

September 22, 2009

Georgia Costello
President
Southwestern Illinois College
2500 Carlyle Ave.
Belleville, IL 62221

Dear President Costello:

Enclosed is a copy of Southwestern Illinois College's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. It begins with a concise Executive Summary, intended for those general readers that do not require a high level of detail. Your Systems Appraisal Team of quality experts provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's AQIP Liaison a copy of this full *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and enclosures.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution. The enclosed *After Your Appraisal* details what lies ahead and how to use your Feedback Report most effectively, and explains when and how to register for your next Strategy Forum.

To comply with federal requirements, we need the CEO of the institution formally to acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and to provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Please read the enclosed *After Your Appraisal* suggestions *before* you decide how to respond. Limit your acknowledgement and comments to a maximum of two typewritten pages, and understand that your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file, to be shared with future peer reviewers who review your institution (including the next Systems Appraisal team, the next Quality Checkup visit team, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation panel). Email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org; call me or Mary Green (at 800-621-7440 x130) if you have any questions about it.

We know you will gain real value from the Systems Appraisal Feedback and the activities it will stimulate within your institution, and we are proud to be working with you as you continue along the never-ending path to improvement.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Spanghel
Vice President

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS COLLEGE

September 20, 2009



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS

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

Category One

SWIC has developed a collaborative culture and organizational alignment that promotes a shared student-centered focus. Many of the processes and systems for helping students learn are regularly reviewed and improved and student performance results are analyzed to support data based decision-making and continuous improvement. SWIC could enhance the continuous improvement process by creating greater transparency of the alignment of strategic goals and curricular and co-curricular objectives; and in particular, clarifying how core competencies are used and measured outside the realm of the general education.

Category Two

SWIC has a collaborative culture in which information appears to be shared through reports and regular departmental meetings which allows individuals to be engaged in the strategic and tactical planning processes. The planning processes include steps for accomplishing other distinctive objectives which provide services and connections with the local communities. SWIC is committed to determining, assessing, and adopting other distinctive objectives that can benefit stakeholders. SWIC establishes its distinctive objectives through multiple sources of input. Data is collected in several areas (Figure 2.1), but alignment to distinct objectives is not clear. Results and corresponding improvements have contributed to both the College and community in positive ways. Expanded collaboration with external entities throughout the design process, as well as regular solicitation of needs from faculty and staff will provide useful information and reinforce the spirit of collaboration that SWIC fosters.

Category Three

SWIC has many processes and systems in place to support students' and other stakeholders' needs. Student satisfaction with services is tracked and studied through the CCSSE and internal surveys and improvements have come out of this analysis. SWIC has built relationships with local employers through the Career Center and numerous advisory committees. SWIC has

been responsive to the needs of students with the implementation of new services and 21st century technologies.

While SWIC has measures for its external stakeholders, there are few results reported. Developing internal targets and external benchmarks for the various measures of stakeholder needs could improve institutional decision-making. These relationships may be enhanced by developing a regular system of measuring employer satisfaction with SWIC services and activities such as job fairs.

Category Four

The integration of strategic and tactical planning and AQIP action plans positions the College for future gains in effectiveness and efficiencies. SWIC provides evidence of an organization with low turnover and employees who are guided by the College's mission, values, and goals. As the College continues to use AQIP principles and strategies to make improvements and set targets while involving employees in the processes, more results will be available in valuing people. There are many opportunities to better understand and document faculty, staff, and administrator contributions and workplace satisfaction in order to support and further the mission.

SWIC has effective processes for recruiting, hiring, recognizing and evaluating employees that align with the needs and values of the College. The College has made significant strides in its quality improvement efforts toward valuing people. Further attention to identifying retention activities and measures of employee well being, safety and health could provide data for decision making.

Category Five

SWIC shows progression toward a collaborative culture that is supported by the Board of Trustees and College leadership. As leadership continues to openly share progress and engage community members in the process of change, quality improvement will more likely be experienced by all stakeholders. The College has multi-level planning in place that reflects the mission and values of the College and utilizes environmental scanning as a key process to inform the learning community. The College is at an early stage in data collection, setting institutional targets and peer comparison standards. However, use of action projects focused on leading and communicating further promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement and stakeholder involvement.

Category Six

SWIC has provided strong evidence of formalized processes and systems which support organizational operations and provide a comprehensive system of assessment and continuous improvement. SWIC processes enhance the management of day-to-day student, administrative and organizational support services while providing internal data and external benchmarking for long term strategic planning. With many changes being implemented that have resulted in improvements, SWIC has continued opportunities to document outcomes. Alignment of institutional benchmarks and outcomes may contribute to continuous improvement.

Category Seven

SWIC provides evidence of sophisticated processes which measure, track and enhance analysis of data collection, measurements and systems effectiveness and security. The processes have built in mechanisms for full cycle continuous improvement. SWIC processes, systems, and results indicate that the institution is progressing in this category of measuring effectiveness. Further efforts in the area of timeliness, accuracy and security of data may be considered.

Category Eight

SWIC appears to have made progress in many of the processes for planning continuous improvement and has made good use of action plans that drive continual improvement throughout the College. The integration of strategic and tactical planning and AQIP action plans positions the College for future gains in effectiveness and efficiencies. Given the changes being implemented there remain opportunities to develop quantitative measures, refine planning targets, and providing for the continual development of employees.

Category Nine

A wide variety of relationships have been formed with internal and external stakeholders to add value to College operations and services for students and other stakeholders. SWIC is engaged in creating a system of key performance measures which will further enhance the process to ensure existing and future relationships are strategic in nature.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for Southwestern Illinois College are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

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

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

Executive Summary: Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement

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

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

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institution's systems and processes 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.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues 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:

SWIC has processes in place for strategic planning which include regular environmental scanning and data based decision making that is tied to the budgeting cycle of the College. Planning processes could further enhance continuous improvement efforts by

creating greater transparency of the alignment of strategic goals and the objectives in the annual tactical plans. For example, instructional departments might identify, report, and communicate the alignment of strategic goals and curricular and co-curricular objectives; and in particular, clarify how core competencies are used and measured outside the realm of General Education.

SWIC partners with a broad number of stakeholders and uses a decentralized approach to determine needs through qualitative measures. Developing a campus-wide systematic process that includes quantitative measures and targets would provide a more complete picture of how SWIC is meeting stakeholder needs and expectations as well as aligning key partnerships with the Strategic Plan.

The College is at an early stage in data collection, setting institutional targets and peer comparison standards. These processes are greatly supported by the College's use of action projects focused on leading and communicating which further promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement and stakeholder involvement.

SWIC is to be commended for planning and creating a system of key performance measures that when fully implemented, will further enhance efforts to track, measure, report, and utilize data for strategic and tactical decision-making and allow continual assessment of results.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

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

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

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of 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 [Institution] 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

- OV1 Southwestern Illinois College is a public institution that is part of the Illinois community college system and has been accredited since 1949. The governance structure includes a board of trustees, and regulatory oversight by the Illinois Community College Board (fiscal and programmatic) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (strategic).
- OV2a SWIC offers seven baccalaureate/transfer degrees, over ninety occupational degrees or certificates, a comprehensive adult basic education program and numerous non-credit courses.
- OV2b The College serves 26,000 students across three campuses and is the largest community college in the state south of Chicago. Classes are offered off-site at Scott Air Force Base, the East St. Louis Community College Center, Programs and Services for Older Persons, through 26 satellite centers and via distance education.
- OV3a SWIC is the only community college in the state that is experiencing growing enrollments.
- OV3b The SWIC service region is a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural economies with the additional factor of the service region boundaries crossing state lines. Student demographics show changes which impact programming and services including: a growing number of students from underrepresented groups especially African-Americans, an increasingly younger average age of students, an increasing number of full-time students, and an increasing number of students requiring remedial courses.
- OV3c SWIC's representative student characteristics include; 28% ethnic minority, 79% first-generation, 80% underprepared, 4000 students seeking ABE coursework, 849 students with disabilities, over 18,000 financial aid recipients, and 600-800 veterans per semester.
- OV4a SWIC has numerous partnerships with businesses, community agencies, area school districts, and other educational institutions that contribute to curriculum and academic departments, serve partner employees in providing training needs, and improve standard of living for community members.
- OV4b SWIC's developmental students account for 31.1% of the college's total credit hours attempted; with 20.9% of the students enrolled in the college's baccalaureate/transfer or

CTE programs enrolled in developmental education. Additionally, the average student age has changed from 31 to 28 over the past 14 years.

OV5a SWIC has seven collective bargaining unions that represent all non-administrative and non-exempt employees.

OV5b SWIC's faculty identified three learning objectives common to all degree-seeking students; reasoning skills, communication skills, and citizenship.

OV6a The majority of classrooms are equipped with smart technology that is integrated into the curriculum in a variety of ways. Courses are offered through a variety of distance learning methodologies including online, telecourses, and video conference courses.

OV6b SWIC's Selsius Corporate and Career Training program partners with approximately 200 businesses annually.

OV7a SWIC's primary competitors include public, private, proprietary, on-line institutions, and employers that conduct their own training.

OV7b Challenges for SWIC are limited fiscal resources, competition with other entities for state resources, and that although all campuses are undergoing renovations, space remains an issue.

OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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

- OV2a SWIC offers seven baccalaureate/transfer degrees, over ninety occupational degrees or certificates, a comprehensive adult basic education program and numerous non-credit courses.
- OV2b The College serves 26,000 students across three campuses and is the largest community college in the state south of Chicago. Classes are offered off-site at Scott Air Force Base, the East St. Louis Community College Center, Programs and Services for Older Persons, through 26 satellite centers and via distance education.
- OV4b SWIC's developmental students account for 31.1% of the college's total credit hours attempted; with 20.9% of the students enrolled in the college's baccalaureate/transfer or CTE programs enrolled in developmental education. Additionally, the average student age has changed from 31 to 28 over the past 14 years.

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>
1P1	S	SWIC has placed considerable resources behind the collaborative process to determine and develop common student learning objectives and now has determined a timeline for regular assessment including benchmarking the core competencies. Common core competencies/learning objectives are determined by a faculty-driven process overseen by the Outcomes Assessment General Education Committee under the leadership of a full time faculty coordinator.
1P3	O	Although SWIC refers to a program development model that is connected to the strategic planning process; there is a lack of clarity concerning how proposals are tracked since they come from both internal and external sources. Opportunities may be missed if: proposals are lost or misdirected; if stakeholders are unsure about how to submit or champion a proposal; and if there is not a clear description of need that is a good fit with the strategic plan. A well articulated process helps to align market needs with course and program development resulting in well prepared and satisfied students and employers.
1P5	S	Departmental faculty members make recommendations to the curriculum committee concerning course prerequisites to ensure that students are placed in the correct courses. Additionally, the Mission Success program, COMPASS, other departmental assessments, and learning style inventories guide student advising and placement providing a well-rounded set of useful indicators.
1P6	S	SWIC communicates required preparation and learning /development objectives to current and prospective students through the College catalog, Mission success, recruiting visits, brochures, student handbook, mailed class schedules, and the College website. The use of a standard

course syllabus template that identifies student learning objectives and curriculum maps support alignment and consistency.

- 1P7a SS SWIC provides a “full service” approach to student advising and career/interest exploration to holistically match student needs, interests, and abilities with program/goal selection. Degree auditing builds on student services to monitor progress and make corrections that can best support student academic goals.
- 1P7b O SWIC has developed “Mission Success”, an assessment and counseling program to aid in student success for entry to the institution. There is an opportunity to expand the program to include/integrate the appropriate selection of programs of study by the students
- 1P8 SS A wide variety of assistance is available to academically underprepared students including PALS, RESTART, and RISE, and a sequence of developmental course work. SWIC should be commended for having faculty members play a role in advising and assessing students during initial class sessions.
- 1P10 S SWIC offers a variety of services for veterans, as well as non-traditional and vocational students through programs such as NETworks. Additionally SWIC offers services through the Minority Transfer and Multicultural Student Services Center indicating a commitment to supporting a diverse learner population.
- 1P11 SS SWIC has a robust and systematic multi-tiered process for supporting and assessing teaching and learning effectiveness that involves the faculty evaluation system, faculty development, activities of the OA Coordinator, and various venues for communicating results to stakeholders.
- 1P13-14 S Evaluation of curricular currency and effectiveness is conducted at multiple levels: classroom, program, and institution. Using multiple strategies to collect and analyze data, the five-year course review cycle allows SWIC to compare their programs with those of other institutions, keeping quality, relevancy, and currency at the forefront of curricular offerings.

1P16	S	Alignment of co-curricular development goals with curricular learning objectives is accomplished through numerous courses offering service learning opportunities, an honors program, regular meetings with the student leadership team, and faculty sponsorship of student organizations. The college provides co-curricular and curricular activities that align with both service and leadership.
1P18	SS	A systematic process is in place for the comprehensive assessment of student learning that rests with various groups including the OA Coordinator, Outcomes Assessment Committee, General Education Committee and the competency skills committees. A full-time Outcomes Assessment Coordinator illustrates the commitment to outcomes assessment.
1R1	SS	SWIC regularly measures student performance through classroom, program, and institutional data that is comprehensive. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 provide a broad overview of the timelines for the assessment of general education core competencies. SWIC should be commended for using multiple measures for student performance, providing a comprehensive documentation and providing a picture of results that support the mission and core values.
1R2a	S	Performance results for common student learning and development objectives are consistently used to identify areas of improvements to aid student success. Analyzing and then using the data to make decisions and try new strategies attests to the College's commitment not only to student learning but also to continuous quality improvement.
1R2b	O	While SWIC's report provides a number of results on various items; several do not have trends analysis. Opportunity exists to fully implement trends analysis for other efforts. Comparing the results over time, to a target, to students from similar institutions and graduates could provide useful information to SWIC upon which to base future actions.
1R3	S	Performance results for specific program learning objectives are provided from the math department and the Physical Therapist Assistant program.

These examples show evidence of analyzing data and then making data based decisions to make programmatic improvements to support student success.

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| 1R4 | S | Comparisons of the academic achievement of native students at transfer institution to SWIC graduates, along with licensure/registry rates and employer surveys indicates that SWIC is preparing students to be successful in continued education and the workforce. |
| 1R5 | O | CCSSE (2005) data indicates that SWIC students are generally satisfied with student services. Longitudinal data comparisons may provide a more comprehensive understanding of student satisfaction in this area and allow the department to “drill down” into the data to continuously improve services. |
| 1R6 | S | SWIC utilizes data from mandated state reports to track how they compare with other community colleges in Illinois. The data provided indicate favorable comparison indicating an effective data-driven decision making in the support of student learning. |
| 111 | SS | Through AQIP and other initiatives, SWIC has well documented data-driven strategies to inform decision making that has contributed to improved student learning. |
| 112 | S | SWIC has created a collaborative environment demonstrating a community approach to improving performance by engaging all stakeholders in a continuous improvement process and using assessment as a tool to achieve that goal. |

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

OV3b The SWIC service region is a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural economies with the additional factor of the service region boundaries crossing state lines. Student demographics show changes which impact programming and services including: a growing number of students from underrepresented groups especially African-Americans, an increasingly younger average age of students, an increasing number of full-time students, and an increasing number of students requiring remedial courses.

OV4a SWIC has numerous partnerships with businesses, community agencies, area school districts, and other educational institutions that contribute to curriculum and academic departments, serve partner employees in providing training needs, and improve standard of living for community members.

OV6b SWIC's Selsius Corporate and Career Training program partners with approximately 200 businesses annually.

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>
2P1	S	SWIC serves key stakeholders through processes that are driven by strategic objectives from the College's mission and core values. Relevant data for tactical planning includes an annual environmental scanning report, program outcomes, and information from external advisory groups that allow the College to identify trends and make data-based decisions regarding other distinctive objectives.

- 2P4 S SWIC describes a process to assess and review the appropriateness and value of other distinctive objectives that involves the Board of Trustees who examine budgetary impact, the SPC, and College departments that develop tactical plans with action steps. The SPC provides a progress report to the Board of Trustees on a semi-annual basis.
- 2P5 S Supplemental funds are set aside by the BOT for funding non-grant projects and is allocated largely based on strategic plans.
- 2R1 O Figure 2.1 provides the programs and measures of accomplishing major non-instructional objectives. Additional information on how often these measures are examined and what is done with the analysis of the measures would provide a more complete understanding of these results.
- 2R2 S SWIC provides a variety of performance results for accomplishing other distinctive objectives. Many of these results include some longitudinal measures which begin to show trends and could potentially be used for comparisons with other colleges in the future.
- 2R3 SS All major programs at the college have assessment measures and have more than one for each program reflecting comparison results that meet or exceed peer institutions.
- 2R4 S Multiple examples indicate that SWIC's performance results of processes for accomplishing other distinctive objective have strengthened the institution and relationships with their communities. These activities could provide widespread support for the College's mission and goals in an increasingly competitive educational environment.
- 2I1 S SWIC is able to provide multiple recent improvements in lifelong learning, community outreach and partnerships, and diversity and accessibility for students and community members. Processes for tracking these improvements indicate that they are more likely to be followed because of their integration into the strategic plan.
- 2I2 S SWIC reports a very high level of acceptance of AQIP institutionally and a culture that is collaborative and communicative which has led to

improvements in accomplishing other distinctive objectives. The planning processes and regular meetings no doubt aid the selection of setting improvement targets.

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

- OV3b The SWIC service region is a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural economies with the additional factor of the service region boundaries crossing state lines. Student demographics show changes which impact programming and services including: a growing number of students from underrepresented groups especially African-Americans, an increasingly younger average age of students, an increasing number of full-time students, and an increasing number of students requiring remedial courses.
- OV3c SWIC's representative student characteristics include; 28% ethnic minority, 79% first-generation, 80% underprepared, 4000 students seeking ABE coursework, 849 students with disabilities, over 18,000 financial aid recipients, and 600-800 veterans per semester.
- OV4a SWIC has numerous partnerships with businesses, community agencies, area school districts, and other educational institutions that contribute to curriculum and academic

departments, serve partner employees in providing training needs, and improve standard of living for community members.

OV4b SWIC's developmental students account for 31.1% of the college's total credit hours attempted; with 20.9% of the students enrolled in the college's baccalaureate/transfer or CTE programs enrolled in developmental education. Additionally, the average student age has changed from 31 to 28 over the past 14 years.

OV6a The majority of classrooms are equipped with smart technology that is integrated into the curriculum in a variety of ways. Courses are offered through a variety of distance learning methodologies including online, telecourses, and video conference courses.

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.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	S	SWIC assesses student needs through environmental scans, campus assessments, and a cross-analysis process that allow the college to be agile in its response to student needs. Four Action Projects have focused on those needs which involved multiple groups campus-wide.
3P2	S	The college uses a variety of processes including a cross-functional communication committee to build student relationships. Their improvement efforts include the expansion of a social networking site, a new student orientation, faculty advising, and various student activities. The follow through provided by the implementation of this committee and its results served to retain students and increase student satisfaction.
3P3	S	SWIC utilizes a systematic approach using multiple methods to identify, analyze, and then respond to key stakeholder groups through formal and informal processes. The College looks at longer term trend data through strategic planning and environmental scanning which allows the College to better understand stated needs.
3P4	S	SWIC has taken a number of strategic actions in sharing information, partnering with other educational institutions, and providing critical

- services to students. These actions have been central to maintaining stakeholder relationships, receiving public recognition for its efforts, and to fulfilling the college's strategic priorities.
- 3P6 S SWIC collects and analyzes complaint data through formal and informal means and has a system to identify trends which can then lead to action taken for repetitive problem areas that decreases the likelihood of similar complaints.
- 3R1 S SWIC determines and selects measures of student satisfaction through administration of the CCSSE which occurs every five years. Analysis of the data helped create an annual review process through surveying student satisfaction with services.
- 3R1-3R2a O Although regular cycles of student satisfaction data are collected; the samples have been small and the results appear to be satisfactory but there were little shared in the portfolio. Results on the CCSSE (Figure 3.2) indicate that there are areas that need improvement in student services.
- 3R1-3R2b O SWIC's assessment practices indicate a commitment to making data-driven decisions. However, efforts to determine other stakeholder satisfaction are less clearly defined relying on secondary information such as participation in events and program enrollments. A process that clearly compares expectations with stakeholder satisfaction may likely result in greater engagement and a more accurate evaluation.
- 3R3a O The College uses its Mission Success program as one measure of building student relationships, however targets were not provided to determine if the program is successful. Actual retention percentages have decreased slightly over the past three years. This trend may call for additional review. SWIC could consider additional measures of student success in order to establish a more robust assessment system.
- 3R3b O Although admirable efforts have been made to retain students there still is a gap between satisfaction and retention. Continued efforts in addressing

the gap will likely increase SWIC student success and best practices leadership within the state.

- 3R4a S SWIC serves students and employers through the services of the Career Center which posts job openings and hosts on-campus job fairs with a significant number of area employers participating. The results of such efforts have resulted in SWIC having graduate employment rates exceeding the benchmarks for Illinois community colleges.
- 3R4b O SWIC lists ways it measures stakeholder satisfaction, other than students, but provides little results for these measures. The results of stakeholder satisfaction might be strengthened with survey information that measured actual employer satisfaction with the Career Center services and employer satisfaction with graduate job performance.
- 3R5 O SWIC states that thirty-three instructional programs have advisory committees to build relationships and verify that the programs are meeting the needs of area employers; however no results are provided. Developing a process to monitor and measure employer satisfaction through advisory committees may identify areas needing improvement or program strengths.
- 3R6 O Other than student satisfaction it is unclear what the intended outcomes for performance are for SWIC building relationships with stakeholders. Setting institutional targets and establishing external benchmarks will more clearly reveal if institutional efforts are truly producing satisfaction.
- 3I1-3I2 SS SWIC is to be commended for implementing a strategic planning process to increase its understanding of students' needs and improving satisfaction through strategic efforts. SWIC has implemented new processes and services to meet the needs of stakeholders including new technology, a leadership and Legacy program, and an AQIP action project directed toward veterans.

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

- OV4a SWIC has numerous partnerships with businesses, community agencies, area school districts, and other educational institutions that contribute to curriculum and academic departments, serve partner employees in providing training needs, and improve standard of living for community members.
- OV5a SWIC has seven collective bargaining unions that represent all non-administrative and non-exempt employees.
- OV6b SWIC's Selsius Corporate and Career Training program partners with approximately 200 businesses annually.
- OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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

- 4P1 S SWIC clearly articulates requirements for hiring faculty and staff through a structured process involving administration, Human Resources and the departments that serve to ensure faculty and staff meet the needs and understand the values of the institution.
- 4P2 S SWIC utilizes hiring committees to review applications that are prescreened for applicants who meet the job description requirements.
- 4P3 O Although a formal system is in place (which is depicted in Figure 4.1) for recruiting and hiring employees, no process was described for retaining employees other than the new employee orientation that is described in 4P4. A focus on a similar process for retaining employees may provide for greater employee satisfaction and address potential turnover.
- 4P4 S A new employee orientation was developed through an AQIP action project that offers a flexible schedule of orientation sessions, thus meeting the needs of those teaching or working outside regular business hours.
- 4P5a S The College has a multi-year plan for hiring new faculty positions over a five year period and uses a system of cross training personnel to cover services in the event of sudden resignations or terminations. This demonstrates responsiveness to changing personnel needs through an AQIP initiative that established an Enhances Staffing Faculty Plan.
- 4P5b O Although cross training personnel is admirable, the process through which individuals are cross trained is unclear. A strategic and intentional process contributes to preparedness for retirement and staff attrition.
- 4P6a O There does not appear to be a formal, structured attempt to design work processes and activities to contribute to organizational productivity and employee satisfaction other than the dissemination of information from those who attend weekly meetings with the president.
- 4P6b O Including satisfaction indicators in the environmental scanning process may identify patterns of need or concern.

- 4P7 O Other than the belief that ethical behavior is part of the College's culture and placing the Mission and Values statement throughout the College, there appears to be no formal process to ensure the ethical practices of all SWIC employees. Developing and formalizing processes that can then be regularly assessed and improved could further strengthen the College's culture.
- 4P8 S SWIC has developed a system of required and voluntary training for employees that align with strategic priorities. Full-time faculty complete a tenure review process, attend orientation sessions, and are eligible for tuition reimbursement for course work.
- 4P9 S SWIC has placed additional emphasis on faculty and staff development and has developed an Employee Development Advisory Council that provides a needs assessment of training. Support for meeting development and training needs of faculty and staff is provided through various avenues and align with strategic priorities. Strategies for supporting faculty and staff development over the course of their career are to be commended.
- 4P13 O Although SWIC notes positive attendance records and lower worker's compensation claims, qualitative measures of well being, health and safety would add additional insight.
- 4R1 O Encouraging staff and faculty to make personal statements during informal conversations and formal evaluations is listed as a strategy. More regular and varied strategies for collecting information about employee satisfaction/needs could be useful in detecting and correcting patterns.
- 4R2 S The College values its employees through various activities and forms of recognition. Performance results for valuing people include low turnover of employees, employee giving to the SWIC Foundation and United Way, employee volunteerism in the community, and other activities or processes that support employees' needs or recognize employee accomplishments.

- 4R3 O Although SWIC provides strong evidence of productivity and effectiveness of employees with results of a strategic enrollment and retention plan, other evidence of effectiveness from various areas of the college would help document productivity. Measures of valuing do not appear to align with indicators.
- 4R4 O SWIC presents itself as a leader in the state academic community. As such there is an opportunity to demonstrate successful strategies in valuing employees.
- 4I1 S SWIC uses the AQIP and strategic planning processes to make improvements in valuing people which are illustrated in 4I2. SWIC has used strategic planning and AQIP projects to make a number of improvements and demonstrate its focus on valuing people.
- 4I1/2 O Targets provided are institutional productivity and efficiency goals that may or may not relate to employee satisfaction and value.
- 4I2 O The system of dealing with problem areas when they arise might be supplemented with processes for continuously identifying problem areas.

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

- OV1 Southwestern Illinois College is a public institution that is part of the Illinois community college system and has been accredited since 1949. The governance structure includes a board of trustees, and regulatory oversight by the Illinois community college board (fiscal and programmatic) and the Illinois board of higher education (strategic).
- OV2b The College serves 26,000 students across three campuses and is the largest community college in the state south of Chicago. Classes are offered off-site at Scott Air Force Base, the East St. Louis Community College Center, Programs and Services for Older Persons, through 26 satellite centers and via distance education.
- OV7a SWIC's primary competitors include public, private, proprietary, on-line institutions, and employers that conduct their own training.
- OV7b Challenges for SWIC are limited fiscal resources, competition with other entities for state resources, and that although all campuses are undergoing renovations, space remains an issue.
- OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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>
5P1-5P2	SS	Alignment of the mission and values of the College to the strategic plan, tactical plans, annual employee reviews and other processes provide unified direction, employee commitment and a robust system of annual review.
5P3	S	Needs and expectations of students are included in setting directions through representation on the BOT and on the curriculum and disciplinary committees. Many student/graduate surveys are administered to inform

decision making and ensure that the “voices” of stakeholders will be heard.

- 5P4 SS The College incorporates environmental scanning for institutional learning about perceived and recognized needs for change within a learner-centered framework. An annual report is disseminated college-wide and presented to the Board of Trustees which selects action plans for implementation.
- 5P5a SS SWIC invites campus-wide involvement in making decisions and utilizes action plans in the process to make recommendations for quality improvement. Campus inclusion helps to build commitment to decisions and plans for the future.
- 5P5b O Although SWIC appears to use systematic collection methods to determine institutional needs, the decision making process seems to be based upon a decentralized process linked to e-mail, surveys, and ad hoc committees.
- 5P6 S SWIC’s decisions are data informed, as they indicate a multitude of items that are monitored and considered in the decision making process. The College is strengthening this process through an AQIP action project dealing with institutional indicators of effectiveness that will substantially improve the value of data and better provide direction for change and improvement.
- 5P7 S Multi-level communication occurs through various avenues depicted in Figure 5.1 that serve to connect and inform the campus and its stakeholders.
- 5P8 SS Using the strategic plans and the corresponding tactical plans communicate and reinforce the mission of SWIC and the means to achieve that mission and vision going forward.
- 5P9 S Leadership development is supported through a variety of means for all employee groups. Additionally, SWIC recognizes the value of AQIP action projects that promote collaboration among employee groups to

- accomplish shared goals and helps embed continuous quality improvement into the institutional environment.
- 5P10 O Although SWIC does provide opportunities for professional development in content specific areas as well as pedagogy, a succession plan for a few key leadership positions could help to ensure high performance in times of transition of key individuals.
- 5R1-5R3 O SWIC reports no results in Leading and Communicating and has an action project planned. Using measures and results are critical in leading, communicating, and advancing the goals of the institution.
- 5I1 S SWIC is making progress on improving leadership and communication through an All-College Discussion Day, analysis of data from surveys, AQIP Action Projects, adoption of a learning institution model, and impromptu discussions between the college president and college staff.
- 5I2 O Although SWIC reports enhanced communication with and from the President; the College is in the early stages of defining measures, collecting data, and setting targets for improvement. Communicating progress and incremental results of initiatives can motivate and engage the community as these efforts commence.

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

- OV2b The College serves 26,000 students across three campuses and is the largest community college in the state south of Chicago. Classes are offered off-site at Scott Air Force Base, the East St. Louis Community College Center, Programs and Services for Older Persons, through 26 satellite centers and via distance education.
- OV3b The SWIC service region is mixture of urban, suburban, and rural economies with the additional factor of the service region boundaries crossing state lines. Student demographics show changes which impact programming and services including: a growing number of students from underrepresented groups especially African-Americans, an increasingly younger average age of students, an increasing number of full-time students, and an increasing number of students requiring remedial courses.
- OV3c SWIC's representative student characteristics include; 28% ethnic minority, 79% first-generation, 80% underprepared, 4000 students seeking ABE coursework, 849 students with disabilities, over 18,000 financial aid recipients, and 600-800 veterans per semester.
- OV4b SWIC's developmental students account for 31.1% of the college's total credit hours attempted; with 20.9% of the students enrolled in the college's baccalaureate/transfer or CTE programs enrolled in developmental education. Additionally, the average student age has changed from 31 to 28 over the past 14 years.
- OV6a The majority of classrooms are equipped with smart technology that is integrated into the curriculum in a variety of ways. Courses are offered through a variety of distance learning methodologies including online, tele-courses, and video conference courses.
- OV7b Challenges for SWIC are limited fiscal resources, competition with other entities for state resources, and that although all campuses are undergoing renovations, space remains an issue.
- OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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>
6P1	O	A variety of strategies are used to collect data about student support services needs, however the focus is on unit specific performance rather than an integrated analysis of how needs may exist in the holistic experience of the learner.
6P1-6P2	S	Support service needs of students and other key stakeholders are identified through multiple methods including point-of-service communications, surveys, and evaluations. The multiple measures are helpful in providing a well-balanced view of the service needs of students as well as the administrative needs of faculty, staff and administration.
6P2	O	While the ongoing survey of staff and faculty assists in determining support needs, the aligning of services with performance indicators can better provide services that meet the professional developmental needs of employees.
6P3	SS	Key support processes that contribute to physical safety and security are designed and maintained by the Public Safety Department. This department works collaboratively with College departments and local agencies and attempts to integrate stakeholder feedback into programs and services. Figure 6.1 provides a comprehensive overview of integrated safety and security services. Having a key area designated for this area indicates the importance SWIC places on this area and allows for a more coordinated effort.
6P4	SS	Through its strategic and tactical planning processes the College has implemented changes in the student administration system and reorganized the Instructional Leadership Team. The results have impacted the college culture to ensure that all planning efforts are linked to the strategic plan, fostered cross-departmental collaboration and

communication, and have enabled the College to be more agile to the changing needs and issues of its stakeholders.

- 6P5 O The opportunities through various software packages for learners to manage their own information and for other stakeholders to have access to self-directed learning are commendable. However, the communication appears to be one-way. If stakeholders are provided a venue to contribute knowledge or help to organize knowledge, as in the Green Committee, then innovation and empowerment are more likely to occur.
- 6R1 S Figure 6.2 provides an overview of the measures of student, administrative, and organizational support services processes that are regularly analyzed. Connecting the key process to the key measure of success helps integrate this data with strategic and tactical planning and assessment.
- 6R2 SS SWIC provided performance results for student support services processes which document improvements, increased usage of services, and new initiatives. This dedication to supporting student success is commendable and bodes well for enhancing the educational environment for students.
- 6R3a SS Performance results for administrative support service processes indicate that the College's financial status including audit reports are positive. SWIC also produces evidence of other processes that have improved efficiency, safety, technology, and ecology efforts. These results add to the overall picture of strong organizational support for College operations.
- 6R3b O SWIC has an opportunity to develop other measure of administrative support service processes beyond financial results and impact.
- 6R4 SS SWIC demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement by having processes in place that provide a system of data collection and analysis to improve key student, administrative, and organizational support services. Annual review processes include benchmarking with peer institutions and trend analysis.

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| 6R5 | S | SWIC provides a comprehensive set of student services that are well monitored for contributions toward quality improvement. SWIC utilizes the data from the ICCB Data and Characteristic report to compare results for the performance of processes for supporting organizational operations with results from other Illinois colleges. These external comparisons provide benchmarks and when combined with internal results are used in the strategic and tactical planning process to make improvements. |
| 6I1 | S | SWIC provided examples of recent improvements that were targeted from the AQIP Portfolio feedback report and the College's tactical planning efforts which evidence a systematic approach of continuous improvement. The new Student Center and Faculty Center, and Financial Aid office improvements are examples of specific improvements made in the area of supporting organizational operations. In addition, improvements in student and faculty access to timely and relevant information improve communication while empowering the individual. |
| 6I2 | SS | SWIC has integrated their strategic planning process, tactical planning process, program review and AQIP processes in a manner that reflects, supports and continues to develop a culture of continuous improvement. |

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

- OV7a SWIC's primary competitors include public, private, proprietary, on-line institutions, and employers that conduct their own training.
- OV7b Challenges for SWIC are limited fiscal resources, competition with other entities for state resources, and that although all campuses are undergoing renovations, space remains an issue.
- OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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>
7P1	S	SWIC selects and manages data requests for short-term requirements through a Request for Services (RFS) process that has a rating system giving precedence to students and state/federal requirements when necessary. Longer term IT support is integrated into the annual and strategic planning process.
7P2	S	SWIC has processes in place for data and performance information which are aligned with the strategic plan and the tactical action plans to support the strategic plan.
7P3	O	SWIC has a centralized data collection process which uses collaborative working relationships to ensure data integrity, transparency and accessibility. Implementation of an ERO, as well as plans to add future modules to the system, will provide continued improvements in this area.
7P4	O	SWIC is utilizing an AQIP action project to establish benchmarks and a dashboard reporting system to enhance analysis and sharing of information across the institution. Completion of the action project will

- serve to move the College forward in establishing and benchmarking key indices of institutional effectiveness.
- 7P5 S The use of a statewide database maintained by the ICCB, the establishment of peer groups – both state selected and self-selected - has facilitated the use of comparison data and information.
- 7P6 S An extensive program review process as well as outcomes assessment by discipline and programs ensure data and information analysis is aligned to support the institution's goals.
- 7P7 SS Annual audits for the College network and production application systems are followed up by a report review leading to systems improvements. Additionally, the RFS system standardizes and regulates upgrades and software and hardware migration. The RFS system provides testing and feedback and lead to necessary changes providing a continuous improvement cycle.
- 7R1 SS SWIC has identified a number of key institutional measures at both the macro and micro level for tracking effectiveness. The portfolio summary is a model of best practices on how data is being used to identify capacity, trends, and effectiveness of IT services.
- 7R2a S The IT scorecard (Figure 7.5) provides longitudinal evidence that the IT system for measuring effectiveness is meeting organizational needs and goals.
- 7R2b O The IT scorecard report includes information on IT effectiveness; however, there are other measures that may be more directly related to measuring overall effectiveness in achieving the institution's goals and objectives. As SWIC continues to develop their dashboard reporting system, there may be additional opportunities to report key measures of effectiveness.
- 7R3 O SWIC has an opportunity to formalize the system for comparison results with other institutions or organizations that when combined with the excellent processes illustrated in Figure 7.3-7.5 would provide a highly

efficient system of measuring, tracking, and assessing performance results related to measuring effectiveness.

- 712 S Continuous improvement practices and processes are evident as SWIC describes changes made through outcomes assessment, program review and tactical plan usage.

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

- OV3a SWIC is the only community college in the state that is experiencing growing enrollments.
- OV3b The SWIC service region is mixture of urban, suburban, and rural economies with the additional factor of the service region boundaries crossing state lines. Student demographics show changes which impact programming and services including: a growing number of students from underrepresented groups especially African-Americans, an increasingly younger average age of students, an increasing number of full-time students, and an increasing number of students requiring remedial courses.
- OV7b Challenges for SWIC are limited fiscal resources, competition with other entities for state resources, and that although all campuses are undergoing renovations, space remains an issue.

OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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>
8P1	SS	Strategic planning emerges as a strength for SWIC, with campus-wide engagement in annual tactical planning and AQIP projects that are monitored by the Strategic Planning Council and reported through an accountability report to ensure the plans are implemented and tracked.
8P2	SS	SWIC is a model of best practices in how it has structured its planning process around a framework of strategic priorities, goals, objectives, and tactical plans. Strategic and tactical planning appears to be integrated with the budgeting cycle.
8P3	O	Developing a process through which action plans may originate and be reviewed by the campus community at large, not just the SPC, will engage and involve more people in the support of plans and more likely ensure their success.
8P3-8P4	S	Utilizing input from many sources, key action plans are selected by the SPC and approved by the Board of Trustees to assure alignment with strategic priorities. Each project is chaired by one or more vice presidents which communicates to stakeholders the commitment by the institution.
8P5	O	SWIC indicates that there is little commonality between performance data reported to the State and the key strategic priorities set by the College. The Action Plan to develop a range of institutional indicators of effectiveness is an opportunity to further improve the strategic and tactical planning processes for SWIC.

- 8P6 SS SWIC describes a system of strategic, flexible, and innovative funding for current and future needs and projects. In particular, the College's ability to reallocate funding when needed and the Funding for Results Program are ways to navigate these challenging financial times.
- 8P7 O While conducting SWOT assessments as a part of environmental scanning is helpful, using institutional indicators and market trends to trigger SWOT will assist in averting risks, particularly those that are related to SWIC's vision and mission.
- 8P8 S SWIC established through a previous action project a system of professional development and training that is tied to the College's mission, goals, and strategic plan.
- 8R1 O SWIC acknowledges the need to develop a system of measuring the effectiveness of the planning processes in a more formal and quantitative manner. Creating a systematic, campus-wide assessment approach provides the opportunity for development of quantitative measures and internal targets to further institutional improvement efforts.
- 8R2 S The College reports results for three retired action projects and progress on two of the five initiatives (Figures 8.6 and 8.7) that are forward thinking and indicate leadership and agility.
- 8R3 S SWIC has used and plans to expand their use of the action plan concept to aid in the achievement of their strategies and plans.
- 8R4 O SWIC recognizes the challenge of operationally defining targets and outcomes to streamline accountability for achievement of intended goals, particularly when making comparisons with other institutions.
- 8R5 S SWIC measures their effectiveness in continuous improvement by having ongoing measures of tactical plan progress and periodic measures of strategic plan progress.
- 8I1 O SWIC has set in place an inclusive system of membership rotation for the SPC and now has the opportunity of developing a set of core indicators of

effectiveness for key processes. Work on this dashboard will significantly position the College for measuring continuous quality improvement.

- 8I2 S Priority given to the selection of processes for improvement is focused on external assessments, environmental scanning, and tactical plans providing SWIC with reliable indicators of institutional progress and support for data-based target setting.

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

- OV1 Southwestern Illinois College is a public institution that is part of the Illinois community college system and has been accredited since 1949. The governance structure includes a board of trustees, and regulatory oversight by the Illinois community college board (fiscal and programmatic) and the Illinois board of higher education (strategic).
- OV4a SWIC has numerous partnerships with businesses, community agencies, area school districts, and other educational institutions that contribute to curriculum and academic departments, serve partner employees in providing training needs, and improve standard of living for community members.
- OV6b SWIC's Selsius Corporate and Career Training program partners with approximately 200 businesses annually.

OV8 SWIC lists its opportunities as: resilient local economy, continued population/enrollment growth projections, excellent college/business/labor partnerships, strong institutional support for improvement, K-12 systems that are receptive to partnerships, well-qualified and motivated faculty and staff, and utilization of an outcomes assessment system.

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>
9P1	O	Although SWIC has numerous successful partnerships that are closely tied to key priorities with related measures of success, it is not clear what processes are used to select and prioritize these partnerships. A more clearly defined process may help ensure efficient use of resources and effective establishment of targets.
9P2	S	SWIC has clearly defined processes for building relationships that depend on SWIC students and graduates including advisory councils, articulation agreements and the Career Activities and Employment Center.
9P3	S	SWIC creates and prioritizes relationships with organizations that provide services to students based on those designed to serve a broad range of students. Faculty and College staff serve on boards and councils of many of the organizations that provide services to students.
9P5	S	SWIC has had memberships in educational associations, external agencies, and the general community with goals included in the strategic plan and the College mission.
9P6	S	SWIC should be commended for focusing on expectations to maximize the relationships they have with external partners.
9P7	S	SWIC creates and builds relationships between and among departments through a variety of formal and informal methods and utilizes the website, a newsletter, meetings, and College events to communicate these efforts. The HR department supports cross-area interaction through professional development activities.

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| 9R1/9R2 | S | Measures are in place to gauge stakeholder relationships and results that indicate the success of these partnerships. |
| 9R3 | O | SWIC has an opportunity to continue to identify comparison data to be used for benchmarking purposes, as well as to establish internal targets. These activities may aid in the identification of areas to focus improvement efforts. |
| 9I1 | S | SWIC lists recent improvements for building collaborative relationships and is able to identify and measure the performance of a wide variety of internal and external relationships. |
| 9I2 | O | SWIC has processes to build collaborative relationships and is working on a system of metrics to measure success in this area. Continued efforts toward setting targets and evaluating progress will greatly contribute to understanding the value of collaborative relationships and enhance continuous quality improvement efforts. |