

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of
SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS COLLEGE

November 22, 2005



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Systems Appraisal conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program of The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools provides a comprehensive examination of Southwestern Illinois College conducted by a trained team composed primarily of higher education peer reviewers. In order to provide fresh and objective insights and perspectives the team also included reviewers from outside higher education. Following is the Appraisal Team's summary evaluation of Southwestern Illinois College's current performance in each of the nine AQIP Categories. These evaluations are in the form of rubrics, or descriptive statements concerning the team's perception of your current level of institutional maturity for process design, process deployment, performance results, and improvement cycles for each Category. The single words AQIP uses to refer these rubrics are:

- **Beginning.** Processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are beginning to be planned and developed. Successful approaches and processes are employed exclusively in those units that develop them. The institution is just beginning to gather results showing how successful its approaches and processes are. Performance data has not been collected long enough to reveal trends or patterns. The institution does not yet collect data that measures its performance against other organizations. Feedback from processes is casual and not used to set future performance targets. Systematic cycles of improvement are just beginning to be considered and implemented.
- **Developing.** Reliable processes that work consistently to achieve their goals are being developed and implemented. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used in units other than where they originated. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in a few areas. Evidence exists of recently (within last two years) improving levels of performance in a few areas. Anecdotal information is on hand about processes and performance of other organizations. Feedback is occasionally used to set performance targets in a few areas. Anecdotal evidence of improvements, occurring at irregular intervals is provided.
- **Maturing.** Growing, emergent processes that typically achieve many of their goals have been put in place. Successful approaches and processes are occasionally adopted and used throughout the institution. Occasional short-term (under two years) data on performance results exist in most areas. Recently improving levels (within last two years) of performance can be found in several areas. Information is collected on performance of

outstanding organizations with similar processes but used irregularly. Feedback is periodically used to set performance targets in a few areas. A record of significant improvements, occurring periodically, as the result of specific initiatives is provided.

- **Proficient.** Practical, sturdy processes that generally achieve their fundamental goals are in place. Successful approaches and processes are sometimes adopted and used throughout the institution. Mid-term (two-four years or more) data on performance results exist in most areas. Shorter trends (under five years) of improving levels of performance can be found in some areas. Information collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes is used systematically in a few significant areas. Feedback from processes is gathered and used systematically to set performance targets and drive improvement in a few significant areas. A record of significant improvements resulting from systematic multi-year (two - 10 year) improvement processes is provided.
- **Accomplished.** Robust, experienced processes exist that usually achieve many of their goals. Successful approaches and processes are often adopted and used throughout the institution. Mid-term (two-four years or more) data on performance exist in many significant areas. Shorter trends (under five years) of improving levels of performance can be found in many or most areas. Information collected on performance of outstanding organizations with similar processes is used systematically in many areas. Feedback from processes is gathered and used systematically to set performance targets and drive improvement in many areas. The organization identifies a record of concrete advances in a few areas resulting from rapid improvement cycles occurring at least annually.
- **Commendable.** Strong, established processes exist that usually achieve most of their goals. Successful approaches and processes are frequently adopted and used throughout the institution. Long-term (five years or more) patterns of high performance exist in most areas. Long-term trends (five years or longer) of improving levels of performance can be found in many areas. Information collected on performance of world-class organizations with similar processes is used systematically in many areas. Feedback from processes is gathered and used systematically to set performance targets and drive improvement in most areas. The organization identifies a record of concrete advances in many areas resulting from rapid improvement cycles occurring at least annually.

- **Outstanding.** Vigorous, tested processes exist that consistently achieve all of their goals in all or most areas. Successful approaches and processes are fully deployed throughout the institution. Long-term (five years or longer) patterns of high performance exist in all or most areas. Long-term (five years or longer) trends of improving levels of performance can be found in all or most areas. Information collected on performance of world-class organizations with similar processes is used systematically in all or most areas. Feedback from processes is gathered and used systematically to set performance targets and drive improvement in all areas. The organization has a record of significant advances in all or most areas that resulted from rapid improvement cycles occurring at least annually.

The complete Systems Appraisal Feedback Report contains evaluation of the processes, performance results, and improvement strategies under each of these nine AQIP categories, pointing out where the team sees Southwestern Illinois College current activities and practices as strengths and where it sees in them opportunities for improvement.

As you study the results of this Appraisal, do *not* ignore your strengths and focus *solely* on the possibility of improvements. Your strengths offer significant opportunities as well: they can be celebrated as model practices, deployed or imitated in programs throughout the institution, and used to inspire new approaches to performance enhancement in other areas.

Rubrics assigned by Systems Appraisal Team's to describe Southwestern Illinois College's current performance on each AQIP Category

<p>1: 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>
<p>2: 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. These are <i>distinctive</i> in that they distinguish your institution from other institutions, which likely have different sets of purposes and goals. 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>

<p>3: 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>
<p>4: Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of employees — your faculty, staff, and administrators — since the coordinated efforts of all these people 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.</p>	<p>Beginning</p>
<p>5: 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>

<p>6: 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.</p>	<p>Beginning</p>
<p>7: Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. Since AQIP Category requires measures of the success of the processes within it, your measures for Category 7 will track your institution's <i>overall</i> performance in collecting and distributing the right data to the right people at the right time.</p>	<p>Beginning</p>
<p>8: 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>

<p>9: 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.</p>	<p>Developing</p>
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STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

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

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Southwestern Illinois College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the *Criteria* will serve

as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation. The team provided the following comments on SWIC's Index to the Criteria for Accreditation:

Criterion One:

- ◆ SWIC clearly publishes its mission documents. The strategic importance of understanding and support across the organization rests with the administration in assuring that all structures and processes are involved in the collaborative process to identify how this will occur.
- ◆ SWIC articulates that the organization upholds and protects its integrity. Although the college's Mission and Values Statement supports ethical practice, the Board of Trustees Policy Manual requires ethical behavior as a condition of employment, and the underlying assumption and value of "doing the right thing" is expected, the monitoring process is unclear. Without a mechanism for reporting violations of ethical policies, it may be difficult to monitor how the college upholds and protects its integrity.

Criterion Two:

- ◆ The institution cites the importance of environmental scanning as the process to assist in preparing for the future. The dependence on environmental scanning is also noted throughout the portfolio, however the scanning process results and criteria for setting targets are not described.
- ◆ AAA Rating by Moody's Investor Service provides validity to the resource base of SWIC. The strategic positioning of the college with minimized debt and increased fund balance provides agility in supporting educational programs for the future.
- ◆ SWIC evaluates programs with three criteria: quality, cost, and need. The application of these criteria to SWIC's common learning objectives (1C1) in the Program Review and Process Cycle (Figure 7.2) does not focus on student learning as reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness.

Criterion Three:

- ◆ SWIC identifies seven learning objectives common to all degree-seeking students and requires 15 general education core curriculum courses in its AAS degrees. The General

Education Outcomes Assessment Committee and the Disciplines Outcome Assessment Committee use faculty-driven processes to encourage faculty involvement in determining the common student learning objectives and general education core courses.

- ◆ SWIC does not make a link between the data it collects and improving student learning. This is a strategic and institutional effectiveness issue because SWIC does not clearly define student learning and the underlying measurements for these definitions. Most of the student learning outcomes identified (placement, transfer, student/employer satisfaction) are indirect measures of learning. Results of specific measures of student performance are only provided for a few health occupations.
- ◆ SWIC recognizes the value of instructional technology in addressing the needs of a diverse student population. SWIC's faculty development program provides workshops each semester to encourage the introduction and use of technology in the curriculum.
- ◆ SWIC's key student and administrative support processes are in place to provide accessible, affordable, educational opportunities for all students and members of the community with the objective of supporting student learning.

Criterion Four:

- ◆ SWIC's mission addresses a broad, diverse, commitment to education and its community. The Board of Trustees priorities that encompass the development of a diverse, student-centered community are outlined in the strategic plan. By supporting and promoting the life-long learning process, SWIC strives to create a learning community that is open-ended and committed to providing opportunities for continuous learning. The college's distinctive objectives emphasize the significance of accessibility to life long learning through various pathways.
- ◆ Although Board Policy directs that "the total educational program will be evaluated continually with respect to its value to the students enrolled," how the college evaluates the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society are not described. It is not clear how these educational market issues are balanced with student needs. The three criteria of the Program Review Process and Cycle (quality, cost, and need) cited by SWIC also do not link the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Criterion Five:

- ◆ SWIC's distinctive objectives focus on educational excellence through active partnerships with students and the community. The Center for Training Innovations and Programs and Services for Older Persons are examples of successful community outreach and service. The college strives to meet the needs of all partners and actively seeks input through advisory boards, employers, and representatives from other educational institutions.
- ◆ SWIC collects data for a few key collaborative relationships Measures of Success (Figure 9.1). The most recent Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey cited by SWIC was conducted in 1999. Using data and results for all key collaborative relationships Measures of Success, including more recent satisfaction data, evaluates the contributions of these relationships and identifies potential targets of improvement.

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

- S SWIC self-identified there is not a uniform approach to the evaluation of "continuous improvement" per se and no specific measures have been adopted for college-wide use. An evaluation focused on measuring effectiveness across the college to examine how SWIC collects, analyzes, and uses information to drive performance improvement will give the college insight on process improvement. SWIC uses various methods to report results, however raw numbers do not demonstrate quality of results and comparative data that is presented is very limited. Establishing criteria with evaluation metrics strengthens the continuous improvement process.
- S The college has referenced two AQIP Action Projects frequently and throughout the Systems Portfolio in responding to faculty, staff, and administration needs. The college's Action Projects on models for collaboration between faculty, staff, and administrators are

being developed. With such strategic focus on these two AQIP Action Projects, continued review on the processes developed and data/results of the multiple opportunities identified throughout the Systems Portfolio is needed.

- S SWIC identified seven learning objectives common to all degree-seeking students (1C1) and members of the AQIP-OA Steering Committee directly oversee the assessment process and analyze its various indicators of effectiveness (7P7). As part of program review, all programs and disciplines are expected to assess each of their educational goals every five years. SWIC evaluates programs with three criteria: quality, cost, and need. The application of these criteria to SWIC's common learning objectives (1C1) in the Program Review and Process Cycle (Figure 7.2) does not focus on student learning as reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness. Data has been reported on only one learning objective (writing) to demonstrate student learning. Most of the student learning outcomes identified in the program review process (placement, transfer, student/employer satisfaction) are indirect measures of learning. A focus on examining the data SWIC collects or needs to collect and creating needed data bases provides the opportunity to obtain reliable evidence of student learning.
- S SWIC operates with the underlying assumption and value that “doing the right thing” is expected. There is not a mechanism described for reporting violation of ethical policies. Without a clearly defined monitoring process and a mechanism for reporting violation of ethical policies, it maybe difficult to monitor how SWIC upholds and protects its integrity.
- S SWIC self-identified that it does not have succession plans. This is a missed opportunity to capture human knowledge intelligence and to nurture or mentor future leaders. Succession planning may also be linked to the 2 AQIP Action Projects on faculty, staff, and administrative development (8P7) by examining the college’s systems for career progression with the aim of enabling and encouraging all faculty and staff to contribute effectively to the best of their ability.

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. Rubrics should be used to understand where the opportunities for ongoing systems improvement are greatest, not as scores indicating success or failure. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

ELEMENTS OF Southwestern Illinois 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, significant issues for your institution, and an Appraisal Rubric score for each Category. These are presented in four sections of the Feedback Report: Critical Characteristics Analysis, Category Feedback, Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis and the Appraisal Summary. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

Each member of the Systems Appraisal Team devoted many hours to analyzing and reacting to your *Systems Portfolio*, first individually and then via a consensus process. There are no one-person idiosyncratic, or subjective opinions here. Most of the team's members have had executive responsibilities in colleges and universities, but the team also included at least one person whose work and experience lie outside of higher education, and who could help the team maintain perspective on the work higher educators still have to do to bring quality principles into all areas of the Academy. All team members are committed to promoting continuous quality improvement in higher education and have received training in quality processes. We know that you and your colleagues will find the astuteness of their perceptions, as embodied in this report, useful in your commitment for continuous quality learning.

Good as the team was, however, it is important to remember that they 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.

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.

Appraisal Summary: The compilation of the nine rubrics that capture the team's appraisal of the organization's Portfolio description of each of the nine AQIP Categories. The summary indicates the team's consensus on the developmental maturity of each Category description.

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.

APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

The body of your feedback report contains two elements: a Critical Characteristics Analysis, and an exploration of your institution's Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement as perceived by the Systems Appraisal team.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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 Southwestern Illinois 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 SWIC is a public institution that began in 1946 and is Illinois' largest, most comprehensive community college south of Chicago, serving 26,000 students annually and over 440,000 residents in a 2,100 square mile region of southwestern Illinois.
- O1b SWIC has three campus degree-completion sites, 26 extension sites, and a distance education program to further provide regional access to the college.
- O1c The college service area is comprised of urban, suburban, and rural economies, including heavy industry, material processing & transportation (northern), banking, medical, legal, & retail services (central), and agriculture & small town retail (southern).

- O1d SWIC is a public institution governed by seven elected board members, one from each of the seven geographic districts. SWIC Board of Trustees also includes a student trustee (elected by student body) who casts an advisory vote.
- O1e SWIC is closely regulated by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). ICCB adopted the Illinois Commitment, a series of statewide priorities for higher education, and regularly monitors institutional compliance through yearly fiscal, enrollment, outcomes, and planning reporting.
- O1f Approximately 2/3 of college revenue comes from state appropriations channeled through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and from local property taxes.
- O1g SWIC has a published mission, set of institutional values, and strategic plan.
- O2a SWIC is a comprehensive institution that offers seven transfer degree curricula, 57 programs leading to an Associate of Applied Science, 95 career certificate programs, and an adult basic education program.
- O2b SWIC has extensive growth in adult basic education with the headcount nearly doubled from 1,635 in 2001 to 3,163 in 2005.
- O2c Instructional programming is complimented by student development service offerings that include a counseling center, a career activities and placement center, the minority transfer and multicultural student services center, and a special services center.
- O2d SWIC provides social and educational services to individuals over 55 and offers a program of non-credit, customized and industry specific training for companies.
- O3a SWIC's enrollment is at a record high, intentional, and results from concerted strategies to gain market share and increase retention.
- O3b The average age of SWIC students has shifted from 31 in 1994 to 28 in 2004 and indicates a re-emergence of the traditional student with full-time student growth up from 25% in 1994 to 32% in 2004.
- O3c SWIC's underrepresented groups are growing, especially the growth of African-Americans from 8.1% in 1994 to 17.7% in 2004.

- O3d SWIC students that require developmental courses are increasing and these developmental students account for 31.8% of the college's total credit hours attempted in 2004.
- O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.
- O5a SWIC has a stable faculty and staff base and most employee groups are affiliated with one of several bargaining units.
- O5b There has been a trend toward higher levels of employment in several employee groups except full-time faculty.
- O5c SWIC's most significant and difficult challenge is recruiting and hiring qualified minority candidates for professional positions. (Category 4C3)
- O6a The current College-owned facilities include 709,000 square feet of space with plans to expand its classroom space infrastructure of multiple programs (Liberal Arts building, Fire Science Training Center, and Horticulture Classroom building) in Belleville over the next few years.
- O6b Another SWIC infrastructure expansion includes a multi-million dollar software conversion from Legacy to PeopleSoft with assistance from a Title III grant for software and hardware purchases.
- O6c Over a five year period, SWIC has improved its classroom technology by converting over 140 rooms to smart classrooms across the three campuses with another 29 in the planning phase.
- O6d Every five years, SWIC participates in the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report for the College, a self-study to test compliance with ICCB rules and regulations and to assure key processes are present and functioning.
- O6e SWIC maintains eight health occupations program-level accreditations and all accreditations are current, with the College not experiencing any disciplinary actions or withdrawals from any of its accrediting bodies.
- O7a SWIC's main competitors are Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, best educational value 30 miles away, and McKendree College in Lebanon, accessibility and regional

reputation 15 minutes away. Other competitors are Lindenwood University for evening classes and two public Missouri universities offering in-state tuition to Illinois students to specific regions within SWIC's district boundaries.

- O8a Although technology presents opportunities for growth and more effective teaching/learning at SWIC, the costs are growing faster than college revenues.
- O8b SWIC's state funding for minority programs has declined by 50%, although minority student population is increasing.
- O8c Strategic planning has created positive programmatic changes with limited coordination in the planning process for some major decisions.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O2c Instructional programming is complimented by student development service offerings that include a counseling center, a career activities and placement center, the minority transfer and multicultural student services center, and a special services center.
- O2d SWIC provides social and educational services to individuals over 55 and offers a program of non-credit, customized and industry specific training for companies.
- O3d SWIC students that require developmental courses are increasing and these developmental students account for 31.8% of the college's total credit hours attempted in 2004.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois 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>
1C1	S	SWIC's faculty have identified seven learning objectives that are accompanied by clarifying competencies common to all degree-seeking students. With 97% of full-time faculty supporting these objectives and accompanying competencies, the process continues to challenge faculty in their disciplines.
1C1	S	SWIC requires 15 general education core curriculum courses in its AAS degrees and recommends them as options in others. Standardizing the requirements in AAS degrees (to the degree that it is feasible) strengthens the curriculum and assists in aligning learning with mission.

- IC2 OO While faculty are empowered to determine methods of evaluation for their students' competencies, there does not appear to be data that indicates a common collection methodology for the seven learning objectives. Non-standard data collection could hinder SWIC's ability to accurately assess how well students are mastering the objectives.
- IC3 S SWIC recognizes the value of instructional technology and offers courses in a variety of formats, including hybrid (combining online and face-to-face), several forms of distance delivery, and some programs designed for accelerated delivery. Offering these options increase the opportunities to provide convenient classes for SWIC's diverse service area and population.
- 1C3 S SWIC faculty development program provides workshops each semester to encourage the introduction and use of technology in the curriculum. SWIC recognizes the value of instructional technology in addressing the needs of a diverse student population.
- 1C4 S The college is committed in preparing students to live and work in a pluralistic society – a goal stated in both the college mission and the strategic plan. The college seeks to promote this concept within the curriculum by including multiculturalism in numerous courses and campus activities.
- 1P1 SS The General Education Outcomes Assessment Committee and the Disciplines Outcome Assessment Committee use faculty-driven processes and encourage faculty involvement through a variety of activities to solicit input and facilitate decision-making in determining the common student learning objectives.
- 1P2 OO Although the process of designing new programs and courses is explained in detail, it is not clear how educational market issues are balanced with student needs. The many variables in the process described could result in duplicative efforts or missed opportunities.

- 1P3 S The college's three-step process of 1) a College Information/Welcome Session, 2) an Assessment/Course Placement component, and 3) Individual Counseling, assist students with entry to SWIC. This intensive welcoming and acclimating approach provides students with resources and services, including meeting others who are starting college at SWIC, to connect and prepare them for specific curricula, programs, and courses.
- 1P3 SS Adult Basic Education (ABE) offers extensive and varied pre-enrollment testing to determine student preparedness. ABE consults with other college departments to determine skill requirements for specific programs and to align the ABE content with SWIC curriculum. The student assessment, preparation, and alignment contribute to mission success and student retention.
- 1P4 O Although the college relies upon its catalogue as the primary source of academic information and also makes available a variety of information and activities, it is not clear how these activities are tracked to avoid erroneous events or linked to the success of a student. In addition to the admissions office and faculty mentioned, overlooking other staff may result in missed opportunities.
- 1P5 S The Mission Success programs and the three broad areas of the Career Activities and Employment Center help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities.
- 1P6 S SWIC documents effective teaching through a variety of evaluation processes that are applicable to the status of full-time, adjunct, and part-time faculty.
- 1P7 OO A variety of instructional delivery methods are described, however processes for building and balancing course delivery systems with student and institutional needs are not clear.
- 1P8 S SWIC uses a 5-year cycle (20% of occupational degree and certificate programs annually) to review programs. Baccalaureate disciplines,

student services, and academic services are also reviewed on a five-year cycle.

- 1P9 S Using CCSSE, a nationally normed comparison of student satisfaction information, with focus group follow-ups and meetings with student leadership provides a solid base for verification. At the time of portfolio submission, results were not available for this survey.
- 1P10 S SWIC offers social, cultural, and recreational activities at various sites. In addition, service learning, clubs, and organization opportunities for students tie into the curriculum objectives. These co-curricular objectives strengthen leadership in SWIC students.
- 1P11 O The outcomes assessment leadership directs a variety of activities to assess student learning, however several processes are yet to be finalized. The development of these processes and the use of multiple measures for direct and indirect methods of assessment will assist SWIC in helping students learn.
- 1P12 S SWIC uses multiple measures to determine the preparedness of occupational students for employment including graduate and employer follow-up surveys.
- 1P13 O SWIC is currently developing a system of institutional benchmarks and the critical factors in the assessment of institutional effectiveness. A process to monitor student performance beyond the program level will provide data to enhance institutional continuous improvement strategies.
- 1R1 O Results are collected at the program level to determine how well programs are meeting their educational goals, however it is not clear how the data is evaluated and what benchmarks are used to measure progress. (Example, Figure 1.2)
- 1R1 O The data presented does not address how the needs of an increasing number of developmental students enrolled are being met and how the results are being measured. Overlooking this growth area of the college

may lead to missed opportunities that build on what is working well for the student.

- 1R2 OO While Figures 1.4 and 1.5 in IR2 reflect uneven and/or limited growth in SWIC completions for FY 2000-03, it is not clear that these tables present consistent information.
- 1R4 S SWIC's programs normally meet or exceed the pass rates on professional licensure examinations in 2001 and 2002 (Figure 1.9).
- 1R4 OO Although SWIC has had a dramatic enrollment increase in the number of online students (Figure 1.8), a process to assess these courses using data to demonstrate the success of on-line students is not evident. It is not clear whether the on-line technology is helping students learn.
- 111 SS Collaborative ventures by staff in Student Development, Community Services, and Instructional Divisions is a strength. With this collaboration, SWIC is in a good position to continually improve the quality and assessment of student learning.
- 111 O SWIC's program review has changed little since the 1990's. The efficacy of a process requires continual evaluation. SWIC has an opportunity for an upcoming Action Project.
- 112 O Academic advising for students is planned for systemic change along with improved technology and communications. This opportunity for improvement is the target of one of SWIC's ongoing Action Projects.
- 112 S SWIC entered AQIP with the following action plans: identify and obtain support of a full-time faculty-driven outcomes assessment process, increase the support for faculty development, pursue improvements that provide accurate academic advising, and dependence of the college on adjunct faculty and part-time employees.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O1b SWIC has three campus degree-completion sites, 26 extension sites, and a distance education program to further provide regional access to the college.
- O2a SWIC is a comprehensive institution that offers seven transfer degree curricula, 57 programs leading to an Associate of Applied Science, 95 career certificate programs, and an adult basic education program.
- O2b SWIC has extensive growth in adult basic education with the headcount nearly doubled from 1,635 in 2001 to 3,163 in 2005.
- O3b The average age of SWIC students has shifted from 31 in 1994 to 28 in 2004 and indicates a re-emergence of the traditional student with full-time student growth up from 25% in 1994 to 32% in 2004.
- O3c SWIC's underrepresented groups are growing, especially the growth of African-Americans from 8.1% in 1994 to 17.7% in 2004.
- O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.
- O8b SWIC's state funding for minority programs has declined by 50%, although minority student population is increasing.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois 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>
2C1	SS	One of the five objectives that complement Helping Students Learn is "accessibility." The concept of "accessibility" defines a broader scope including considerations for persons with disabilities, a barrier-free physical environment within a multi-campus system, off-campus sites, distance learning opportunities, and on-campus transit.
2C2	S	SWIC provides a range of educational opportunities to meet specific community needs, e.g., Center for Training Innovation, Programs and Services for Older Persons, Art Center, dual credit, test preparation and testing, enrichment programs for children and the Industrial Training Center.
2C2	S	SWIC's tactical planning process assures that distinctive objectives relate to the institution's mission, vision, and strategic plan.
2C2	S	Lifelong learning opportunities, as well as respect and understanding of multicultural and diversity issues, are available across the 2,100 sq mile region. A focus is placed on individual growth through educational excellence and active partnerships.
2P1	S	The Strategic Planning Council (SPC) identifies needs and opportunities that are compatible with the mission, values, and goals.
2P1	O	The process of determining other distinctive objectives occurs at several levels. The opportunity exists to clearly articulate criteria or benchmarks for determining other distinctive objectives.
2P2	S	The college communicates its expectations through both informal and formal channels to make the strategic plan widely available. This process guides the college towards satisfying their objectives.

- 2P3 S A system of supplemental budgets provides a way to stimulate creativity and innovation for faculty and staff projects that require assistance outside the formal budget process.
- 2P4, 5 S Systematic collection and analysis of various data are part of the institutional practices. Performance measures for the major service providers are determined by the function being measured. The formal assessment and review process for the college's other distinctive objectives are woven into the strategic planning process and the tactical plan.
- 2R1, 2 OO SWIC uses various methods to report results, however comparative data is not presented and raw numbers do not demonstrate quality of results. Using comparative data of colleges outside Illinois could also enhance overall program effectiveness.
- 2I1 O Although SWIC recognizes that staff development and professional currency is key to continually improving systems and process for other distinctive objectives, an opportunity exists to identify and prioritize targets for improvement.
- 2I2 S The Public Information and Marketing office communicates results and improvement priorities as improvements and innovations are developed.
- 2I2 O SWIC is developing targeted goals in four areas: NAEYC accreditation, for-credit classes at PSOP facility, increasing share of health care market, and increasing attendance at Community Education off-campus sites. As these target goals are developed, communicating results and priorities to staff and stakeholders strengthens the college's distinctive objectives.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O2d SWIC provides social and educational services to individuals over 55 and offers a program of non-credit, customized and industry specific training for companies.
- O3a SWIC’s enrollment is at a record high, intentional, and results from concerted strategies to gain market share and increase retention.
- O3b The average age of SWIC students has shifted from 31 in 1994 to 28 in 2004 and indicates a re-emergence of the traditional student with full-time student growth up from 25% in 1994 to 32% in 2004.
- O3c SWIC’s underrepresented groups are growing, especially the growth of African-Americans from 8.1% in 1994 to 17.7% in 2004.
- O3d SWIC students that require developmental courses are increasing and these developmental students account for 31.8% of the college’s total credit hours attempted in 2004.
- O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.

Item S/O Comment

- 3C1, 2 SS SWIC has a well-defined understanding of stakeholders with short term and long term, common and unique, requirements and expectations (Figures 3.1 and 3.2) whose interests in the college are diverse and reflect a dedication to active partnerships.
- 3P3 S The environmental scanning process identifies and tracks changing student and stakeholder needs. These processes are also linked to strategic planning efforts.
- 3P3 OO Information on the analysis and selection of a course of action on changing stakeholder group needs is not clear. Without this information, gaps in services might occur.
- 3P4 S SWIC builds and maintains stakeholder relationships utilizing a series of activities and actions to foster and maintain mutually beneficial associations.
- 3P5 O Although SWIC indicates stakeholders fall into six fairly constant groups, further separating and addressing each group provides insight and prioritization when determining if a new student/stakeholder segment should be addressed.
- 3P6 O The college collects complaint information and provides development seminars to assist in analyzing and resolving issues within the respective departments, however the process used for the analysis of complaints is not explained.
- 3P7 O Student and other stakeholder satisfaction measures were completed in 2001. Measurements taken on a more recent/frequent satisfaction assessment cycle provides additional data and trend information.
- 3R1 OO The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results (Figure 3.5) reveal satisfaction levels for each area, however national normed data is not provided which is a benefit of using a standardized instrument. SWIC's targeted measures of success for each area is also not clear.

- 3R2 S SWIC's results in meeting student expectations (Figure 3.6) are comparable to those found nationwide at community, junior, and technical colleges across the nation.
- 3R2 OO Although the Mission Success Program has increased participation since 2001 (Figure 3.7), it is not clear how the program increases retention, course completion, attrition, and other student success measures. Using participation rates as a single data source limits SWIC's ability to fully measure the effectiveness of building relationships.
- 3R3 O Results supporting the impact of the relationship between consistent enrollment growth and institutional program and service needs are not evident. Satisfaction results linked to instructional performance are not clear.
- 3R3 O SWIC undertook a baseline survey of external constituency groups in 1999. SWIC may overlook opportunities for improvement as the results might not be relevant today.
- 3R4 OO SWIC identifies several stakeholder relationship building activities and processes, however results on the effectiveness of these activities and process are not clear.
- 3R5 O ICCB review results and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction results are within the education community. ICCB comparative results with other institutions are not evident. Comparative results outside the educational community are not clear.
- 3I1 S An AQIP Action Project on Improvement of Academic Advisement is a significant SWIC initiative in understanding the needs of key student groups.
- 3I2 O SWIC has identified several opportunities for improvement: 1) continued development of web services to enhance communication, and 2) the analysis and implementation of improvements from the findings of CCSSE survey (not available at portfolio completion).

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.
- O5a SWIC has a stable faculty and staff base and most employee groups are affiliated with one of several bargaining units.
- O5b There has been a trend toward higher levels of employment in several employee groups except full-time faculty.
- O5c SWIC's most significant and difficult challenge is recruiting and hiring qualified minority candidates for professional positions. (Category 4C3)

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

Item S/O Comment

- 4C1 S The college is organized in a traditional organizational design. The design emphasizes the delivery of formal education, professional/career development, and appropriate social services to regional citizens.
- 4C2 S SWIC is in a “suburban bedroom community/commuter worker” location within a vibrant expanded metro community in excess of 2.7 million people. Scott Air Force Base provides an additional skilled and educated pool of active duty and military dependents to fill full- and part-time positions at the Belleville Campus. The low turnover rate among the full-time workforce speaks to a positive work environment, labor market salaries, and SWIC’s reputation as an employer of choice.
- 4C2 S The college’s history of relying extensively on part-time faculty and staff to control operating costs is an AQIP Action Project: Re-Appraising the Role of Adjunct Faculty and Part-Time Staff.
- 4C3 S While labor force supply is measured by the unemployment rate and educational attainment level, SWIC is able to attract and retain competent employees in areas not requiring a college degree.
- 4C3 O Recruiting and hiring qualified minority candidates are self-identified concerns.
- 4C4 S SWIC has two AQIP Action Projects in this category. In addition to the Adjunct Faculty and Part Time Staff initiative (4C2), the other initiative is strengthening the new employee orientation program. These two faculty development opportunities enhance contributions to SWIC’s organizational development and growth.
- 4P1, 2 S Processes are in place to identify credentialing of faculty and staff. SWIC recruitment and hiring process complies with its Board policy and affirmative action requirements (Figure 4.1). SWIC utilizes hiring committees for each full-time position.
- 4P2 OO As a self-identified need in 4C3, specific actions to recruit minority faculty and staff are not clear.

- 4P2 O Although SWIC has recently developed a more formalized comprehensive program (including mentoring) of new employees that includes part-time employees, a formal retention process provides opportunities to increase life-long learning. It is not clear how SWIC plans for changes in personnel.
- 4P3 O Even though SWIC's Mission and Values Statement set guidelines for cooperatively getting work done and employees believe these statements support ethical practices, ethical dimensions included in individual performance reviews assures annual conversations of employees with supervisors on the topic. Innovation, high performance, empowerment, skill sharing, and organizational learning conversations also encourage high performing teams that benefit the organization.
- 4P4 S SWIC plans are underway for 2005 to offer skill enhancements (technology and safety) to all employees through its Center for Training Innovation. Training needs are determined by employee and/or supervisor request, competency requirements, and change. The faculty technology specialist, the outcomes assessment coordinator, and the faculty development coordinator collaborate on technology and assessment training needs.
- 4P5 O Although SWIC has training available for faculty and staff, the process for requesting and obtaining training is not clear. Faculty and staff may miss professional development opportunities without a clear understanding of the process.
- 4P5 O It is not evident how planning for continuous improvement, augmenting the college's focus on helping students learn, and accomplishing distinctive objectives are incorporated in the training plan. Integrating these processes assist SWIC with mission attainment and student-focused training.
- 4P6 S Evaluation systems are in place for all employee groups. The performance evaluation tools used by SWIC were developed to measure competencies necessary for successful job performance.

- 4P6 O Developing a feedback loop of trends and results aligned with SWIC's seven learning objectives and distinctive objectives provides a focus for the college's staff development opportunities.
- 4P7 S Employees are recognized for service and performance through various recognition systems at three annual events. Benefits for full-time employees include life, health and dental insurance options. All employees are offered reduced tuition for themselves and their immediate family members. A tuition reimbursement benefit is also available.
- 4P8 O No evidence is provided to determine key issues related to motivation. Professional development activities and events enhances employee motivational and satisfaction. Data gathering documents the effectiveness and assists in continuous improvement of motivation and satisfaction strategies.
- 4P9 S Job related employment needs are addressed through the established process of union negotiated contracts. Overall health and safety of employees and the campus environment are monitored through public safety offices.
- 4P10 OO The effectiveness measures of valuing people used at SWIC are not clear. Establishing measures and criteria used in data collection and analyzed regularly identifies opportunities for SWIC to meet faculty and staff needs including motivation, and satisfaction.
- 4R1 OO SWIC has an opportunity to demonstrate results for valuing people through health/safety/well being reporting, employee satisfaction impact, and institutional development.
- 4R2 OO Although a variety of activities are listed, data and results on processes associated with valuing people are not evident.
- 4R3 OO Evidence of effectiveness for employee productivity and goal achievement require linkages between retention and enrollment growth. Identifying these linkages and processes with data and results allows the replication of goal achievement without guessing.

- 4R4 OO The results comparison with other higher education institutions is not clear. Without external higher education and outside of education comparative data, it is difficult for SWIC to set targets and know the college's competitive position.
- 4I1 OO Valuing people is a continuous improvement effort at SWIC with two AQIP Action Projects in this category. Data and results from the two Action Projects will strengthen SWIC's continuous improvement efforts.
- 4I2 OO SWIC identifies activities as targets. Without criteria and measurements established at the time of the target activity identification, SWIC will not be able to realize the gains (or losses) in meeting their target activity and the resulting resource allocation impact.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O1d SWIC is a public institution governed by seven elected board members, one from each of the seven geographic districts. SWIC Board of Trustees also includes a student trustee (elected by student body) who casts an advisory vote.

- O1g SWIC has a published mission, set of institutional values, and strategic plan.
- O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.
- O6d Every five years, SWIC participates in the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report for the College, a self-study to test compliance with ICCB rules and regulations and to assure key processes are present and functioning.
- O8c Strategic planning has created positive programmatic changes with limited coordination in the planning process for some major decisions.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois 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>
5C1	SS	The mature leadership of vice presidents, well-defined committees, and numbers of teams commit the college to communication, visibility, and access in a highly public setting. SWIC places considerable emphasis on communicating with its varied constituencies.
5C2	S	The mission, values, strategic goals, and objectives of the Board are contained in the strategic planning system that have reporting mechanisms to assure proper alignment with management practices. Leadership alignment occurs through a number of public entities and is monitored by a reporting system common to Illinois.
5P1	SS	Direction is set through division tactical plans, budgeting processes, and administrative plans. Throughout the portfolio, the strategic planning process proactively prepares to meet various student and stakeholder needs through scans of the internal and external environments.
5P2	O	While SWIC’s strategic planning process provides a centrally managed mechanism through the Environmental Scanning Committee, it is not

clear how the structure, data, and formality operates to observe/report opportunities/innovations.

- 5P3 SS Decision-making is informed, shared, and participatory; consensus is sought at the lowest possible level. The strategic planning process enables ad hoc and standing committees to bring information forward to responsible parties, recommendations for action plans, and the need for decisions.
- 5P4 O Although key data elements are monitored regularly by SWIC leadership in the overall decision-making process, the process for using information and results, implementation of specific action, and follow-up is not clear.
- 5P5 S Communication mechanisms are in place, well defined and interconnected. A sophisticated and complex system of communication exists at SWIC.
- 5P6 S The Mission, Values Statements, Board Policy Manual, and other key publications make available publicly SWIC's institutional expectations, affirming principles of dignity and worth of all people, lifelong learning, individual growth, excellence, and partnerships with students and community.
- 5P7 S Personnel evaluations, tuition assistance opportunities, faculty and staff development, and leadership development are all part of the process to enhance leadership abilities.
- 5P7 O SWIC is using AQIP Action Projects to consider aspects of enhancing the capabilities of staff throughout the institution.
- 5P8 OO Because the Board of Trustees has committed the institution to a policy of seeking the most qualified candidate for an open position, SWIC does not have succession plans.
- 5P9,
- 5R1 OO As an enlightening outgrowth of the Systems Portfolio process, working teams have been developed at SWIC that heretofore had not previously

existed. SWIC is in the beginning stage and results are not available. This is an opportune time for SWIC to consider measurements to obtain results for leading and communicating processes and systems.

- 5R2 OO Although SWIC believes that its system reflects the typical situation of the Illinois community college, a results comparison to address leadership effectiveness, communication effectiveness, and employee satisfaction will assist the college in setting targets and assessing the target effectiveness.
- 5I1 S SWIC's engagement in the Constellation Index and major discussions at All College Discussion Day allowed staff the opportunity to provide their perspectives in new ways. New communication ideas allow for a broadening of perspectives and inputs.
- 5I2 O SWIC recognizes the need to improve the formalization of leadership development strategies. Addressing a systematic method for obtaining and analyzing data assists SWIC in setting improvement priorities and targets for future leading and communicating strategies.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O2c Instructional programming is complimented by student development service offerings that include a counseling center, a career activities and placement center, the minority transfer and multicultural student services center, and a special services center.
- O6d Every five years, SWIC participates in the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report for the College, a self-study to test compliance with ICCB rules and regulations and to assure key processes are present and functioning.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois 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>
6C1	S	SWIC's key student and administrative support processes are in place to provide accessible, affordable, educational opportunities for all students and members of the community with the objective of supporting student learning and other distinctive objectives.
6C2	S	A "one-stop" concept in the student services area was created based on SWIC's strategic plan goal of "creating an environment that is centered on learners, their needs, and their goals."
6C2	O	Although an Enrollment Management Committee was established in 2001 with three primary objectives per the tactical plan, 2004 objectives are not defined.
6C2	OO	As the result of a Title III grant, four major student success and retention programs were developed, however linkages with the Enrollment Management Committee who also focuses on retention are not evident. Linking Enrollment Management with funding opportunities maximizes services to students and utilizes the research generated from the committee to assist in the continuous improvement of those services.
6P1, 2	S	SWIC faculty and staff utilize a variety of strategies to identify the student support service and administrative support service needs ranging from

networking with other professionals to an AQIP All-College Discussion with 700 employees.

- 6P1, 2 OO Key stakeholder group requirements and expectations (Figures 3.1-2, 6.1, and 6.3) and inputs (Figures 3.3-4) are identified, however the process(es) to cull out support service needs for either students or key stakeholders are not addressed and may result in missed opportunities.
- 6P3 OO Although SWIC's emphasis on tactical planning to achieve the College's strategic plan resulted in inter-divisional collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and partnership through the Enrollment Management Committee, it is not clear how feedback from students and key stakeholder groups is used to change processes or manage day-to-day operations.
- 6P3 O It is recognized that knowledge-sharing occurs in the Enrollment Management Committee, however the documentation and encouragement of knowledge-sharing, innovation, and empowerment facilitates the implementation of SWIC's tactical plan across all campuses and a broader group of employees.
- 6P4 S SWIC benchmarks against peer institutions in Illinois (ICCB) to continuously improve support areas and to identify strength and weakness for strategic planning.
- 6P4 O Point-of-service information (verbal and evaluation data) are used on a daily basis, however SWIC does not systematically show how the verbal and evaluation data are used to improve services and processes on a day-to-day and summative basis.
- 6P5 S SWIC has identified multiple key measures of success for each student support key processes (Figure 6.1) and administrative key processes (Figure 6.3).
- 6R1 S Numerous activities in the student support processes are identified with positive growth. This growth has increased student participation in a variety of services (orientation, counseling appointments, library services, MTMSSC).

- 6R1 O An Enrollment Management Committee process improvement resulted in the availability of an additional payment option. Although the participation in this option increased by 800 students (29%), it is not evident that this process improvement resulted in enrollment growth which is the ultimate result for the student support processes.
- 6R2 SS SWIC's fiscal approach has allowed the college to maintain an increasing fund balance coupled with a minimum debt level resulting in an AAA Moody Bond Rating.
- 6R3 OO Benchmarking data with ICCB peer institutions (6P4) are reported for tuition and financial aid. In addition to SWIC's use of benchmarking for strategic planning, benchmarking for continuous improvement of the variety of processes identified in 6R1 and 6R2 improves the quality of those processes.
- 6I1 OO Although strategic planning and AQIP are the main forces driving improvements, SWIC does not have a process to assess and improve processes (i.e., improve strategic planning process, AQIP process nor the processes in Category 8).
- 6I2 O Several student and administrative web-based support services are targeted for improvement. An implementation plan was scheduled to be in place by August, 2005, but was not available at portfolio submission.
- 6I2 OO Setting targets for all student and administrative processes identified in 6.1 and 6.2 assists in continuous improvement of those processes. Communicating the current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty and staff, and appropriate stakeholders further enhances the continuous improvement of those processes.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes

and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Southwestern Illinois 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

O1e SWIC is closely regulated by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). ICCB adopted the Illinois Commitment, a series of statewide priorities for higher education, and regularly monitors institutional compliance through yearly fiscal, enrollment, outcomes, and planning reporting.

O6b Another SWIC infrastructure expansion includes a multi-million dollar software conversion from Legacy to PeopleSoft with assistance from a Title III grant for software and hardware purchases.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7C1	S	SWIC centrally collects and stores institutional information through the Information Technology Division via multiple college-wide administrative systems. Clear lines of access to these systems and the institutional data are established with checks and balances. SWIC data users directly view and retrieve data utilizing multiple access methods.
7C1	S	SWIC’s Office of Institutional Research (IR) analyzes institutional data and communicates it through paper/electronic mediums.
7C2	S	SWIC supports a range of institutional measures for tracking institutional effectiveness.

- 7C2 OO While SWIC measures institutional effectiveness using qualitative and quantitative procedures and a list of Key Institutional Measures, the use of information concerning student learning as a key institutional gauge is not clear.
- 7P1 S IT supports a wide variety of institutional information and data needs which are prioritized with production issues and student needs taking precedence. IT receives direction and requests for information and data from five sources: SWIC Strategic Plan, SWIC Tactical plan, IT strategic plan, IT Tactical Plan, and Request for Services.
- 7P1 OO A systematic approach of determining what processes are utilized to select, manage, and use information and data (including current performance information) that support student learning (Category 1), overall institutional objectives (Category 2), and strategies (Category 8) is not evident. Without a systematic approach, information and data are ad hoc and reactive, rather than focused on strategies for continuous improvement.
- 7P2 O SWIC acknowledges that accuracy of data has been a concern and is taking steps toward a remedy. The decentralized process for managing data is under a new system (Enterprise Resource Planning) that is beginning to identify the source and stewardship of data
- 7P3 OO While comparative data is required across the institution, SWIC compares itself primarily with six sister colleges within Illinois. An opportunity exists that encourages the collection and use of comparative information to analyze itself from a peer perspective, as well as, determine how its outcomes compare to those within and outside the education community.
- 7P4 O Reports are routinely received and analyzed by the Strategic Planning Council, the Enrollment Management, and the Professional Development Committee. The wider distribution and sharing of these data and to what extent these analyses are shared is unclear.

- 7P5 S The program review process (Figure 7.2) is required of every academic and support program at least once every five years.
- 7P5 OO Programs are analyzed and justified under three criteria (quality, cost, and need), however the linkage and application of these criteria to SWIC's common student learning objectives (1C1) does not ensure that the data in the program review process is aligned with a focus on student learning.
- 7P6 S SWIC's information systems (production platforms) are audited by an external organization for upgrade needs, level of systems security, and performance.
- 7P7 O Although SWIC cites a report that documents progress made on strategic and tactical plans, the measurement of effectiveness for SWIC's system of measuring effectiveness is not evident. Having a process for measuring effectiveness of systems moves SWIC from a reactive to a proactive approach in continuous improvement of systems and processes.
- 7R1 O Tracking data improves the current anecdotal evidence (of Career Student's success in entering the workforce and transfer students' success at four-year institutions). As the new outcomes assessment system matures, determining validity of assessment tools and assessment system contributes to the reliability of indicator effectiveness.
- 7R2 O Data from comparative higher education institutions and outside the educational community are beneficial in measuring process improvements and in gaining insights on potential internal institutional opportunities for improvement.
- 7I1 O While improvements in current processes and systems are described, the process to determine its relevance and measure the effectiveness of the process is not clear. Having a process and system for measuring effectiveness facilitates strategic effectiveness.
- 7I2 O Targets are described, however criteria used to set targets for improvement are not evident. Establishing how effectiveness and

improvement priorities are selected for relevance and how the data is tracked, analyzed, and reported contributes to the reliability of the target.

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

- O1e SWIC is a public institution that began in 1946 and is Illinois' largest, most comprehensive community college south of Chicago, serving 26,000 students annually and over 440,000 residents in a 2,100 square mile region of southwestern Illinois.
- O1g SWIC has a published mission, set of institutional values, and strategic plan.
- O8c Strategic planning has created positive programmatic changes with limited coordination in the planning process for some major decisions.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Southwestern Illinois 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>
8C1	S	Emphasis on becoming a learning organization provides direction and a foundation for institutional planning and continuous improvement.
8C1	S	Themes consistent with the attributes of a Learning Organization tie SWIC's strategic priorities to the vision and guides the college's learning:

focus on continuous improvement, willingness to undergo accountability, emphasis on improved communication, adaptability to the environment, and acceptance that the institution is its people.

- 8C2 S SWIC's short- and long-term goals are linked to five strategic priorities. Nine critical processes align the mission, strategies, and goals of SWIC and contribute to college's continuous improvement.
- 8P1 S The college's well-defined planning process is based on shared responsibility. Coordination of the planning process involves clear role identification, community participation, and stakeholder involvement.
- 8P2 S SWIC distinguishes between strategic plans and tactical plans. The strategic plan is revised as needed to meet changes and demands as a result of environmental scanning. The tactical plan is an annual product and by design, impacts the college's budgeting process.
- 8P3 O It is not clear how institutional strategy progress reports are tracked and communicated to students, faculty, staff, and key stakeholder groups. Use of satisfaction and evaluation results strengthens current action plans and contributes to the identification of future action plans.
- 8P5 OO Specific measures and performance projections are not explicitly incorporated into the strategic plan. There is little commonality between the performance data required by the Illinois Commitment goals and the strategic goals, priorities, and objectives set by the college.
- 8P6 S SWIC aligns the college's strategic priorities through the allocation of three resources: SPC recommendation to the Board, reallocation of divisional funding, and Funding for Results initiative.
- 8P7 OO At present the college has no explicit or formal process that necessarily coordinates staff development with its strategic plan and Action Projects. Data and results from the two Action Projects will strengthen SWIC's focus in this process.
- 8P8 OO At present, there is not a uniform approach to the evaluation of "continuous improvement" *per se* and no specific measures have been

adopted for college-wide use. SWIC recognizes the need to self-assess how the AQIP process is leading to an on-going plan for continuous improvement.

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| 8R1 | S | Results of tactical planning initiatives include the development of the college's Enrollment Management Committee, the linking of departmental administrative goals to strategic plan objectives, and a methodology for establishing and prioritizing information technology projects by division within the institution. |
| 8R2&3 | OO | An example of a recent accomplishment is included in Figure 8.10; however projections of performance for SWIC's strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years are not determined. Projections aligned with 3-5 year strategic plans measures performance against targets by which to gauge improvement. |
| 8R2&3 | O | Using comparisons of performance projections with other higher education institutions and organizations outside the educational community provides benchmarks for SWIC to manage and monitor continuous improvement. |
| 8R4 | S | The strategic planning process facilitates the growth of shared input, vision, and ownership of institutional priorities by demonstrating a continuous process of planning improvement and inclusion. |
| 8I1 | S | The Strategic Planning Council's Environmental Scanning Committee supports the search for ongoing improvement activities along with surveys, stakeholder input, and other data gathering processes. |
| 8I2 | O | Although targets are set by the Strategic Planning Council and embedded in the strategic planning process, specific improvement priorities SWIC is targeting and how these will be addressed are not described. The establishment of improvement targets strengthens the continuous improvement process. |

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 Southwestern Illinois 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

O4a SWIC collaborates with its stakeholders: public and private educational entities, business and industry, community agencies, local governments, regulatory bodies, employees, alumni, and students.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9C1	S	SWIC identifies key collaborative relationships, purposes for those relationships, and measures of success (Figure 9.1).
9C2	S	SWIC's partnerships create linkages among funding sources, programs, and services.
9P1	S	Communication networks support relationships and collaborations that differ depending on the department's and division's mission and goals.
9P2	S	SWIC works to meet the needs of its partners and seeks input through the work of the Strategic Planning Council, advisory boards, employers, and representatives from other educational institutions.

- 9P3 S SWIC recognizes internal collaboration is vital for growth and success by creating and building internal relationships through meetings, cross-disciplinary teams, recognition events, representation on councils, and ongoing communication.
- 9P3 OO A focus on student learning is not representative of the integration and communication of internal relationships and collaborations. Internal relationships and collaborations focusing on helping students learn avoid silos with the college working toward the same outcome.
- 9P4 S SWIC uses multiple methods to measure collaborative relationships.
- 9R1 OO SWIC collects data but links results to only a few Measures of Success (Figure 9.1) and only to 2-3 key collaborative relationships. Using data and results for all key collaborative relationships evaluates successful contributions of these relationships and determines areas to target for continuous improvement.
- 9R2 O Data from comparative higher education institutions and outside the educational community are beneficial in measuring collaborative relationships process improvements and in gaining insights on potential institutional opportunities for improvement.
- 9I1 OO Although SWIC's faculty and staff continuously evaluate feedback from collaborative resources and use the information to modify the tactical plan, the identification of criteria for evaluation of current processes and systems are not shared.
- 9I2 OO Communication/feedback methodologies exist across the institution with the goal of monitoring progress, evaluation, and communication. Specific improvement priorities that are targeted and how they will be addressed are not communicated.