

# **SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT**

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

## **RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**September 17, 2008**



**Academic  
Quality Improvement  
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

**30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400  
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504  
[www.AQIP.org](http://www.AQIP.org)  
[AQIP@hlcommission.org](mailto:AQIP@hlcommission.org)  
800-621-7440**

**SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT**  
In response to the *Systems Portfolio* of  
**Red Rocks Community College**



Academic  
Quality Improvement  
Program

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

**September 17, 2008**

**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary .....	1
Elements of the Feedback Report .....	4
Strategic and Accreditation Issues .....	6
Using the Feedback Report .....	8
Critical Characteristics Analysis .....	9
Category Feedback .....	12
<i>Helping Students Learn</i> .....	12
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i> .....	18
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i> .....	21
<i>Valuing People</i> .....	26
<i>Leading and Communicating</i> .....	30
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i> .....	33
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i> .....	37
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i> .....	41
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i> .....	44

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

**Category 1: Helping Students Learn** - RRCC has established processes for Helping Students Learn and has begun to collect and analyze data on piloted processes. The college can now benefit from expanding upon their existing efforts to systematically and substantively collect, analyze, and disseminate data to involve the entire college, to determine how well these processes are working, and to identify process improvements. Suggestions for improvement include the use of trend data and benchmarking. Trend data and benchmarking will allow RRCC to identify areas where improvement is needed and best practices are occurring.

The team found it difficult to follow some sections of the category because questions were combined and given minimal treatment and little explanation regarding the lack of response. While it may be in place, it is not clear from the report whether or not the institution has struck balance between its external and internal stakeholder's needs. The institution's ability to both receive external stakeholder input (state compliance, employer input) and take full internal ownership of the processes and systems involved in helping students learn will assist the institution to continuously improve upon student learning.

**Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:** Red Rocks Community College has identified three distinctive objectives through stakeholder input and they are positioning themselves to collect and use results. However, processes to incorporate assessment results to make improvements are not well defined. The college now has the opportunity to collect, analyze and use results to continuously improve within these areas and to benchmark their performance with other like institutions.

**Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs** - RRCC is involved with the community it serves and is active in attempting to meet perceived student and external stakeholder needs. RRCC has documented several examples where data has been collected and analyzed on student and stakeholder needs and satisfaction. In addition, the college has identified a number of opportunities to expand upon and improve their data collection, analysis and use of results. RRCC can strengthen their data collection and analysis efforts by engaging in systemic methods of measuring stakeholder satisfaction, the outcomes resulting from their

stakeholder relationships, establishment of baseline and trend data, and expanding their use of comparative data with colleges outside of CCCS. The intention to build upon the existing successes in collecting, analyzing, and using results indicates the college's commitment to continuously improve its response to students and stakeholders needs.

**Category 4: Valuing People** - RRCC should be commended for establishing recent improvements in collecting institutional climate data, orientating new employees, and a screening process for new hires. However, the College has depended primarily on a fairly informal system of annual employee performance plans and evaluation as their primary source of information related to valuing people. A number of established processes, such as identifying qualifications for and recruiting employees, and communication with employees, can serve as the college's foundation for building more formalized processes that are implemented consistently across all employee groups, and that strengthen the connection between these processes and the college's focus on employee satisfaction and well-being. The college will benefit from systematic long term collection of climate data to assess trends, establish improvement targets, and evaluate institutional change. In addition, RRCC has identified a number of improvement targets that can be pursued and measured to demonstrate the college's commitment to continuously improving their processes related to valuing people.

**Category 5: Leading and Communicating** - RRCC has established and intends to more fully utilize a number of college constituent planning groups to strengthen their leading and communicating processes. In addition, the CCCS provides support through system-wide initiatives such as climate surveys, performance plans and mandated succession planning. RRCC's new president has demonstrated her commitment to increasing opportunities for collaborative decision making. All of these initiatives demonstrate RRCC's intentions to strengthen their leading and communicating processes. As these processes are developed and enhanced, effectiveness measurement should be incorporated so that data will be collected and analyzed to determine how well the processes are working and to identify potential improvements.

**Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations** - RRCC has implemented and communicated a number of initiatives to measure the effectiveness of student and administrative support services, such as the student services customer surveys and Technology Strategic Planning, and the College appears to be financially strong based on the percentage of operating reserves. However, it is not clear how these processes are documented, measured,

and improved. The college appears to be positioned to continue collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of services in meeting stakeholder needs and to then use these results to continuously improve. Following a data-driven decision-making process may assist the College in providing funding to the areas most in need of improvement.

**Category 7: Planning for Continuous Improvement** - RRCC uses the goals identified in its strategic planning process to determine what data to select, manage, and use. Several examples are cited of how information and data are accessed and collected to support student learning, institutional objectives and strategies. The College is strongly influenced by the Colorado Department of Education's Performance Contract Goals and the Colorado Community College's statewide implementation of the Banner business system. It is anticipated that the Banner business system will be used to improve its processes and systems for measuring effectiveness. This might provide the opportunity for the College to develop a performance measurement system that supplies critical data and information about key processes and results. The College may benefit from continuing their efforts to collect data on their specific initiatives, such as their Action Projects, and use the results to continuously improve upon their effectiveness. In addition, data from sources other than the Colorado Department of Education will provide for a stronger analysis of their overall performance.

**Category 8: Measuring Effectiveness** - RRCC's efforts related to planning for continuous improvement are directly impacted by the Colorado Department of Education's Performance Contract Goals and the college's participation in AQIP. The college has an opportunity to use these two major initiatives as the foundation for building a comprehensive, college-wide planning process that includes annual and strategic planning for all college constituents. This planning process will be strengthened by including employee training about the importance of collecting and analyzing data to be used for data driven decision making and for continuous improvement.

**Category 9 – Collaborations and Partnerships** - RRCC opted to include the Foundation and RMEC as its examples of collaborations and partnerships. Red Rocks Community College has identified areas of improvement including using the report produced by The Dini Partners to set targets for improvement for their Foundation and offering online courses for RMEC. There is no evidence to determine whether similar processes exist for other college partnerships. The college has an opportunity to use these two major initiatives as the model for building a comprehensive process to establish new and improve existing partnerships. This

comprehensive process should include effectiveness measures which are collected, analyzed and used to continuously improve upon the college's collaborations and partnerships.

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

---

## ELEMENTS OF Red Rocks Community 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 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 institution 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 Red Rocks Community 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 Red Rocks Community College for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

**Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies.** The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist your institution 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 your institution will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

RRCC seemingly has some strong Action Projects that have produced exceptional processes and systems. Those strengths can serve as a model for RRCC's work on future action projects and improvements to other college processes and systems. The college has an opportunity to expand upon its existing efforts to systematically and substantively collect, analyze, and disseminate data to involve the entire college, to determine how well these processes are working, and to identify process improvements.

RRCC indicates that its evaluation systems are sometimes lacking or underdeveloped. Further, as part of that evaluation system, the college does not often benchmark against other institutions and incorporate that data to better its own process improvements. As part of its systematic data collection, analysis and dissemination, RRCC has an opportunity to benchmark with other institutions, which can provide it with information needed to set improvement targets.

RRCC appears to have had many new initiatives implemented within the past year. In addition, its new president is implementing a number changes within the college. The College may want to consider prioritizing all of these new initiatives to ensure each one receives an appropriate amount of attention and resources. In addition, communicating these priorities internally and externally may allow RRCC to secure stakeholder buy-in.

Many of RRCC's processes and outcomes, such as defining common learning objectives and curriculum development, are a result of Colorado Community College System (CCCS) mandates. Overall, the institution seems to allow its agenda to be set by external forces instead of developing its own internally-determined processes, procedures, and systems. While CCCS mandates do appear to provide direction and support for the college, it is unclear how closely the CCCS-mandated outcomes apply to RRCC's processes. RRCC has an opportunity to define its own, internally-driven measures of effectiveness. Doing so may provide the college with data that is clearly understood and useful for process improvement.

## 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 Red Rocks Community College 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 Red Rocks Community 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 Red Rocks Community 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 The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O1b RRCC is one of five (5) community colleges in the Denver area and one of 13 colleges comprising the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). Red Rocks Community College's main Lakewood campus is located 10 miles due west of Denver, Colorado. The Arvada campus is located approximately 15 miles to the north.
- O1c The College Opportunity Fund (COF) has created a voucher program for higher education which has shifted funding for public higher education from formula funding to a stipend paid to the colleges based on individual student enrollments.
- O2a RRCC offers more than 150 programs and 650 courses leading to a two-year degree or professional certificate.
- O2b RRCC uses partnerships with universities to provide co-enrollment programs for transfer students, an important growth market for the College. This is reflected in 62% of RRCC's students seeking transfer degrees.
- O2c RRCC is one of only six community colleges in the country to offer a Physician Assistant (PA) Certificate.

- O2d RRCC collaborates with universities that accept credits toward baccalaureate and masters degrees, with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education, and with state energy industries to develop and provide programs in Process Technology, Industrial Maintenance and Renewable Energy Technology.
- O2e The College transfers the highest number of students to the Colorado School of Mines than any other college or university in the country. The Colorado School of Mines has the highest admissions standards in the state and yet considers the general education credits from RRCC equivalent to designated courses at CSM.
- O3a Fall 2007 student headcount was 7,039 with 69% part-time students, 17% minority and 51% female.
- O3b RRCC has launched several initiatives to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of underserved students.
- O3c During the 2006-2007 academic year, 577 graduated from certificate programs and 401 graduated with associate degrees.
- O3d RRCC's largest associate degree program is a liberal/general studies degree and the largest certificate programs are in the Health area.
- O4a RRCC – Lakewood is part of the Life Long Learning Campus.
- O4b RRCC received approval from CCCS to grant degrees and certificates for technical education coursework at Warren Technical High School.
- O4c The College has dual enrollment agreements with local high schools, which allows the students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, reducing the time to earn an associate degree after high school graduation.
- O4d The College created the Industrial Science and Operations facility to address the needs of industry partners in the service area.
- O4e RRCC has the largest construction technology program in Colorado including carpentry, electrical, HVAC, fine woodworking, plumbing, and renewal energy degrees and certificates.

- O5a RRCC employs a total of 714 faculty and staff, including 352 women and 362 men with 56 having bachelor's degrees, 80 having masters or doctoral degrees. Sixty-two (62) full-time faculty teach 41.2% of the RRCC courses.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.
- O6b Because of a lack of public funds available for education, funding for capital construction has been most challenging in Colorado, where the state is ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in state and local support for higher education. However, passing Referendum C in 2005 has provided more financial resources for capital construction than there has been in recent years.
- O6c The college submitted a program plan to the state requesting a new trades and technology building in 2002. The plan is on hold pending state funding, so it will be revised to reduce the costs using a phased approach beginning in August 2008.
- O6d With all programs located in the same building on the Lakewood Campus, the growth of one program typically infringes upon adjacent programs which must be modified or relocated.
- O6e The College maintains laboratory space and computer labs with the goal of recreating the technology found in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Due to year end budget surplus, more than \$500,000 will be invested in IT infrastructure to refresh computer systems in labs and classrooms prior to Fall 2008.
- O6f As a result of the General Assembly's 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.
- O6g The College plans proactively for the prevention of crimes and has developed a comprehensive crime prevention program. RRCC's Campus Police collaborate with the Lakewood Police and West Metro Fire Protection District ensuring coordinated

emergency response. The Police Internship Program has developed a strong reputation among local police departments as many of the interns field multiple employment offers.

O7a The CCCS facilitated Envisioning Scenario Planning with participation from all 13 Colorado community colleges, resulting in the identification of private sector competitors.

O8a Through a SWOT analysis, RRCC identified the following opportunities and vulnerabilities: college options for high school students, increasing demand for technical workforce, renewable energy industry expansion, funder focus on STEM education, implementing Banner, limited resources for capital improvements, space to accommodate program growth, student expectations of learning engagement, and K-12 environments that have better technology.

---

## 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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O1a The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O2a RRCC offers more than 150 programs and 650 courses leading to a two-year degree or professional certificate.
- O2b RRCC uses partnerships with universities to provide co-enrollment programs for transfer students, an important growth market for the College. This is reflected in 62% of RRCC's students seeking transfer degrees.
- O2c RRCC is one of only six community colleges in the country to offer a Physician Assistant (PA) Certificate.
- O2d RRCC collaborates with universities that accept credits toward baccalaureate and masters degrees, with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education, and with state energy industries to develop and provide programs in Process Technology, Industrial Maintenance and Renewable Energy Technology.
- O2e RRCC collaborates with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education. Statewide articulation agreements facilitate seamless transfer for students.

- O4c The College has dual enrollment agreements with local high schools, which allows the students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, reducing the time to earn an associate degree after high school graduation.
- O4e RRCC has the largest construction technology program in Colorado including carpentry, electrical, HVAC, fine woodworking, plumbing, and renewal energy degrees and certificates.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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	S	RRCC determines common learning objectives and program-specific learning objectives through participation in statewide initiatives, including the GE-25 Council and the Colorado Common Course Numbering System (CCCNS). New or revised course proposals are faculty-initiated with a multi-tier review and approval system both within the institution and Colorado's Department of Higher Education (CDHE).
1P2	S	Red Rocks designs new programs based on the workforce needs of employer partners, societal interest, and input from program advisory members. Courses are added to programs through a process of aligning student preparation with employer expectations and articulations, as well as student and faculty interest. RRCC's Curriculum Approval Committee allows faculty to propose new courses in coordination with the CCCS'



discipline-specific Academic Chair (AC) who represents all faculty across the state within that discipline.

- 1P3-1P5a     S     RRCC has developed Plans of Study (POS) for high school aged students to assure preparedness of students. The CDHE legislates assessment policies and requires that advising information is available to ensure students are accurately placed into courses and complete remediation within 30 semester hours. RRCC has streamlined its registration, financial aid, advising and assessment processes by establishing the Student Welcome Center as a 'one-stop' service center. Various assessment methods are used to ensure proper placement of students in courses. The assessment criteria include Accuplacer scores, ACT scores, past performance, previous courses, and the student's educational goals.
- 1P3 – 1P5b     O     Although the College uses assessment tests from the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), it is unclear how activities are coordinated or evaluated.
- 1P6             S     RRCC has implemented a commendable assessment system (A "Plan, Do, Check, Act" Cycle) based on an action project that provided for a means to connect course objectives to teaching strategies. As a result of follow-up on the action project, RRCC embedded assessment practices into faculty performance goals. The College began by using the cycle of assessment at the course level, and assessment is evolving and will be supported by professional development offered through the new Achieve Classroom Excellence Center.
- 1P7             S     RRCC reviews course enrollment trends and has implemented SCT's Banner system for managing its enrollment which allows for regular and systematic analysis of trends in enrollment. Daily enrollment reports and weekly annualized full-time enrollment reports are used to monitor enrollment patterns by campus, time of day or weekend, and location, allowing RRCC to build an efficient and effective course delivery system.

- |            |    |  |
|------------|----|--|
| 1P8        | SS | The CCCS conducts an annual conference with discipline-specific faculty to provide an opportunity to review course competencies and seek changes needed. RRCC monitors curriculum effectiveness and determines which program to change or discontinue by having faculty review CCCNS curriculum guides, through reviews of career and technical education programs every five years, by charging task forces with program evaluation, and through the VP for Instruction's <i>Academic Master Plan</i> . |
| 1P9a       | S  | Two of RRCC's Action projects, Tutors without Borders and Faculty Advising, are a direct result of identifying needs for student support. After piloting these support services, a need for ongoing staff and faculty professional development was identified, resulting in establishment of the Achieve Classroom Excellence Center in Spring 2007.   |
| 1P9b       | O  | The College has used Action projects for developing and improving student support services. However, it is unclear what methods are used to identify student support needs and how the effectiveness of the initiatives are being assessed.  |
| 1P10a      | S  | The College has a variety of co-curricular activities for students and they are widely communicated. RRCC Student Employment office coordinates the Service Learning Program which connects community service with academic instruction.   |
| 1P10b      | O  | Although Red Rocks discusses service learning projects it isn't clear if these projects are a part of all degree programs or what process is followed in aligning curricular and co-curricular objectives.   |
| 1P11-1P13a | S  | RRCC's Assessment Action project has resulted in faculty developing and implementing assessment processes. Graduate surveys and industry certification exam results are used to determine how well students are prepared for employment. Red Rocks Community College faculty have developed assessment strategies, collected data comparing performance and learning outcomes, reviewed the data, and used the data to alter teaching and improve student learning.                                      |

- 1P11 – 1P13b OO While RRCC provided information for this response, the description was limited in its scope and did not fully respond to the process questions. As a result, it is difficult to determine the full scope of RRCC's assessment initiatives.
- 1R1 O Limited results included in the responses were in reference to math and English. However, the college has also identified a need to systematically collect, analyze and disseminate assessment results. Without data and the results of their analysis, it will be difficult for the institution to make adjustments to its practice and to document whether or not student learning has occurred.
- 1R2a S RRCC uses several methods to assure student acquisition of knowledge and skills including the National Student Clearinghouse, articulation agreements with other schools, and employer surveys. RRCC's strong pass rates on industry certification exams document that students have acquired skills needed in three academic programs.
- 1R2b O It is clearly a strength that students can transfer credits to other institutions but there is no clear evidence that RRCC has assessed that the students have acquired the desired knowledge and skills.
- 1R3a S Red Rocks has completed three Action projects associated with Helping Students Learn: "Tutors without Borders," "Faculty Advising," and "Assessment of Student Learning." The data from each action project indicated that the projects were a success based on testimonials received from students and faculty.
- 1R3b O RRCC has identified a number of opportunities for improvement based on results collected when Action project pilots were implemented, including increasing faculty participation in Tutors without Borders, resolving issues related to data entry required to track Faculty Advising, sharing Assessment of Student Learning strategies across disciplines, and a general need for more professional development for faculty and staff.
- 1R4 OO While RRCC participates in CCSSE, the college has not compared its results for student learning with other institutions.

- 111            O        Because the institution has not documented that it has collected the data, it is difficult to identify how RRCC improves its processes and systems for helping students learn.
- 112            O        RRCC recognizes the need to focus its efforts in the area of assessment and its implementation, but it reports limited results for student learning and development. The College does not report how targets are established. Without targets it may be difficult to guide actions, especially those that are the most critical to the future success of the organization.

---

## **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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O1a    The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O3b    RRCC has launched several initiatives to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of underserved students.
- O3c    During the 2006-2007 academic year, 577 graduated from certificate programs and 401 graduated with associate degrees.

- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.
- O8a Through a SWOT analysis, RRCC identified the following opportunities and vulnerabilities: college options for high school students, increasing demand for technical workforce, renewable energy industry expansion, funder focus on STEM education, implementing Banner, limited resources for capital improvements, space to accommodate program growth, student expectations of learning engagement, and K-12 environments that have better technology.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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	While RRCC does collect input from a variety of internal and external stakeholders when determining other distinctive objectives, it is unclear exactly what processes are used to set these objectives and how these balance the needs of students and other stakeholders.
2P2a	S	RRCC’s expectations regarding their other distinctive objectives are communicated using a variety of techniques, including special events, committee work, web sites, email, direct mail, publications and presentations.
2P2b	OO	It is unclear how leadership involves employees in decision making. No feedback loop or continuous improvement cycles are described. Communication of expectations for Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives does not appear to be systematic to meet the specific needs and expectations of students and external constituents.

- 2P3            O     Although the faculty and staff members of Red Rocks defined their needs and concerns for the other distinctive objectives during Conversation Day, it isn't clear what process is followed to ensure ongoing communication is occurring. It does not appear that a process is systematic nor is it clear how information is analyzed and used.
- 2P4a           S     Assessment and review of other distinctive objectives occurs through various methods. A faculty and staff review team examines the Action projects. Child care programs are examined through staff meetings and staff retreats. A college leadership committee examines the library.
- 2P4b           O     RRCC assesses its distinctive objectives using available data. However, it is unclear how information is communicated and integrated to yield organizational improvement.
- 2P5, 2R1      O     RRCC has developed several quantitative and qualitative measures and has seemingly reviewed the results to these assessments. However, the specific review process was not discussed in several cases. RRCC now has the opportunity to analyze these results and use them to identify next steps for making improvements.
- 2R2            O     The processes for comparative analysis of distinctive objectives performance results are documented but there is no actual statistical comparison or documentation of comparative results.
- 2R3            O     Although processes are documented for the use of results, actual results are not provided in regard to performance on distinctive objectives.
- 2I1            O     Red Rocks states that each of their other distinctive objectives has been reviewed for improvement but the actual process followed in that improvement isn't clear. For example, the College states that the school age child care director and staff used survey results to improve systems and processes but doesn't describe the steps followed in doing so, which would describe the process.
- 2I2            O     Although RRCC states that targets have been set or will be set for each of its other distinctive objectives, it isn't clear what those targets are or

how they will be addressed.

---

### **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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O1a The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O2b RRCC uses partnerships with universities to provide co-enrollment programs for transfer students, an important growth market for the College. This is reflected in 62% of RRCC's students seeking transfer degrees.
- O2d RRCC collaborates with universities that accept credits toward baccalaureate and masters degrees, with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education, and with state energy industries to develop and provide programs in Process Technology, Industrial Maintenance and Renewable Energy Technology.
- O2e The College transfers the highest number of students to the Colorado School of Mines than any other college or university in the country. The Colorado School of Mines has

- the highest admissions standards in the state and yet considers the general education credits from RRCC equivalent to designated courses at CSM.
- O3a Fall 2007 student headcount was 7,039 with 69% part-time students, 17% minority and 51% female.
- O3b RRCC has launched several initiatives to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of underserved students.
- O4b RRCC received approval from CCCS to grant degrees and certificates for technical education coursework at Warren Technical High School.
- O4c The College has dual enrollment agreements with local high schools, which allows the students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, reducing the time to earn an associate degree after high school graduation.
- O4d The College created the Industrial Science and Operations facility to address the needs of industry partners in the service area.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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>
3P1a	S	RRCC analyzed the assessment data of incoming high school graduates and their need for developmental education. As a result, they opened Community Learning Centers in local high schools and community locations to assist prospective students. In addition, the college opened



the Connect to Success Office in Fall 2006 to respond to developmental students' unique learning needs.

- 3P1b O RRCC has made an effort to improve the retention rates of enrolled students in developmental education. However, it is unclear how the College develops new goals and approaches to identify the changing needs for this and other student populations.
- 3P2a S RRCC offers a variety of services, activities, events, student organizations, programming, and communication tools to create community within its current student body. In addition, RRCC has programs designed to establish relationships with area high school students that award college credit to the students and establishes name recognition for the college.
- 3P2b O RRCC did not discuss the process that is followed to maintain relationships with prospective and enrolled students. Identifying a process to follow when working with these students will allow RRCC to identify best practices in recruitment and retention, and also areas where improvements can be made to build and maintain relationships with students.
- 3P3a S The college has a process for identifying the changing needs of key stakeholder groups through planning, surveys, focus groups, and advisory councils.
- 3P3b O While RRCC uses a number of methods to identify the needs of its stakeholders, the continual monitoring of external stakeholder needs is not evident. In addition, there is little discussion of the methods used to analyze the data collected and select a course of action regarding the changing needs of key stakeholder or the analysis that is used to determine if the action taken was successful.
- 3P4 S RRCC builds and maintains relationships with their other stakeholders through career and technical program advisory councils and community outreach and recruitment events.

- |      |    |  |
|------|----|--|
| 3P5a | S  | RRCC has used data to identify and develop targeted programming for under-served and under-represented student populations.  |
| 3P5b | O  | A focused action project to recruit under-served students could bring opportunities to increase enrollments. The need for such a project is supported by statistics that indicate Red Rocks Community College's enrollment of minority students is not representative of the minority population in the college's service area.  |
| 3P5c | O  | Although RRCC used data to identify student populations needing special educational offerings and services, it isn't clear if an ongoing process exists to identify changing needs. Such a process would allow the college to strategically plan for and address those changes.  |
| 3P6a | S  | RRCC appears to use multiple methods of collecting complaint data from students and stakeholders through both a formal and informal process.   |
| 3P6b | OO | RRCC has identified a need to more consistently analyze student complaints collected through informal methods. Since RRCC shares little information with constituents about how complaint data is analyzed, communicated and used for institutional improvement, the college may benefit from analyzing student complaints collected through the formal student grievance procedure. |
| 3P7a | S  | RRCC uses surveys to collect student feedback on each course each semester, and to ask graduates about their employment status and satisfaction with coursework six months after graduation.   |
| 3P7b | O  | Although the College collects information on student satisfaction (i.e. the Student Opinion of Instruction), it is unclear how this feedback is analyzed and used for improvement. In addition, it is unclear how the opinions of external stakeholders are measured through a standardized process.   |
| 3R1a | S  | RRCC Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) results for online courses indicate that students are satisfied with their online learning experience. Graduate survey results indicate that Red Rocks coursework enabled  |

them to meet their educational goals and enhanced their ability to get or keep a job.

- 3R1b OO Although RRCC reports SOI results for Fall 2007, limited results are provided in the form of trend data to determine changing patterns in student and stakeholder satisfaction, which may limit RRCC's ability to develop and deliver programs and services to effectively meet the needs of these key stakeholder groups.
- 3R2a S RRCC does collect, analyze, recommend, and implement institutional improvements based upon student satisfaction survey results.
- 3R2b O No results are provided on student attrition, retention, or program completion. The lack of results may limit the College's ability to assess its effectiveness in addressing retention.
- 3R3a S RRCC results for stakeholder satisfaction, including Medical Assisting employer surveys and employer feedback on student interns, is useful in helping RRCC verify stakeholder satisfaction and establishing a best practice model in building external stakeholder relationships that can be used elsewhere in the college.
- 3R3b OO RRCC has an opportunity to expand upon the positive feedback received from specific employer groups by collecting data on satisfaction from other employers outside of Medical Assisting and other stakeholders such as community members, advisory committee members, and foundation board members.
- 3R3c OO RRCC has anecdotal results regarding external stakeholder satisfaction but does not have standardized processes, including collection of trend data, to measure external stakeholder satisfaction.
- 3R4 OO RRCC did not provide a response for this item.
- 3R5 OO While RRCC provides benchmark IPEDS and CDHE Performance Contract data on graduation and retention rates, limited comparative data is reported beyond system (CCCS) expectations.

- 311 OO RRCC has a need to develop a formalized and systematic approach to improve current processes and systems for understanding the needs of key student and stakeholder groups
- 312 O Although RRCC identifies the measurement targets set by CCCS and their efforts to achieve those measures, there is no discussion of internally-determined targets established by the College beyond those required by CCCS. In addition, there is little noted regarding their plan to communicate improvement targets, data collection results and analysis, and planned improvements to its stakeholders. Development of internally driven measures and targets for improvement, in addition to those identified by CCCS, will allow RRCC to identify its unique needs and trends, its best practices, and areas where improvement are needed.

---

#### **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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O5a RRCC employs a total of 714 faculty and staff, including 352 women and 362 men with 56 having bachelor's degrees, 80 having masters or doctoral degrees. Sixty-two (62) full-time faculty teach 41.2% of the RRCC courses.

- O6f As a result of the General Assembly’s 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.
- O6g The College plans proactively for the prevention of crimes and has developed a comprehensive crime prevention program. RRCC’s Campus Police collaborate with the Lakewood Police and West Metro Fire Protection District ensuring coordinated emergency response. The Police Internship Program has developed a strong reputation among local police departments as many of the interns field multiple employment offers.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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>
4P1a	S	RRCC has comprehensive processes to identify specific qualifications/credentials required for instructors. Credential standards for faculty in the career and technical programs are established through the Colorado Community College System.
4P1b	O	RRCC describes processes for hiring classified and non-classified employees. However, it is unclear how the College identifies skills, abilities, and competencies of required or prospective employees. The statement that these are included in the job description does not explain how these decisions are made.
4P2a	S	Depending on the role of the hire, RRCC uses a variety of approaches for marketing vacant positions (i.e. locally, state-level, regionally, or nationally).
4P2b	S	RRCC offers one-on-one initial HR orientation regarding benefits and policies and procedures. The institution offers voluntary training on traditional HR topics. Further, the ACE program provides just in time

- training for faculty along with the appointment of a mentor for the first two semesters of teaching.
- 4P2c      O      RRCC is currently working on its succession plan that was not completed at the time of submission of the portfolio but should now be implemented. There are no details of that plan included. Having a succession plan in place would assist RRCC with its upcoming retirements.
- 4P3a      S      While more detail regarding the process would be helpful to understanding it better, RRCC does note a collective decision-making process via the Collaboration Council that is part of normal decision making. The process includes varying levels of staff, faculty, and administration in an effort to increase employee buy-in and empowerment.
- 4P3b      O      While there is an ethics policy for RRCC's officers to sign, it is unclear if there is a similar policy for other levels of employees.
- 4P4      S      Employee training seems to be encouraged at RRCC with training goals included in employee annual performance plans. Additionally, employees are encouraged to share what they learn with their colleagues after completion. The college foundation offers grants of \$1,500 towards professional development with the goal of helping employees support students more fully.
- 4P5      O      It is unclear from the response how RRCC aligns staff training with institutional improvement or the college's mission or strategic goals. There is no evidence of a formal policy or procedure for determining training needs. The lack of a systematic process may create complacency in an area that has the potential for improvement.
- 4P6      O      There appears to be a lack of consistency in personnel evaluation with supervisors and employees designing their own performance plan. These personalized employee evaluation plans may reduce the consistency of how evaluations are conducted and whether they are connected to organizational goals. A process designed to be used by all departments

that could be tailored to specific job classifications might provide for consistent evaluation of all employees.

- 4P7 O While RRCC does have an employee recognition system for years of service, it is unclear how the institution supports employees through benefits and services.
- 4P8 O Motivation of employees appears to be a decentralized process at RRCC and it is unclear whether it is supported by a process or system. A formal process may allow RRCC to more effectively understand trends in the key issues facing employees.
- 4P9 S RRCC conducts an employee satisfaction survey, with evidence indicating approval of the college processes. A climate survey was conducted in Spring 2008 and exit interviews are conducted to determine why employees are leaving which may provide data to inform the institution of areas that can be improved.
- 4P10 O While RRCC conducts employee exit interviews it may be beneficial to collect information during the annual evaluation process on how the college can be more responsive to the needs of employees. Relying on exit interviews could make it too late to retain employees that might be of value to the institution.
- 4R1a S The turnover ratio has declined over the past 4 years.
- 4R1b OO The results reported are limited to exiting employees. No results for current employee satisfaction or well-being are reported.
- 4R2a S RRCC has implemented two initiatives aimed at valuing employees: 1) a screening process that attempts to remove bias and increase diversity within the institution, and 2) a stronger first-day orientation program.
- 4R2b O With the results from the statewide employee satisfaction survey, RRCC now has the opportunity to identify employee issues and trends and use them to improve its processes related to valuing people.
- 4R3 O While RRCC documents its employees' productivity and effectiveness through annual employee performance goals and by promoting six

- employees internally, it's unclear how these two examples serve as evidence of employee productivity and effectiveness.
- 4R4 OO Although the CCCS system-wide climate survey results have been received, no data have been provided. RRCC has an opportunity to analyze these results and compare them with those of other community colleges within Colorado.
- 4I1a O It isn't clear what process HR follows when evaluating conversations with employees. Following a systematic process may allow the institution to ensure that all suggestions are given equal consideration.
- 4I1b O RRCC identifies improvements to their screening processes and to their first-day orientation program in 4R2, but it's unclear whether these improvements were made based on any measurement and analysis or results related to these processes.
- 4I2 O Because RRCC's supervisors and college leadership have set a number of improvement targets which are communicated in a variety of ways, the college now has the opportunity to identify processes that need to be established and/or enhanced in order to implement these improvements.

---

## **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 Red Rocks Community 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    The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College’s mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College’s values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
  
- O1b    RRCC is one of five (5) community colleges in the Denver area and one of 13 colleges comprising the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). Red Rocks Community College’s main Lakewood campus is located 10 miles due west of Denver, Colorado. The Arvada campus is located approximately 15 miles to the north.
  
- O6f    As a result of the General Assembly’s 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.
  
- O8a    Through a SWOT analysis, RRCC identified the following opportunities and vulnerabilities: college options for high school students, increasing demand for technical workforce, renewable energy industry expansion, funder focus on STEM education, implementing Banner, limited resources for capital improvements, space to accommodate program growth, student expectations of learning engagement, and K-12 environments that have better technology.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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>
5P1a	S	There is evidence of widespread involvement in initiatives and communication throughout the college.
5P1b	O	RRCC’s new Collaboration Council may provide the college leadership with the opportunity to align communication and decision making with the mission and values of the college.

- 5P2a S RRCC uses both CCCS Performance Contract Benchmarks and their own SWOT analysis to identify future opportunities to support the mission and the learning environment.
- 5P2b O While RRCC leaders develop strategies designed to impact the CCCS Performance Contract Benchmarks, it is unclear how senior leaders stay connected with local stakeholders.
- 5P3a S Action project committees make recommendations on how the outcomes of the Action project can become standard operating procedures. The recommendations are discussed by the President's Cabinet, who makes the final decision on the annual budget.
- 5P3b O RRCC has a multiple committee/council structure including a Collaboration Council. Although the purpose for each group has been stated, it is not clear as to the communication and decision-making processes taking place within and between the committees/councils.
- 5P4 O While RRCC does provide examples of routine quantitative and qualitative reports currently available, they have also identified systematic use of data in decision making as a great growth opportunity for their college.
- 5P5 O Although the College describes a process of communication amongst and between committees and councils, it is unclear if a process exists for communication between and among levels of the entire organization.
- 5P6 O The new president seems to be committed to communication in her plan to meet one on one with all faculty and staff and is collating the results of her conversations to develop priorities with the College planning groups. However, it is unclear how mission, vision, and expectations are communicated as part of this process.
- 5P7 O RRCC indicates that professional development focused on preparing leaders is an area of opportunity for the college, and that they have begun defining qualities and performance goals of leadership through their instructional leadership teams, participating in the CCCS Performance

- Planning Process, and through the president's interviews with all employees.
- 5P8 O RRCC does not appear to have in place a leadership succession plan for either administration or board members that will ensure the continuity of the College's mission and Vision Statement.
- 5P9 O CCCS data is used by the College to monitor its progress for Leading and Communicating. This data does not include workforce engagement or climate. Without this data, it is difficult to measure progress towards employee involvement and communications.
- 5R1 O While RRCC has conducted surveys, both within the institution to evaluate instructional leadership and as part of a CCCS initiative to evaluate campus climate, no results are provided. In addition, it is not clear if the surveys will be repeated on a regular basis to obtain trend data. Trend data can be used to identify patterns where improvement is needed and best practices are occurring.
- 5R2 OO Comparison data of other institutions would provide important opportunities for improvement as well as evidence of areas of quality within the college.
- 5I1 & 5I2 OO There are no reported processes for Leading and Communicating noted. Although some anecdotal examples are provided, there is no indication of measurable improvement as a result of these changes, nor is there evidence of targets for improvement. RRCC has an opportunity to formalize these processes to ensure that they can link improvements to measurable results that have been collected and analyzed.

---

## **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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O1a The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O1c The College Opportunity Fund (COF) has created a voucher program for higher education which has shifted funding for public higher education from formula funding to a stipend paid to the colleges based on individual student enrollments.
- O3b RRCC has launched several initiatives to improve the access, retention and graduation rates of underserved students.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.
- O6b Because of a lack of public funds available for education, funding for capital construction has been most challenging in Colorado, where the state is ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in state and local support for higher education. However, passing Referendum C in 2005 has provided more financial resources for capital construction than there has been in recent years.
- O6c The College submitted a program plan to the state requesting a new trades and technology building in 2002. The plan is on hold pending state funding, so it will be revised to reduce the costs using a phased approach beginning in August 2008.

- O6d With all programs located in the same building on the Lakewood Campus, the growth of one program typically infringes upon adjacent programs which must be modified or relocated.
  
- O6e The College maintains laboratory space and computer labs with the goal of recreating the technology found in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Due to year end budget surplus, more than \$500,000 will be invested in IT infrastructure to refresh computer systems in labs and classrooms prior to Fall 2008.
  
- O6f As a result of the General Assembly's 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	RRCC cites use of CCSSE results and IPEDS data to identify student support needs such as the need for additional advising and tutoring. Also, the Colorado Department of Higher Education used community college remediation rates to increase funding to provide additional tutoring support.
6P2	O	The process of identifying administrative support service needs appears to be rather informal and does not seem to be part of a larger, structured, improvement process. It is unclear how input is gathered from faculty, staff, and administrators and used to improve support services.
6P3a	S	RRCC's Student Services and Enrollment Management areas meet regularly to promote communications and awareness of new or revised programs and services. RRCC employees meet with colleagues from other Colorado community colleges to share best practices. College departments work together as with Business Services and Financial Aid

- working together to facilitate student financial aid from application to award disbursement.
- 6P3b      O      It is unclear how RRCC is ensuring that its day-to-day operations meet the needs of its students and key stakeholders and whether or not it is documenting, reviewing and revising the processes related to its day-to-day operations.
- 6P4      O      While RRCC is using surveys to evaluate student services, it is unclear if these results have been used to improve its services. In addition, no information is provided about how administrative support areas are collecting and using information to improve services. A systematic process of data collection, analysis, and planning may identify whether these services are meeting stakeholders' needs.
- 6P5      OO      While RRCC provides some description of desired outcomes, it is unclear what measures it systematically collects, analyzes and uses to guide decision making and improve its student and administrative support processes.
- 6R1      O      Limited results for Supporting Institutional Operations are reported. RRCC has an opportunity to develop and implement a systematic process for evaluating student needs and then using results to improve its processes to meet those needs.
- 6R2      O      While RRCC provides data on financial health and facility updates, results are not reported for other areas of administrative support services. RRCC has an opportunity to develop and implement a systematic process for evaluating administrative support needs and then using results to improve its processes to meet those needs.
- 6R3      OO      RRCC does not provide benchmark data for supporting institutional operations.
- 6I1      O      While RRCC describes its plans for meeting perceived administrative and student support needs, there is no reported standardized approach for

identifying those needs and using the results to improve current work systems and processes for Supporting Institutional Operations.

- 6I2            O        RRCC recognizes the need to set, prioritize and communicate improvement targets related to Supporting Institutional Operations.

---

## **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 Red Rocks Community College'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 Red Rocks Community 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    The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O1c    The College Opportunity Fund (COF) has created a voucher program for higher education which has shifted funding for public higher education from formula funding to a stipend paid to the colleges based on individual student enrollments.
- O2b    RRCC uses partnerships with universities to provide co-enrollment programs for transfer students, an important growth market for the College. This is reflected in 62% of RRCC's students seeking transfer degrees.

- O2d RRCC collaborates with universities that accept credits toward baccalaureate and masters degrees, with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education, and with state energy industries to develop and provide programs in Process Technology, Industrial Maintenance and Renewable Energy Technology.
- O2e The College transfers the highest number of students to the Colorado School of Mines than any other college or university in the country. The Colorado School of Mines has the highest admissions standards in the state and yet considers the general education credits from RRCC equivalent to designated courses at CSM.
- O4b RRCC received approval from CCCS to grant degrees and certificates for technical education coursework at Warren Technical High School.
- O4c The College has dual enrollment agreements with local high schools, which allows the students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, reducing the time to earn an associate degree after high school graduation.
- O4d The College created the Industrial Science and Operations facility to address the needs of industry partners in the service area.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.
- O6f As a result of the General Assembly's 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.

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



<b>Item</b>	<b>S/O</b>	<b>Comment</b>
7P1	S	RRCC cites several examples of how information and data are accessed and collected to support student learning, institutional objectives and strategies. The strategies are prioritized based on efforts to increase enrollment, improve retention, and increase graduation rates.
7P2a	S	RRCC's Institutional Research staff respond to both internal (staff and faculty) and external (CCCS & IPEDS) data requests. Internally requested data is stored in common drives and externally requested data is stored on the college's business system.
7P2b	O	Institutional Research staff members respond to data requests submitted by faculty, staff and College planning groups to determine use of data and information. However, it is not clear if a process exists to collect and report data for the departments and units. The College acknowledges that it has been challenged in using data in its decision-making efforts.
7P3a	S	RRCC is participating in statewide efforts to define data reports needed from the COGNOS system. The College also plans to use the National Student Clearinghouse and the National Center for Educational Statistics Peer Analysis System for comparative measures.
7P3b	O	Although the College has access to several outlets for comparative data, it is unclear how it determines the needs for collecting and reviewing data from those sources.
7P4	O	RRCC uses the intranet to distribute data to staff and faculty, and college-wide meetings are held to report on progress of College strategies and to present data updates concerning enrollment and budgets. However, the College lacks a systematic approach to analyze information and data regarding overall performance.
7P5a	S	The College collects assessment data for student services and uses CCCS goals regarding accountability in student learning and formative analysis within the Assessment of Student Learning Action project. For example, Institutional Research is assisting Student Services with

- collecting and analyzing data to improve their processes as well as the customer service satisfaction of the students using the LaRC.
- 7P5b      O      The College describes the strategies used to define overall college performance. However, it is unclear if a process exists to ensure that those strategies are supported at the department and unit level.
- 7P6      O      The College is migrating to the Banner system and facing challenges in data collection and retrieval. Once the system is fully implemented, data collection, analysis, and reporting may improve.
- 7P7      OO      RRCC does not have a process for measuring the effectiveness of its system for measuring effectiveness. Without a process for determining the effectiveness of measures, the College may be impeding its ability to effectively evaluate and improve key processes.
- 7R1      O      The College reports no results by which it could determine if its systems for measuring effectiveness meet its needs in accomplishing its mission and goals.
- 7R2      OO      Although RRCC describes the use of IPED's National Center for Educational Statistics, the College does not report any comparisons between its results and other institutions' results in measuring its effectiveness. Without the effective use of comparative data, it is difficult to support operational and strategic decision making.
- 7I1a      O      The College reports that the Banner ERP system will be used to improve current processes and systems for measuring effectiveness. However, it is unclear how processes will be prioritized, improved, and aligned with mission and vision. Without this alignment and the use of appropriate measures, it may be difficult to manage performance.
- 7I2      O      Although, there is a plan to survey faculty and staff, it is unclear how the College sets targets for improvement, identifies areas needing improvement, and communicates that information to its stakeholders. Targets provide a basis for measuring and increasing the speed of progress towards stated goals.

## **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 Red Rocks Community 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 The vision of Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) is to be the college of first choice. The College's mission is to create a passion for learning through dedication to students, commitment to excellence, and love of learning. The College's values are innovation, teamwork, diversity, communication, and integrity.
- O6a A performance contract with the Colorado Department of Education stipulates services funded from state support and sets specific benchmarks in access and retention. Community colleges are expected to provide general education courses approved as guaranteed transfer courses as well as basic skills courses, high school dual enrollment options, education services in rural areas, and services to increase economic development opportunities.
- O6f As a result of the General Assembly's 2004 recommendation, the Colorado Community College System has a centralized, standardized, integrated, information technology system through use of SunGard Banner. In July 2008, Hr, Payroll and finance modules will go live. The student information system module has been operational since fall 2006.
- O6g The College plans proactively for the prevention of crimes and has developed a comprehensive crime prevention program. RRCC's Campus Police collaborate with the Lakewood Police and West Metro Fire Protection District ensuring coordinated emergency response. The Police Internship Program has developed a strong reputation among local police departments as many of the interns field multiple employment offers.

O7a The CCCS facilitated Envisioning Scenario Planning with participation from all 13 Colorado community colleges, resulting in the identification of private sector competitors.

O8a Through a SWOT analysis, RRCC identified the following opportunities and vulnerabilities: college options for high school students, increasing demand for technical workforce, renewable energy industry expansion, funder focus on STEM education, implementing Banner, limited resources for capital improvements, space to accommodate program growth, student expectations of learning engagement, and K-12 environments that have better technology.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Red Rocks Community 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>
8P1a	S	The new president has communicated the value she places on a participatory planning process and the College has worked this process into its AQIP process and the revision of its mission and vision. The establishment of the Collaboration Council creates an inclusive planning culture.
8P1b	OO	The College has revised their vision and mission statements, made the decision to participate in AQIP, and identified and implemented Action projects. However, it is unclear who participates in the strategic planning process and the exact process steps are not described.
8P2a	S	RRCC uses CCCS performance benchmarks to establish short and long term strategies. The College links planning initiatives with financial and facility resources.
8P2b	O	The President's Cabinet relies on the planning groups to bring forward short term priorities. However, it is unclear if a process exists to determine priorities and how the divergent expectation of stakeholder groups is addressed.

- 8P2c O The College acknowledges that there is an opportunity to make full use of the Collaboration Council and other committees and councils to improve upon communication and develop more inclusive planning, budget, and decision-making processes.
- 8P3a S Action projects were identified through a Vital Focus process. Each action project was then explored and developed through a focused committee of faculty and staff.
- 8P3b O There is no evidence of a system for producing, implementing, measuring, or revising actions plans. While mention is made of selecting the first set of Action projects, it is unclear how this process has been institutionalized or formalized, how others at the institution are involved, and how progress is communicated to internal and external stakeholder groups.
- 8P4 O RRCC describes their organizational planning process that is responsible for facilitating two-way communications across campus. However, it is unclear how goals identified in the strategic planning process are supported at the divisional and departmental levels.
- 8P5 OO The College does not report on a process for selecting measures and setting performance projections. Although the process of collecting and analyzing data requires additional resources, data may provide critical information about key processes and results. Without data, it is difficult to track progress towards stated goals.
- 8P6 O RRCC recognizes that they have an opportunity to develop a process that will help them better identify resources needed to support action planning.
- 8P7a S RRCC has identified training opportunities as they relate to Action projects and the work of college committees. For example, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee recommended that the deans complete training to assist in understanding the systematic process needed to support assessment.
- 8P7b O Although RRCC indicates that they have established faculty training, it is

- unclear if there are professional development opportunities for other employee groups. A process that links employee development with mission and vision, long-term strategic goals and plans may assist the College in its resource allocation processes.
- 8P8 OO The College reports on the results of a 2002 Climate Survey. More current measures of institutional effectiveness are not described. Without ongoing tracking of relevant measures, it may be difficult to determine progress towards stated goals and success with specific objectives.
- 8R1 S There has been an increase in enrollment and increase in cohort retention.
- 8R2a S The College has established measurable goals for the 2007-08 fiscal year.
- 8R2b O RRCC provides projections of performance for one-year goals. However, limited projections of performance are reported for long-term goals.
- 8R3 OO No information is provided.
- 8R4 OO No information is provided.
- 8I1 O While RRCC describes changes it would like to make to the role of its planning groups, the process that will be followed in making these changes isn't clear.
- 8I2 O The College describes proposed changes in the process flow of its planning groups, targets for improvement based on results, data based decision making, and communication of improvement plans.

---

## **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 Red Rocks Community 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***

- O2b RRCC uses partnerships with universities to provide co-enrollment programs for transfer students, an important growth market for the College. This is reflected in 62% of RRCC's students seeking transfer degrees.
- O2d RRCC collaborates with universities that accept credits toward baccalaureate and masters degrees, with Colorado's public universities to provide teacher education programs in early childhood and elementary education, and with state energy industries to develop and provide programs in Process Technology, Industrial Maintenance and Renewable Energy Technology.
- O4b RRCC received approval from CCCS to grant degrees and certificates for technical education coursework at Warren Technical High School.
- O4c The College has dual enrollment agreements with local high schools, which allows the students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, reducing the time to earn an associate degree after high school graduation.
- O4d The College created the Industrial Science and Operations facility to address the needs of industry partners in the service area.

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

***Item S/O Comment***

- 9P1a S RRCC has multiple collaborative relationships with educational institutions, industry and the Foundation to fulfill the mission of the college.

- 9P1b O RRCC does not describe the process it follows when creating, prioritizing, and building relationships with educational institutions and other organizations from which they receive their students.
- 9P2a S RRCC proactively solicits input from partners, such as the Foundation's feasibility study and the RMEC client needs assessments, to ensure they are responding to partner needs.
- 9P2b O Although RRCC conducts surveys to receive feedback on their Foundation and Rocky Mountain Education Center it isn't clear what process is followed to improve the relationship with other stakeholders based on the feedback received.
- 9P3 O RRCC collaborative partnerships appear to be limited to the Foundation and RMEC. It is unclear how other internal partnerships are created, built, integrated and communicated across the institution.
- 9P4 O RRCC measures the success of partnerships by tracking donations to the Foundation and the performance of RMEC. The College may benefit by having more quantifiable measures to monitor progress relating to specific strategic goals and activities to support collaborative relationships.
- 9R1a S RRCC documents that the Foundation has increased funding for the scholarship program, and that the RMEC has surveyed employers and added courses to respond to their training needs.
- 9R1b O Although RRCC states that the DOL/OSHA regularly collects data from all of its Institutes, the data isn't provided.
- 9R2 OO RRCC has the opportunity to compare the Foundations statistical results with those of like institutions. In addition, it is unclear how the information provided about the DOL/OSHA and REMC training is useful in helping the College to benchmark itself against other institutions.
- 9I1-9I2 O While the RRCC Foundation's feasibility study is an effective way to improve processes and set improvement targets for this fundraising area of the college, the remaining departments within the college will benefit



from focusing on improving current partnership processes, and setting and communicating improvement targets.