and no direct comparative institutions have been identified.

2R3 Results of Other of Distinctive Objectives Strengthening and Enhancing Relationship With Community/Region
RCTC’s mission is to provide accessible, affordable quality learning opportunities to serve a diverse and growing community. These results directly measure how community leadership and external examiners view College performance. The Survey of stakeholders examines how community leaders feel about College quality, responsiveness, mission, role in economic development, preparing students for transfer education and work, serving diverse populations, being socially accountable, and providing community leadership. As such results are a direct reflection on how well the College is achieving its mission, vision, and values (MVV).
Improvement (I)

2I1 Process Improvement for Other Distinctive Objectives
RCTC plans to encourage employees, students, and alumni to install the World Community Grid program on their home computer and register as part of the RCTC team. We will work with student leadership to promote the project as a way to give back to the community. We plan to encourage computer science faculty and students to study the project as it relates to grid computing, encourage faculty and students in the life sciences and medical programs to study the project for its impact on medical research, and encourage marketing students to get involved in marketing the project to the student population.

RCTC nursing and other health sciences programs will begin dialogue with the Migrant Health Inc. to explore how we can best utilize the facility to provide clinical and hands-on learning opportunities, cultural sensitivity, and interdisciplinary/teamwork training to our students. The objective is to be able to not only use the facility to provide health care for the underserved but also maximize clinical sites for the health science programs. The migrant dental clinic can also be used as one of the clinical training sites for RCTC’s dental assisting students.

Participants of the on-line programs must complete a course evaluation that measures usability, effectiveness and practical application. In addition, the college regularly evaluates the impact of the training on employee performance.

The college continually reviews and updates current curriculum and adds additional course content based on customer feedback. A survey of current users was recently distributed to determine curriculum requirements and prioritize new course development. Based on the survey results, the college will secure resources to increase available curriculum and improve current offerings to meet the changing requirements of employers and the workforce.

2I2 Improvement Priorities, Target Setting
Once all documentation is submitted into the IPP, the College’s Leadership Council undergoes a review and recommendation process. Leaders review non-academic self-assessments and program review documents to ensure that strengths and opportunities for improvement are integrated into requests. They then meet with those making submissions to clarify, refine, and make recommendations. Using the IPP web interface, each leader then makes recommendations for all Continuous Improvement Plans (strategic initiative requests) and operating budgets. During this same time period, strategic targets are set. All proposals, recommendations, and final approvals are fully viewable by any college personnel at any stage of the process.

(Sections 6I1 and 6I2 provide much more detail regarding the improvement process at RCTC.)