

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

October 10, 2007



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Elements of the Feedback Report	3
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	5
Using the Feedback Report	9
Critical Characteristics Analysis	10
Category Feedback	13
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	14
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	18
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	20
<i>Valuing People</i>	24
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	27
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	29
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	32
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	35
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR ROCHESTER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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

Rochester Community and Technical College has sought to make teaching and learning its central priority in its mission documents, values and the organizational structure of the College. There is evidence that aspects of assessing and improving student learning are becoming widespread across the College. Nonetheless, most of the activity in this area is focused on courses (with Common Course Outlines) and individual faculty (with CATs). The College is only in the exploring stage regarding identification of general education outcomes and there is no clear evidence that career programs have identified measurable learning objectives. Assessment of learning in these areas is not developed and the College relies largely on indirect indicators for its summative assessment processes. RCTC is developing a basis for improvement in these areas. By focusing its commitment on process improvement developed in other areas of the College on teaching and learning, substantial improvement is likely to appear in a few years.

RCTC has identified its distinctive objectives as partnerships, innovation, comprehensive learning opportunities, and health science/allied health curricular focus. Partnerships are clearly a strength for RCTC. The process for identification of other distinctive objectives would be enhanced by including multiple stakeholders with input on both the strengths of and the opportunities facing the College. RCTC is encouraged to broaden its scope of other distinctive objectives as they strive to serve their whole community.

RCTC has identified a manageable number of student segments to guide their efforts in understanding student needs. The use of the life cycle model aids in understanding how student needs change over time. RCTC is using various means to collect and compare information regarding student and other stakeholder needs and is in the process of obtaining additional sources of other information from other institutions. The College appears to do an excellent job of measuring and collecting data. RCTC presented outstanding data about stakeholder knowledge and awareness of the College as well as comparative data on both the state and national levels. Yet, it is not always clear how this information is placed into the hands of those most responsible for managing the

organization and instructing the students. Rochester has identified processes for improvement largely at the leadership level. While priorities, targets, and indicators are being established on a regular basis, it is not clear if processes are in place to implement improvement. Little evidence is presented that notes how faculty and staff are engaged in the process of responding to change and implementing improvement strategies. Unless these processes are in place, have buy-in and are supported, improvement may be limited.

RCTC understands the importance of valuing people as reflected in the variety of programs in place to develop, recognize, and reward employees. The data they have collected over time provides useful information which will aid in remedying the recent drop in satisfaction. The inclusion of a strategic plan focused on the human resources area within the overall strategic plan will help RCTC in meeting their future challenges such as succession planning, knowledge management, and the aging of the staff and faculty.

RCTC has an expansive system for identifying student support service processes. Expanded use of the dashboard system will increase visibility of these processes and allow identification of appropriate improvement plans. In fact, RCTC has identified areas of dissatisfaction in its support services and is working to address them. The College may want to review the complexity of this system and identify the most vital information for defining the validity of its support services. The overall approach seems almost too detailed and a bit cumbersome.

RCTC has detailed internal processes for assessing leadership and has devoted attention to "leadership building." Scorecards bring data into focus for decision-making, and multiple communication approaches are utilized. However, communication and decision-making seem largely top down, and the snapshot of comment card results provided is not particularly positive. Also, RCTC provides little by way of comparative or trend data, and improvements discussed are largely improvements in data collection and analysis rather than improvements in processes and systems for leading and communicating and setting targets for improvement.

RCTC is committed to measuring effectiveness through their participation in the Baldrige program, the use and planned expansion of the Balanced Scorecard and

Dashboards, eLumen software and other tools and techniques. Continued use and expansion of such tools will facilitate the strengthening of the culture of quality at RCTC. The college would benefit from clarifying how the information systems and resulting data are used to directly measure and improve student performance.

RCTC has been proactive through its methods for achieving continuous improvement. Those methods include campus-wide and community-wide surveys, the use of dashboards, and the use of the balanced scorecard approach. Most significantly, the institution has attempted to align its continuous improvement methods and activities with its Vital Few action projects and its strategic planning efforts. With those methods and activities in place, RCTC has an opportunity to construct comparative benchmarks that target national results, continuously evaluate the impact of positive and negative results, and emphasize the results of student learning assessments.

Due in large part to its location, RCTC has numerous opportunities to build relationships that enhance its ability to fulfill their mission. Among RCTC's most important and influential partners are area educational institutions and their advocates, the Mayo Clinic and entities interested in sports. RCTC has a strong reputation within the Rochester community and surrounding area as a result of its focused efforts at relationship development. With so many diverse relationships and partnerships, however, a focal point to track, assess and communicate opportunities afforded by these relationships would help ensure they remain healthy and are used effectively in the interest of students.

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

ELEMENTS OF Rochester Community and Technical College's FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your

institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary. Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team are based upon the institution's achievements and challenges in regards to each of the nine AQIP Categories. Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Critical Characteristics: Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning

Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institutions under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Rochester Community and Technical College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the *Criteria* will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Rochester Community and Technical College in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Rochester Community and Technical College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

RCTC has an opportunity to continue to improve student satisfaction rates in several areas. While there have been improvements made in the past few years, the momentum must continue, as many of the measures are still below the benchmarked figures.

Student completion rates are average, with a three-year graduation rate of approximately 17%. RCTC has an opportunity to improve upon this measure through identification and admittance of students who “fit” with the institution and have a higher probability of completion. Further identification as to reasons students do not complete their programs of study will allow early intervention processes to be developed.

Rochester Community and Technical College is in the developmental stages of the assessment of student learning. General education has some common learning outcomes identified by MnSCU, and RCTC is in the process of identifying its own set of outcomes. Processes for achieving these outcomes at the course or program level are undefined and the assessment of general education learning is unevenly developed across the curriculum. It is also unclear how career programs engage in direct measures of student learning, beyond those that employ licensing exams. With some exceptions, most measures of teaching effectiveness rely on student evaluations. In addition, given the rapid growth of online courses, RCTC should explore the effectiveness of their on-campus and online learning environments. The College is aware of this issue, as it is an ongoing AQIP Action Project. Some tools are in place, such as *eLumen*. Assuming a commitment on the part of faculty and support from administration, further progress should be appearing soon.

RCTC has opportunities to continue to explore options in instructional delivery methods. Through use of additional data that will be available through recently incorporated software, and in collaboration with some of their relationships and partnerships, RCTC needs to utilize their culture of innovation to stay ahead of the competition in the use of technology in the customization of instruction for students in the future.

RCTC has demonstrated great progress with course assessment. The institution has the opportunity to strengthen its program assessment through these methods.

RCTC has an opportunity to strengthen the culture of accountability of the institution and move towards a culture of continuous improvement. The use of various tools to measure and report results such as their Balanced Scorecard reporting system, *eLumen*, *Power of One*, etc. are valuable in communicating where the College is currently in regards to a number of measures. Using the Malcom Baldrige program to help facilitate RCTC can work towards educating staff and faculty on continuous improvement tools and methods,

generate new suggestions and ideas for changes and enhancements, and develop targets for improvement. The incorporation of continuous improvement as an element of accountability will strengthen RCTC as it moves into the future.

RCTC has accumulated a wealth of data about the institution and its stakeholders. The College has an opportunity to utilize the analysis of this data for continuous improvement and to use this data to influence positive change. However, the institution should remain wary of overwhelming its stakeholders with large amounts of data while providing little or no analysis.

RCTC has an opportunity to use its analysis of accumulated data to improve and emphasize core values of the institution such as teaching, learning, leading, and communicating.

The decreased levels of state funding and subsequent increases in tuition at RCTC will require strategic thinking as to the maintenance of a healthy institution going forward. Sources of revenue, careful analysis of spending, and innovative ideas for financial support are all elements that should be examined.

With approximately 50% of RCTC workforce eligible to retire within the next ten years, RCTC has an opportunity to strategically plan for the workforce of the future. The diversity of the institution could be enhanced, innovative staffing methods developed, hiring practices and policies reviewed and revised to meet changing demands. There may also be opportunities for the make-up of the labor force to be reviewed and designed to fit with RCTC's long term goals and objectives. In an increasingly competitive job market, RCTC will need to determine how they can become the employer of choice in the region.

RCTC faces concerns about its faculty and staff in several areas. The College will face high turnover and concerns about recruitment and training of new employees. The employee base does not currently reflect the diversity of the student population. The College will need to address faculty and staff diversity issues in the near future.

The absence of measures of leading and communicating is a notable concern. Despite a broad range of surveys, meetings, and other Listening and Learning techniques, there is little feedback to report from faculty and staff. While these planning and improvement

systems can effectively align all components of the College and focus its operations, the lack of feedback can also impact employee morale. The senior administration should be aware of and learn from the experiences and perception of RCTC employees.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The *AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it

has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of Rochester Community and Technical College, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Rochester Community and Technical College distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a RCTC is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) that has administrative oversight over 25 two-year colleges and 7 state universities. RCTC is governed by the MnSCU Board of Trustees which—in turn—is appointed by the governor.

- O1b RCTC has the following values: Learner-Centered, Excellence, Innovation, Team work, Respect, and Fun. The RCTC statement of desired culture identifies respecting the differences and values of all stakeholders, celebrating successes, treating students and stakeholders to their delight, and collaborating through open communication and encouraging innovation.

- O2a RCTC offers over 70 credit-based programs with more than 130 credential options in the areas of liberal arts, allied health, business, services and technical career pathways. The College's largest programs are liberal arts, nursing, allied health and business.

- O2b RCTC course delivery methods include face-to-face, labs, online, internships, on-the-job training, clinical, cohort and interactive television delivery. RCTC is among MnSCU's largest generator of online credits.
- O2c RCTC offers community-based educational programs for youth and seniors.
- O3a RCTC benefits from its location Rochester, Minnesota, the state's third largest city and one of the nation's "most livable cities" with a strong local economy. The city is home to the Mayo Clinic and IBM Rochester. RCTC is one of the largest employers in the economically thriving area of Rochester.
- O3b RCTC serves approximately 7,500 students in credit-based enrollments and 4,400 in contract and non-credit open enrollment courses. RCTC is well known in the area, and 66 percent of area residents have attended or have had an immediate family member attend RCTC.
- O4a RCTC is unique as it is a comprehensive community college with the feel of a state university environment and is part of the University Center Rochester (UCR). The UCR also includes the University of Minnesota Rochester and Winona State University (WSU). The 3-2-1 model represented by the UCR features Minnesota's two public higher education systems (MnSCU and the University of Minnesota) working together on one campus. UCR partners serve approximately 12,000 students annually. RCTC is the legal authority on campus.
- O4b RCTC provides monthly reports to and receives input from the Greater Rochester Advocates for Universities and Colleges (GRAUC). GRAUC advocates for advancing innovation, growth and excellence in public higher education in the greater Rochester area and was responsible for the establishment of UCR.
- O4c RCTC has an Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System composed of interlocking groups.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O4e A new WSU/RCTC Leadership Alliance increases collaboration between the MnSCU institutions and focuses on 2+2 programs, seamless student service, support service for

- diverse students, enhancing global alliances, and enhancing customized workforce training initiatives.
- O4f Along with collaborating with numerous higher education and K-12 partners, RCTC serves targeted industries and workers. The institution has articulation agreements and career pathways that facilitate student success. Moreover, RTC has established advisory committees that assist the College in keeping their technical programs current with industry standards.
- O5a RCTC's workforce includes 156 full-time faculty, 160 part-time faculty, 156 full-time staff, 53 part-time staff and 13 full-time administrators. The RCTC employees' average age is 46, 5% are persons of color, and approximately 80% of full-time faculty have at least a master's degree. Employees are represented by seven collective bargaining units.
- O5b RCTC uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate with students and other stakeholders and partners.
- O6a The RCTC campus includes 20 buildings on 518 acres. Since the 1996 consolidation of Rochester Community College and Minnesota Riverland Technical College – Rochester, RCTC has leveraged more than \$50 million in campus development through capital bonding dollars and local tax proceeds. The UCR Master Site Plan envisions several other new developments.
- O7a RCTC competitors include private for-profit providers and community/technical colleges. The closest public two-year institutions are located 45 miles east and 45 miles west of RCTC.
- O7b RCTC's advantages over its competitors include program variety, overall value, credit transferability, access to technology, K-12 partnerships, the UCR, and the leveraging of the IBM and Mayo brand strengths. RCTC's participation in the UCR model provides access to more than 150 credential options for students and has been highly successful in diminishing the affect of local competitors.
- O8a RCTC has identified strategic directions and goals derived from and aligned with the MnSCU system-level strategic plan. The 16 college goals align with 12 KPIs, the institution's strategic advantages, and the RCTC's \$80M impact on the local community.
- O8b RCTC has been challenged by a decade-long decline in state funding. Since

2002 the allocation per FYE has declined 13.3%. As a result, RCTC's tuition has increased 54%.

O8c RCTC was a founding organization in the Rochester Area Quality Council which includes 65 local organizations and has a strong area commitment to quality management and improvement systems. With RCTC identifying initiatives, the institution has created a culture of improvement in which the college is a major participant. The College Performance Improvement System incorporating a "Plan-Do-Check-Act" process contributes to effective decision-making.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these "strengths and opportunities" sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling,

learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O2a RCTC offers over 70 credit-based programs with more than 130 credential options in the areas of liberal arts, allied health, business, services and technical career pathways. The College's largest programs are liberal arts, nursing, allied health and business.
- O2b RCTC course delivery methods include face-to-face, labs, online, internships, on-the-job training, clinical, cohort and interactive television delivery. RCTC is among MnSCU's largest generator of online credits.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O4f Along with collaborating with numerous higher education and K-12 partners, RCTC serves targeted industries and workers. The institution has articulation agreements and career pathways that facilitate student success. Moreover, RTC has established advisory committees that assist the College in keeping their technical programs current with industry standards.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	O	It is not clear that RCTC has identified explicit learning objectives for its programs or for general education, although Common Course Outlines include objectives at the course level and advisory committees for many programs "shape program learning." Learning objectives at both program

and course levels, with alignment between them, will provide a foundation for effective assessment and improvement methods.

- 1P3 S RCTC identifies, and periodically reviews, prerequisite levels for English, math and reading, for other courses and for career programs. Input from advisory committees, faculty, and transfer institutions are used in the periodic review and changes are examined by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council. The process should result in identifying proper levels of student preparation.
- 1P4 S RCTC employs a variety of methods to communicate to students expectations and required levels of preparation, including advising, Student Success Days, Common Course outlines and syllabi, and others. These methods can promote proper course placement and realistic expectations by students of what is expected in courses and programs.
- 1P5 S The College uses several processes to direct students into appropriate programs of study. Early advising and counseling, interest surveys, Preview days and collaboration with high schools help students identify directions for their education.
- 1P8 S Rochester monitors the currency and effectiveness of its curriculum, using several different kinds of input, including program advisory committees, results of licensure exams, accreditation reports and articulation agreements with senior institutions. These sources of input can insure that programs are regularly reviewed by faculty.
- 1P9 O A number of sources provide information about the needs of students and faculty learning needs, in relation to the college's ability to provide learning support for students. These include surveys, summaries from the CLC and Comment Cards for students, while faculty produce development plans and often cite their learning needs in department strategic plans. It is not clear, however, how student and faculty needs are aligned to be complementary, or how student services and support systems are incorporated. A more systematic process of linking these components would benefit the college.

- 1P10 O RCTC provides examples of several co-curricular offerings that reinforce and support curricular learning, such as clubs, trips and service learning. The College would benefit from a more systematic effort to expand co-curricular offerings in more programs and address their alignment with curriculum.
- 1P11 O Across the College, various methods are used to determine processes for assessment of student learning. The use of CATs is common in sections and common assessment methods in courses are included in CCOs. However, RCTC is only exploring more summative levels of assessment for general education and for programs. The college will benefit by drawing on assessment experience at course and section levels and building it at the program and college level.
- 1P12 O Beyond licensure exams in selected areas, RCTC has developed few methods to determine the level of student preparation/learning at the completion of a program. Course grades and student surveys provide only limited or indirect measures of student performance. More direct measures of student learning aligned with program learning outcomes can provide more effective ways to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the programs.
- 1P13 O RCTC collects and analyzes few measures of student performance beyond those required for licensure or IPEDS reporting. The development of summative assessment measures for programs and general education, along with regular indirect measures of student achievement can promote curricular development, especially in conjunction with CCESSSE and SSI results.
- 1R1 O RCTC has not provided results for common learning outcomes, either for specific programs or general education. While some areas of the College have begun to use *eLumen* to develop cross-disciplinary assessments, there is no information about how many programs have developed learning objectives and general education is in the “exploring” stage (1C1). The College will be able to use assessment results to improve

teaching and learning processes when specific learning objectives are developed.

- 1R2 S RCTC uses a few limited measures to assess academic achievement as identified by external stakeholders. Licensure pass rates, graduation rates and selected data on transfer students are a good beginning. More widespread measures, among employers and transfer institutions, along with more focused program-level assessment results, will be important to provide adequate feedback to more programs.
- 1R3 O RCTC uses few valid measures to assess the effectiveness of efforts to improve learning. Aside from certain CCSSE indicators, which address student perceptions of their learning experiences, the results included in the portfolio do not provide clear evidence that efforts to improve learning have been achieved. More focused results that can be traced to specific changes in teaching effectiveness or new support programs will provide the College with more useful feedback.
- 1R4 O RCTC provides comparative benchmark data from only two CCSSE items among colleges in the MnSCU system. However, these represent only a small, and mostly indirect, measure of the effectiveness of improvement processes in learning.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation

of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O2c RCTC offers community-based educational programs for youth and seniors.
- O4e A new WSU/RCTC Leadership Alliance increases collaboration between the MnSCU institutions and focuses on 2+2 programs, seamless student service, support service for diverse students, enhancing global alliances, and enhancing customized workforce training initiatives.
- O4f Along with collaborating with numerous higher education and K-12 partners, RCTC serves targeted industries and workers. The institution has articulation agreements and career pathways that facilitate student success. Moreover, RTC has established advisory committees that assist the College in keeping their technical programs current with industry standards.
- O7b RCTC's advantages over its competitors include program variety, overall value, credit transferability, access to technology, K-12 partnerships, the UCR, and the leveraging of the IBM and Mayo brand strengths. RCTC's participation in the UCR model provides access to more than 150 credential options for students and has been highly successful in diminishing the affect of local competitors.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2P1	O	RCTC determines other distinctive objectives through a series of surveys of faculty, staff and community stakeholders. These other distinctive objectives are incorporated into the strategic planning process. The process highlights the College's strengths while it would be productive to incorporate both strengths and opportunities into the research.

- 2P2 S RCTC maintains communications related to the four institutional objectives through the leadership and shared governance structure as well as maintaining a continuous improvement website.
- 2P3 O RCTC has begun development of a Strategic Human Relations Plan that aligns workforce development with needs assessments, development and tracking systems. The Plan needs to address how this effort is connected with achievement of other distinctive objectives.
- 2P4/5 O RCTC utilizes a balanced scorecard and division dashboards to communicate objectives and status. However, it is not clear how and who assesses and reviews objectives.
- 2R1 O Results for the accomplishment of RCTC's other distinctive objectives are not clearly provided in all cases. The college has established extensive collaborative partnerships, which addresses the partnerships objective, and its participation in the Baldrige Award demonstrates commitment to quality and innovation. Results for the other two distinctive objectives are not provided, limiting the ability to determine how well they are accomplished.
- 2R2 O RCTC is the only institution in the MnSU system engaged in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program so it has no comparison group within the system, and the Stakeholder Survey is unique to RCTC. However, other benchmarks and institutions outside the MnSCU System could be used for comparison, and trend analysis of RCTC's own survey results would allow comparison over time.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining

satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O2a RCTC offers over 70 credit-based programs with more than 130 credential options in the areas of liberal arts, allied health, business, services and technical career pathways. The College's largest programs are liberal arts, nursing, allied health and business.
- O2b RCTC course delivery methods include face-to-face, labs, online, internships, on-the-job training, clinical, cohort and interactive television delivery. RCTC is among MnSCU's largest generator of online credits.
- O3b RCTC serves approximately 7,500 students in credit-based enrollments and 4,400 in contract and non-credit-open enrollment courses. RCTC is well known in the area, and 66% of area residents have attended or have had an immediate family member attend RCTC.
- O4e A new WSU/RCTC Leadership Alliance increases collaboration between the MnSCU institutions and focuses on 2+2 programs, seamless student service, support service for diverse students, enhancing global alliances, and enhancing customized workforce training initiatives.
- O4f Along with collaborating with numerous higher education and K-12 partners, RCTC serves targeted industries and workers. The institution has articulation agreements and career pathways that facilitate student success. Moreover, RTC has established advisory committees that assist the College in keeping their technical programs current with industry standards.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating

to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	S	RCTC has established a Learner Life-Cycle (LLC) outlining five key phases of the students' experience at the College. RCTC conducts internal and external assessments at each phase of the LLC to aid in determining current and future needs and expectations of each segment. Information from these surveys is regularly made available through the Continuous Improvement web site and monitored by college leadership.
3P2	O	RCTC builds and maintains relationships with students by making changes based on data gathered by an inventory of tools and surveys (SSI, CCSSE, and Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey) that measure student responses about their needs and expectations. While these methods provide valuable data about student experiences, it is not clear that these build a relationship with students. The college has an opportunity to actively push this information to employees who are in a position to act on the information.
3P3	S	A wide variety of methods and instruments are used to identify changing needs of stakeholders.
3P4	S	The institution builds and maintains a relationship with key stakeholders through two community-based surveys—Knowledge and Awareness Survey and Survey of Stakeholders.
3P3/4a	O	RCTC uses a Survey of Stakeholders for business and community leaders and a Knowledge and Awareness Survey for community population to identify changing needs. In addition, RCTC uses Recruitment Plus (R+) to build traditional and electronic communication flows targeted to prospective students, applicants, and other stakeholder groups. Fewer methods for direct interaction with non-student stakeholders were identified. Thus, the College has an opportunity to augment its data gathering with a process of face-to-face contact with key

- groups. This added contact could provide a greater depth of understanding concerning issues identified in the surveys.
- 3P5 O Surveys conducted by the College provide a basis for identifying emerging subgroups or subgroups with distinctive needs. RCTC uses “emerging markets” to determine whether new student and stakeholder groups should be addressed. However, it is unclear how “emerging markets” are identified.
- 3P6 S The College has a clear and effective system of complaint identification and resolution. RCTC has defined a four-step grievance procedure for students to follow. In March 2007 the comment card process had yielded 111 comments which included complaints, compliments, questions, and unreported resolutions.
- 3P7 S The institution determines student satisfaction through the use of nationally-normed and locally developed surveys. RCTC identifies gaps by comparing the stakeholder ranked importance of survey items and their satisfaction with said items.
- 3R1 S Rochester has extensive results from its various instruments, which indicate relatively high levels of satisfaction among students and other stakeholders. Comparative data is available for a number of these measures and suggests that RCTC is generally at or near comparable institutions on these measures.
- 3R2 O RCTC relies largely on surveys to gather information, which may not always provide information about the relationships established with student populations. The College appears to be well-regarded by students, but also falls below comparable institutions on student-faculty interaction. Data on retention, transfer or other measures are not available, reducing the ability to obtain non-survey measures on relationships.
- 3R3/3R4 S RCTC gathered data on how stakeholders perceive the college through two means – the Survey of Stakeholders and the Knowledge and

Awareness Study. RCTC continues to satisfy and surpass stakeholder needs.

- 3R5 O Recently, RCTC helped form a CCSSE Minnesota Consortium which provides state-level comparison data in addition to the other aggregates provided by CCSSE. RCTC has also joined the National Community College Benchmark Project. As a result, RCTC has access to a wide range of comparative data. An opportunity exists to describe how this data is managed and distributed to key operating segments within the college for the purpose of identifying opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b RCTC has the following values: Learner-Centered, Excellence, Innovation, Team work, Respect, and Fun. The RCTC statement of desired culture identifies respecting the differences and values of all stakeholders; celebrating successes, treating students and stakeholders to their delight, and collaborating through open communication and encouraging innovation.

- O4c RCTC has an Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System composed of interlocking groups.
- O5a RCTC's workforce includes 156 full-time faculty, 160 part-time faculty, 156 full-time staff, 53 part-time staff and 13 full-time administrators. The RCTC employees' average age is 46, 5% are persons of color, and approximately 80% of full-time faculty have at least a master's degree. Employees are represented by seven collective bargaining units.
- O5b RCTC uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate with students and other stakeholders and partners.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1	S	RCTC, along with input from MnSCU has a clearly defined process for identifying credentials required for faculty, staff, and administrators. This process facilitates identification of quality candidates for open positions.
4P2	S	RCTC has an open, inclusive process for recruiting and hiring such as the use of search teams with diverse membership including representation from all of the bargaining units, students, community representatives, and higher education partners. Retention is noted as a major component of the Strategic HR plan.
4P3	S	RCTC has a formal process for achieving two-way communication with employees and encourages employee participation in institutional governance. Emphasis on core values, such as innovation and excellence, ethics and integrity are promoted in these processes which enhances alignment with overall college goals. RCTC supports faculty development.

- 4P4 S RCTC has an extensive orientation and training program for staff including diversity training, faculty development, and a core training program for supervisors.
- 4P5 S RCTC determines training needs through the results of online surveys, personnel evaluation processes, and periodic development plans completed by employees. Continuous improvement is incorporated into the Integrated Planning Process.
- 4P6 SS RCTC has a performance management system for all faculty, staff, and administrators. Evaluations provide opportunities for goal setting and planning for professional development that are aligned with institutional goals.
- 4P7 S RCTC has established a range of methods to recognize, motivate and reward effective performance. A number of award and recognition methods are included such as the establishment of a committee charged with monthly awards, presidential recognition, and communication of key life events to the campus community.
- 4P8 S The College utilizes a Campus Quality Survey to identify key motivational issues. These issues are reviewed at multiple levels in the organization and rapid response teams are used to solve concerns. Proactive and open communication on difficult issues is used to mitigate negative effects as much as possible.
- 4P9 S RCTC has full-time staff dedicated to employee and student safety and welfare which has been enhanced in response to an assessed need.
- 4P10 S RCTC utilizes the Campus Quality Survey along with other special surveys and Comment Cards to collect data on how the institution values people.
- 4R1 O RCTC has an opportunity to use the data they have collected over time to address the recent drop in scores across all employee satisfaction benchmarks.

- 4R4 O RCTC has not provided results to make effective comparisons to comparable colleges. Obtaining data from other institutions may provide comparisons and benchmarks that could better inform planning at Rochester.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision-making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a RCTC is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) that has administrative oversight over 25 two-year colleges and 7 state universities. RCTC is governed by the MnSCU Board of Trustees which—in turn—is appointed by the governor.
- O4c RCTC has an Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System composed of interlocking groups.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O5b RCTC uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate with students and other stakeholders and partners.

O8a RCTC has identified strategic directions and goals derived from and aligned with the MnSCU system-level strategic plan. The 16 college goals align with 12 KPIs, the institution's strategic advantages, and the RCTC's \$80M impact on the local community.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	S	RCTC utilizes feedback from standard surveys and institutionally developed measures, has created a Balanced Scorecard to track College performance, uses a Strategic and Integrated Planning Processes and seeks to be transparent in communicating with stakeholders; however, it is not clear how these systems focus on mission, vision, values and expectations.
5P2	S	RCTC has developed a system for employee development, conducts performance reviews, is initiating a process for requiring individual development plans and recognizes employee achievements; however, the portfolio does not explain how leaders guide the institution in seeking future opportunities and building and sustaining a learning environment.
5P3	O	RCTC's decision-making process includes constituent input but appears to work from the top down. Committees, sub-committees, task forces, and other groups are advisory. Final decisions rest with the President. Input from the committees, task forces, and groups flow to Leadership Cabinet/Council and influence recommendations from the Cabinet/Council. RCTC, as a proponent of shared governance, might consider clarifying roles and involving all groups more directly in College decision-making.
5P4	S	RCTC relies heavily on a series of performance indicators, displayed on dashboards for each institutional area, as sources for information used in decision-making. Dashboards include leading and lagging indicators and

are open to the College community. Although dashboard data are useful, the College might also benefit from ongoing monitoring of a broader range of information sources to check the reliability and validity of dashboard data and enhance dashboard measures in key decision-making.

- 5P5 O Few processes are identified for communicating between areas and levels within the organization. Aside from comment cards, established methods for upward communication are not explicitly identified. The College could benefit from ensuring that communication channels in multiple directions at multiple levels are available to influence decision-making.
- 5P6 S RCTC utilizes a variety of diverse communication opportunities, including newsletters, presentations, emails to communicate and engage, and the College provides an online 'Comment Card' system for individuals to send comments anonymously via the internet.
- 5P7 S RCTC provides leadership training and staff development opportunities, conducts leadership succession planning and employs a Faculty and Staff Development Specialist. It has also designated development of a comprehensive Human Resources Strategic Plan, which may include leadership development opportunities, as one of its "Vital Few."
- 5P8 O The Portfolio does not provide clear evidence about how succession for key leadership positions is handled. The College has an opportunity to clarify the process by which potential successors are identified for key positions and how key college/organizational values are imparted to incoming leaders.
- 5P9 O The President conducts anonymous "Office of the President Surveys" annually to measure effectiveness of leadership. RCTC should develop additional measures of leadership effectiveness throughout the institution.
- 5R1 O RCTC provides little evidence of results for leading and communicating processes and systems.
- 5R2 O RCTC identifies sources of comparative data, but provides little or no comparative results related to leading and communicating.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O4c RCTC has an Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System composed of interlocking groups.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O5b RCTC uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate with students and other stakeholders and partners.
- O8a RCTC has identified strategic directions and goals derived from and aligned with the MnSCU system-level strategic plan. The 16 college goals align with 12 KPIs, the institution's strategic advantages, and the RCTC's \$80M impact on the local community.
- O8b RCTC has been challenged by a decade-long decline in state funding. Since 2002 the allocation per FYE has declined 13.3%. As a result, RCTC's tuition has increased 54%.
- O8c RCTC was a founding organization in the Rochester Area Quality Council which includes 65 local organizations and has a strong area commitment to quality management and improvement systems. With RCTC identifying initiatives, the institution has created a culture of improvement in which the college is a major participant. The College Performance Improvement System incorporating a "Plan-Do-Check-Act" process contributes to effective decision-making.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.

Item S/O Comment

- 6P1 S RCTC identifies the support service needs of students via Listening and Learning approaches such as the Student Satisfaction Inventory and

organizational unit user surveys. Upon problem identification, the College can rapidly address weaknesses.

- 6P2 OO A process to identify administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, administrators and other key stakeholders is not described in the report. Such a process would be helpful in allowing efficient and effective use of resources in meeting RCTC's goals and objectives.
- 6P3 O RCTC does not describe how their processes are managed day-by-day.
- 6P4 S Data is displayed on dashboards for each operational area, as sources for information used in decision-making. While input from various surveys and internal constituencies is acknowledged, it is suggested that decisions are weighed strongly on the basis of the dashboards. To the extent that the performance indicators and core measures are valid and comprehensive, the college can benefit by using dashboard measures to trigger rapid responses to concerns.
- 6P5 O RCTC's process mapping has incorporated a broad range of measures and performance indicators, most of which rely on data from the Student Success Inventory. It is appropriate that RCTC uses the evaluations of students to measure support service effectiveness. However, other, more direct measures should also be considered. It is unclear from the report to what degree the College incorporates such measures into its regular measurement processes.
- 6R1 O RCTC results for student support service processes are obtained from a wide range of indicators, compiled into SSI benchmarks, to measure effectiveness. While RCTC shows improvement in satisfaction areas for several student support service processes, the scores are below comparison data.
- 6R2 O RCTC results for administrative support service processes are centered on fund balance, crime statistics, tuition revenue, etc. The College needs to look at other administrative support services such as custodial, cashiering, business office when defining administrative support services.

When comparing its results with other institutions, RCTC is slightly below the national average.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a RCTC is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) that has administrative oversight over 25 two-year colleges and 7 state universities. RCTC is governed by the MnSCU Board of Trustees which—in turn—is appointed by the governor.
- O1b RCTC has the following values: Learner-Centered, Excellence, Innovation, Team work, Respect, and Fun. The RCTC statement of desired culture identifies respecting the differences and values of all stakeholders; celebrating successes, treating students and stakeholders to their delight, and collaborating through open communication and encouraging innovation.
- O4a RCTC is unique as it is a comprehensive community college with the feel of a state university environment and is part of the University Center Rochester (UCR). The UCR also includes the University of Minnesota Rochester and Winona State University (WSU). The 3-2-1 model represented by the UCR features Minnesota's two public higher education systems (MnSCU and the University of Minnesota) working together on one

campus. UCR partners serve approximately 12,000 students annually. RCTC is the legal authority on campus.

- O4b RCTC provides monthly reports to and receives input from the Greater Rochester Advocates for Universities and Colleges (GRAUC). GRAUC advocates for advancing innovation, growth and excellence in public higher education in the greater Rochester area and was responsible for the establishment of UCR.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O5b RCTC uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate with students and other stakeholders and partners.
- O8a RCTC has identified strategic directions and goals derived from and aligned with the MnSCU system-level strategic plan. The 16 college goals align with 12 KPIs, the institution’s strategic advantages, and the RCTC’s \$80M impact on the local community.
- O8c RCTC was a founding organization in the Rochester Area Quality Council which includes 65 local organizations and has a strong area commitment to quality management and improvement systems. With RCTC identifying initiatives, the institution has created a culture of improvement in which the college is a major participant. The College Performance Improvement System incorporating a “Plan-Do-Check-Act” process contributes to effective decision-making.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	O	RCTC utilizes consistent and systematic review and communication methods, including the “at a glance” research summaries in the campus online newsletter and the “Dimensions of Assessment” model. It reports on key performance indicators, benchmarks and uses the balanced scorecard approach to guide and manage institutional effectiveness. Data

for other institutional objectives is also linked to KPI's and a wide range of surveys. However, it is not clear how the College uses its information systems to directly measure and improve student learning.

- 7P2 S Data needs at the department level are largely focused on reporting relevant to KPI's or other aspects of the planning and improvement processes. Data requests from department level are evaluated on their relationship to identified goals in the planning process. This focuses activities on the KPI's, but may also limit departmental inquiries if they do not fit the existing model.
- 7P3 SS RCTC utilizes internal and external sources, such as the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), to identify needs and to secure data. All data is readily available for all campus stakeholders on the College's continuous improvement website.
- 7P4 S RCTC analyzes assessment data and utilizes the balanced scorecard analysis to manage institutional effectiveness. The institution has implemented a color-coding system to examine the performance-to-target, performance-to-benchmark, and overall trend of indicators.
- 7P5 S RCTC analyzes and shares information as it relates to the planning and improvement process. Measures for which analysis will take place are identified in relation to KPI's at the various organizational levels. Results are tracked (or will be) through a series of dashboards for departments that are accessed through the CI web site on the Internet. KPI's are also aligned with those of the MnSCU system. This accessibility fosters openness and accountability.
- 7P6 S RCTC completes institutional assessment via accreditation, quality assessments, legislative and system audits, and other system analyses. Assessments are linked to key performance indicators and core measures on the College's BSC. The college has an opportunity to mature in its processes by evaluating the depth and breadth of data collection process with the potential for focusing on a more targeted range of information that can be effectively utilized.

- 7P7 O RCTC did not report what measures of effectiveness are collected and analyzed on its system of measuring effectiveness. This data would inform the college of any modifications needed in the system.
- 7R1 O RCTC has increased faculty and staff response rates and is now able to disaggregate data by employment type, tenure length and contract area. It has also increased student response rates. RCTC has established strong systems of information control and accessibility. However, the College has an opportunity to provide a broader view of how the information collected relates directly to the accomplishment of organization mission and goals.
- 7R2 O In effect, Rochester implicitly defines the effectiveness of its data and information as it relates to and supports the planning and improvement process. As such, measures of its effectiveness would be evaluated by those using the systems to monitor performance and improve processes. RCTC has an opportunity to provide information concerning user satisfaction with the data and information systems. Given the range of reports, dashboards and other methods of communication and providing information, it would be useful to determine if these methods efficiently allow data usage or result in information overload.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a RCTC is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) that has administrative oversight over 25 two-year colleges and 7 state universities. RCTC is governed by the MnSCU Board of Trustees which—in turn—is appointed by the governor.
- O4c RCTC has an Organizational Leadership and Shared Governance System composed of interlocking groups.
- O4d RCTC has identified and mapped its internal processes at three levels with all processes linked to two central goals of teaching and learning and student success.
- O8a RCTC has identified strategic directions and goals derived from and aligned with the MnSCU system-level strategic plan. The 16 college goals align with 12 KPIs, the institution’s strategic advantages, and the RCTC’s \$80M impact on the local community.
- O8c RCTC was a founding organization in the Rochester Area Quality Council which includes 65 local organizations and has a strong area commitment to quality management and improvement systems. With RCTC identifying initiatives, the institution has created a culture of improvement in which the college is a major participant. The College Performance Improvement System incorporating a “Plan-Do-Check-Act” process contributes to effective decision-making.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1	S	RCTC’s three-year multi-phase Strategic Planning Process (SPP) was adopted in 2000. The process aims for complete alignment between mission, vision, goals, performance indicators and budgeting, along with regular assessment/evaluation methods, information gathering and other feedback loops. The process includes Landscape Analysis, Systems and Processes Assessment, and the Identification of Strategic Directions and

Key Performance Indicators. This SPP is supported by the Integrated Planning Process (IPP) utilized for the development of program and department Continuous Improvement Plans.

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|-----|---|--|
| 8P2 | S | RCTC develops short- and long-term strategies through the five phases of the SPP and at the highest leadership level. However, the institution may benefit from identifying methods for addressing conflicting expectations among stakeholders about those strategies. |
| 8P3 | S | RCTC's "Vital Few" and action plans relate to use of data, assessment of student learning, and human resource planning, which seem appropriate in light of the information provided throughout the portfolio. The institution communicates with its stakeholders through conversations and a fully-transparent continuous improvement website. |
| 8P4 | S | RCTC's Leadership Council acts as the coordination body of operational and strategic goal alignment between and among the various levels of the organization. However, it is unclear whether RCTC has identified methods for addressing conflicting expectations among stakeholders. |
| 8P5 | S | RCTC's planning system incorporates performance indicators at each level of strategic planning, which are the basis for dashboards and the BSC at the college level. At the department level, operational planning generates additional measures for improvement initiatives. |
| 8P6 | S | Step 2 of the IPP identifies resources needed to support strategic initiatives. Resource needs are evaluated when improvement plans are submitted and weighed against the overall strategic priorities, leading to a high level of alignment. These resource requests are reviewed utilizing decision criteria for inclusion in the budget. |
| 8P7 | S | RCTC is in the early phases of aligning faculty, staff, and administration capabilities through its Strategic Human Resources Plan. The institution uses training needs surveys to allow staff to identify training needs. RCTC should continue to monitor the skills and attitudes of employees |

- during and after the implementation of the Strategic Human Resources Plan.
- 8R1 O The Balanced Scorecard will provide a real-time snapshot of progress based on the relationship of KPI's and associated CMs and DMs. Although RCTC has linked results to its Vital Few action projects and has made substantial progress with its institutional effectiveness project and human resources project, the institution has demonstrated less progress and few results with student learning assessment.
- 8R2,8R3 O RCTC intends to develop specific targets for the BCS and its components. At this point, RCTC has no comparative data by which it can evaluate its progress against that of other institutions but seems to have developed its own unique benchmarks to other systems. Given the scope of impact the system has had on the College, and in light of this system's use by others in the MnSCU network, it will be important to note RCTC's progress in comparison to that of other members.
- 8R4 O RCTC relies on the results of campus-wide surveys to gauge the effectiveness of its strategies. Although participation in campus surveys has increased, satisfaction results have declined. RCTC has an opportunity to evaluate the latest results and to respond to the challenges presented by the recent downward trends in survey results.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Rochester Community and Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O3a RCTC benefits from its location Rochester, Minnesota, the state's third largest city and one of the nation's "most livable cities" with a strong local economy. The city is home to the Mayo Clinic and IBM Rochester. RCTC is one of the largest employers in the economically thriving area of Rochester.
- O4a RCTC is unique as it is a comprehensive community college with the feel of a state university environment and is part of the University Center Rochester (UCR). The UCR also includes the University of Minnesota Rochester and Winona State University (WSU). The 3-2-1 model represented by the UCR features Minnesota's two public higher education systems (MnSCU and the University of Minnesota) working together on one campus. UCR partners serve approximately 12,000 students annually. RCTC is the legal authority on campus.
- O4b RCTC provides monthly reports to and receives input from the Greater Rochester Advocates for Universities and Colleges (GRAUC). GRAUC advocates for advancing innovation, growth and excellence in public higher education in the greater Rochester area and was responsible for the establishment of UCR.
- O4e A new WSU/RCTC Leadership Alliance increases collaboration between the MnSCU institutions and focuses on 2+2 programs, seamless student service, support service for diverse students, enhancing global alliances, and enhancing customized workforce training initiatives.
- O4f Along with collaborating with numerous higher education and K-12 partners, RCTC serves targeted industries and workers. The institution has articulation agreements and career pathways that facilitate student success. Moreover, RTC has established advisory committees that assist the College in keeping their technical programs current with industry standards.
- O7b RCTC's advantages over its competitors include program variety, overall value, credit transferability, access to technology, K-12 partnerships, the UCR, and the leveraging of the IBM and Mayo brand strengths. RCTC's participation in the UCR model provides

access to more than 150 credential options for students and has been highly successful in diminishing the affect of local competitors.

- O8c RCTC was a founding organization in the Rochester Area Quality Council which includes 65 local organizations and has a strong area commitment to quality management and improvement systems. With RCTC identifying initiatives, the institution has created a culture of improvement in which the college is a major participant. The College Performance Improvement System incorporating a “Plan-Do-Check-Act” process contributes to effective decision-making.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Rochester Community and Technical College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	O	RCTC has an impressive array of relationships, including K-12 partnerships, higher education partnerships, community and recreation partnerships, business partnerships and cultural partnerships; but RCTC has an opportunity to clarify how its partnerships are developed, assessed and prioritized.
9P2	S	RCTC utilizes its governance system, surveys, informal conversations and meetings to identify stakeholder needs. However, due to the large number and variety of partnerships and relationships, RCTC has a challenge to effectively track the needs of its partners and ensure they are being met.
9P4	O	While RCTC describes the importance of its collaborative relationships, the portfolio does not provide evidence about processes required and used regularly to measure and analyze those relationships.
9R1	S	RCTC has provided examples of positive outcomes from its partnerships (particularly with K-12 institutions, GRAUC, UCR and Mayo Clinic). However, the nature and scope of the results provided in the portfolio is limited; and, as yet, little data is available on recent initiatives.

- 9R2 O RCTC does not provide comparative data about its collaborative partnerships.