

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

NORTH CENTRAL STATE COLLEGE

February 15, 2008



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR NORTH CENTRAL STATE COLLEGE

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

The College has articulated student learning outcomes for general education and degree programs and has outlined a specific plan to assess all of the outcomes over time. In addition, the College has engaged in internal and external collaborations with stakeholders knowledgeable about the current needs of students and industry. Fully implementing the assessment plan as outlined in the Student Success Plan will be important for establishing and prioritizing improvement plans.

The College is making significant efforts to collaborate with other educational institutions and workforce organizations. This includes a collaborative effort to train, obtain grant money, share resources, and increase the meaningful educational offerings to stakeholders. However, the College still needs to create mechanisms to collect, analyze, and make decisions using meaningful and valid data. There is still a significant lack of empirical evidence to direct the College as it re-positions itself as the preferred educational institution and workforce trainer within its nine county service area.

The College offers frequent and varied opportunity for input on satisfaction and needs from its stakeholders. Significantly more attention has been given to students and graduates than to other stakeholders. The College realizes that it needs to continue to develop systematic processes for organizing, communicating to stakeholders, and effectively utilizing the data in decision-making. Setting institutional targets and establishing comparative benchmarks will be important for identifying on-going improvement needs for stakeholders.

The College has completed some positive steps (e.g., implementing a Valuing People Action Project) to document, understand, and address employee satisfaction and self-worth (value). This includes evaluating the relationship between the faculty and the administration. As employees feel more valued and a culture of engagement and inclusion emerges, the communication between faculty, staff, and administration should significantly increase in quality and meaning.

The College has made significant steps in trying to improve leading and communicating with students and other stakeholders. However, there is need for data for assessing success and for comparison with other institutions of higher education. It appears that empowerment and engagement of internal stakeholders has not been in place due to a top down decision-making process. The existing culture of dissention and antagonism has been diagnosed by the organization, but interventions to date have not resolved all of the issues.

The primary student and administrative support processes are clearly described, as are the variety of means through which input is elicited about their effectiveness. Ongoing attention to student feedback and other data has resulted in the compilation of a specific list of needed improvements in these areas, some of which have already been implemented. Further attention is needed in reporting results from a variety of areas and constituencies as well as centralizing the data for campus-wide accessibility. Also, looking at changes in an institutional context with institutional prioritization and policy-making, compared to the unit-level approach, will provide consistency and wise use of resources in meeting student and administrative support needs.

While the College appears to have an understanding regarding the need for data-driven decision making and currently collects some data, there is still a need to have a more comprehensive process that would enhance data accessibility, centralization, standardization, and reliability. The College is phasing in Colleague to address data storage; however, distilling the data into meaningful and accessible information will need to be addressed as well as the concerns of faculty who believe measurement and analysis of data is a major problem. Expansion and involvement beyond Information Technology staff for measurement, analysis, and reporting of data will engage the entire campus in informed decision making.

The planning/budgeting model adopted in late 2006 provides a platform for deploying processes that will enable the College to boldly pursue achievement of its declared vision and core values with measurable outcomes for sustaining continuous improvements. However, processes currently operative limit the opportunity for maximizing the use of the information collected. Allowing data collection within departments and using a shorter collection cycle may allow for improvements and interventions to be captured, trended,

and documented more frequently enabling the College to develop its processes for better using data to inform its planning and decision making.

The College has created and implemented new collaborations with local, state, federal, public and private organizations that demonstrate both a commitment for building stronger collaborative relationships and for achieving improvements in leading and communicating. The College also has made changes to its administrative structure to promote and maintain these collaborations. The College has the opportunity to improve its processes for encouraging high school enrollments, student transfers, placement of matriculating students, and meeting the needs of other stakeholders. The College needs to gather significantly more data in order to make data-driven decisions to expand and strengthen its collaborations.

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

ELEMENTS OF North Central State College's FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying

improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

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

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

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

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant

improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*: An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your 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 North Central State 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 the 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 the College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

Information presented throughout the Systems Portfolio indicates there are significant negative communication and empowerment issues between administration and faculty. While the College has initiated action projects to address these issues, there are still a number of issues that need to be resolved. Therefore, the College needs to develop a systematic and consistent evidence-based decision-making process that utilizes the feedback from the campus environment surveys and that recognizes the reactions and concerns of the faculty, such as the faculty's exploration into union affiliation. This in turn, will address the staff's concerns about the effectiveness of the measurement and analysis function; the consequences of inadequate record-keeping as in performance evaluation processes; and that their opinions are neither fully informed nor consulted concerning institutional changes. The expressed faculty/administration tension, if not addressed, could lead to a weakening of collaborative processes necessary to sustain a climate of organizational effectiveness.

The College has begun to analyze the data collected, but it has yet to use much of its data to improve the operation of the College. While it appears that there are groups beginning this process, there does not appear to be a structured or systematic institution-wide

process that gives coordinated results. The College needs to expand its efforts to use measures of performance effectiveness to undergird its planning and resource allocation. Assessment activities in all facets of operation are essential for benchmarking continuous improvements of performance.

The College has begun to gather data about their many collaborative relationships, including rates of participation and successful completion of individuals in specific programs. The impact of workforce development outcomes and coordination with other regional training facilities warrants further data collection and analysis. Information about how these relationships are perceived by the College's partners and measures of impact, especially in terms of outcomes versus outputs, are critical to both continuous improvement and to addressing the HLC's Criterion Five: "...the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value."

The documented achievements of staff and faculty, including adjunct faculty, signal an institution's commitment to valuing life long learning and concern for employees. Creating and/or strengthening processes that promote faculty development, staff training and education, and recruitment and hiring of diverse, qualified faculty and staff could provide tangible positive reinforcement of the core values promulgated by the College. Addressing measures pertaining to employee health, safety, and well-being directly speaks to valuing people.

The assessment and data collection processes at the College are not currently aligned or coordinated institution wide. Problems with accessibility of data and communication to key stakeholders have resulted in the restricted availability of comparisons, correlations, trend data analysis and constructive decision making. The opportunity to leverage resources for solving problems and achieving College goals could be significant.

The College recognizes the importance of serving its constituencies and the need to be responsive to identified needs including curriculum review, delivery systems, and services. However, processes in place to assess learning appear immature, relying heavily on student perceptions rather than trend or other benchmark data. While the data might exist to indicate trends, it appears that the College has done little to develop interventions based on the use of trend data. Capitalizing on trended data and other sources of information, beyond stakeholder perceptions, to enhance student learning will provide for more informed decision making and allow the College to embrace change as a constant factor of its operations.

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 [Institution], 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 North Central State College distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a The College, chartered by the Ohio Board of Regents, is a state-assisted, not-for-profit, two-year technical college that serves three primarily rural counties in North Central Ohio, sharing a campus with a regional site of The Ohio State University.
- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.
- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O1d The College is an open-enrollment institution with 1004 full-time students, 2180 part-time students.
- O2a The College offers 44 different credit degrees (Associate in Applied Business, Associate in Applied Science and Associate in Technical Studies) and certificates, new transfer degrees, workforce training through the Advanced Learning Center to meet the needs of the district businesses and industry, and professional non-credit continuing education.
- O2b The College has an extensive workforce development program that served almost a fourth of the total headcount in 2006.

- O2c The College relies on federal, state, and local grants to maintain its Tool and Die Training Center, Integrated Systems Technology Lab, and the Customized Training facility.
- O3a The College's participation in the Achieving the Dream project is intended to improve success rates amongst students who face traditional barriers to academic success.
- O3b The College provides a variety of support services, including the Student Success Center, Mathematics Lab, Writing Center, peer tutoring, accommodations for students with special needs, and a proactive advising process.
- O4a The College has established numerous partnerships with educational institutions (K-12 school districts and higher education) and industries including General Motors and the local UAW for specialized training through their Tool and Die Training Center and the Integrated Systems Technology Lab.
- O4b A variety of program advisory committees made up of community representatives provide evaluation of, and input to, the College on program content and marketability.
- O4c The College's involvement in the local community includes participation in the North Central Ohio P-16 Council, the Advanced Manufacturing Training Grant, the Tech Prep initiative, career awareness projects, and the development of the Ohio Skills Bank.
- O5a The College has 71 full-time and 155 part-time faculty, and 131 staff, including six administrators.
- O5b Of the College's instructional staff, 13.7% hold less than a bachelor degree, 31.9% a bachelor degree, 44.6% a master degree, and 4.8% hold more than a master degree.
- O6a The College works closely with the Ohio Board of Regents, which coordinates higher education in the state, and is directed by a Board of Trustees whose members are public representatives of Ashland, Crawford and Richland Counties.
- O6b The main campus in Mansfield houses a branch of The Ohio State University and shares services including a student center, cafeteria, recreation center, and childcare.
- O8a The College identifies a number of positive institutional factors including low cost, reputation, partnerships in industry and education, and improvement in educating under-prepared students.

- O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.
- O8c The College's significant progress in the area of assessment constitutes an opportunity for the institution to expand and enhance campus-wide assessment, and thus its ability to use data for continual improvement of student learning.

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 North Central State 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

- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.
- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O1d The College is an open-enrollment institution with 1004 full-time students, 2180 part-time students.
- O2a The College offers 44 different credit degrees (Associate in Applied Business, Associate in Applied Science and Associate in Technical Studies) and certificates, new transfer degrees, workforce training through the Advanced Learning Center to meet the needs of the district businesses and industry, and professional non-credit continuing education.
- O2b The College has an extensive workforce development program which served almost a fourth of the total headcount in 2006.
- O3b The College provides a variety of support services, including the Student Success Center, a Math Lab, a Writing Center, peer tutoring, accommodations for students with special needs, and a proactive advising process.
- O8c The College's significant progress in the area of assessment constitutes a significant opportunity for the institution to expand and enhance campus-wide assessment, and thus its ability to use data for continual improvement of student learning.

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

Item	S/O	Comment
1P1	S	In 2006, the College approved six institution-wide, core learning outcomes against which curriculum is developed, assessed, and modified. A process in which Department Chairs and Program Directors establish program and department outcomes is in place for determining and approving program and departmental learning outcomes.
1P2a	S	A process is in place for creating new programs and courses originating from various levels within the institution.
1P2b	O	While the College has an internal process for developing new programs and courses and for program review, it is not clear how other stakeholders have input into these processes. There is an opportunity for the College to both make these processes more inclusive, and to utilize market research in program/course design and review.
1P3	S	The College has established course entry requirements based on input from assessments and involvement with special programs to best ensure the academic success of its open enrollment students.
1P4a	S	The College has a process for tracking and communicating with students who are on academic probation or who participate in the Directions Program. Counselors meet regularly with students to monitor and advise their progress.
1P4b	SS	The Student Success Center engages with new students early in their school experience for addressing needs and providing services to students.
1P4c	S	The College employs a variety of communication avenues to communicate expectations to students, both in print and online, such as the college catalog, Student Success Center, curriculum sheets, and course syllabi.
1P5a	O	The College recognizes that the faculty advising process could be improved by including resources directed at transfer students, students who have not declared a major, or those on program waiting lists. Without

addressing this opportunity, the College risks lower student retention and satisfaction for these student groups.

- 1P5b S The College effectively assists students with selecting programs, majors, and career exploration through First Year Experience courses, meeting with recruiters and career counselors, and identifying individual learning styles.
- 1P6a S The College uses multiple methods to assess achievement of Core Learning Objectives, as well as student learning in developmental courses and in the programmatic objectives. The results are shared in the College's Achieving the Dream website and Student Success Plan.
- 1P6b SS Program faculty, program directors, and department chairs annually review assessment results and plan/implement improvements where opportunities exist.
- 1P6c S Effective teaching and learning is assessed and documented by the College through a variety of methods, including learning outcome reports, institutional research reports, reports on initiatives, student evaluation in Capstone courses, and course evaluations.
- 1P7a O While the College has increased the number of courses available through distance learning, it acknowledges that it has not yet formally evaluated distance learning, but has established an initiative to systematically address technology issues related to distance learning. Without evaluation information on distance learning, the College has limited insight into how well students' needs are being met.
- 1P7b S The College has mechanisms in place to address course delivery in regards to faculty development including professional development days and the activities involved in Teaching Learning Technology Roundtables.
- 1P7c O While the College has in place processes to identify faculty learning support needs, including the Teaching Learning Technology Roundtables, student course evaluations, and Bromfield Library services, at this time it

appears that faculty development is not sufficiently individualized to meet any unique needs among the faculty.

- 1P8a S The College has processes in place to bring constituents together, determine program currency and curricula effectiveness that include course assessments, advisory committee input, curriculum committee oversight, accreditation standards, licensure and certification, assessment committee input, employer and graduate surveys, and program enrollment.
- 1P8b O The College acknowledges that the program review process may be inconsistently used. An opportunity exists to evaluate the process, update if necessary, and potentially realize financial savings when the campus community uniformly uses the process.
- 1P8c O The Assessment Committee assists academic programs in the development and implementation of their assessment plans and coordinates the assessment of general education outcomes, responding to the requirements of the Ohio Board of Regents' (OBOR) "Student Success Plan." However, assessment of all learning outcomes is incomplete. Further progress on assessing all of the learning outcomes will be fundamental to the College's core mission.
- 1P9 S The College has processes in place to identify student needs and learning support, including the Student Success Center, Teaching and the Office of Specialized Support Services, course evaluation data, and Bromfield Library services.
- 1P10 S Co-curricular goals that align with curricular learning objectives include Arts and Lecture Committee's programs, cross-cultural experiences, and leadership and community service opportunities.
- 1P11a S The College relies on its Assessment and Curriculum Committees to establish processes for assessing, analyzing and improving learning and teaching outcomes.

- 1P11b S The College uses a problem-based learning approach to evaluate student understanding of course materials in Computer Information Systems and College NOW.
- 1P12 S Data is collected on the Core Learning Outcomes, annual assessments, Achieving the Dream initiative, and graduate and employer surveys to measure how well students are prepared and their performance following graduation.
- 1P13 S The College collects and analyzes data on the Core Learning Outcomes, annual assessments, and graduate and employer surveys, as well as data from developmental and gatekeeper courses as a part of the Achieving the Dream initiative.
- 1R1a O Results for the Core Learning Outcomes on qualitative and quantitative measures of critical thinking and communication generally meet the established benchmarks. Without assessment of all of the learning goals, however, establishing priorities for improvement is limited. The College has the opportunity to implement a more effective process, perhaps by using the Achieving the Dream project as a model.
- 1R1b O Results for program learning outcomes indicates assessments have been initiated, but in some cases no results are reported or benchmarks are not met. Opportunity exists to develop improvement plans in areas not meeting these benchmarks and fully implement tracking and trending of results across campus.
- 1R2a OO The success information reported for selected programs is noteworthy but the record is mixed when analyzed across programs, suggesting opportunities for improvements still prevail.
- 1R2b S Data indicates that NC State graduates do well on certification exams and in employer surveys. Further, the data generally indicate modest improvements over the three years listed.

- 1R3 O Assessment results concerned with rate of failure in CIS and use of technology indicate that opportunities exist for the College to formulate and implement improvement action plans in these areas.
- 1R4 O While certification/licensure results offer a means of benchmarking within specific programs, the institution does not appear to have a process in place to consistently collect and analyze comparative data. The College thus has an opportunity to establish such a process.
- 111 S The College provides a number of examples and some descriptions of very specific action steps taken in response to assessment data collected and analyzed, such as the College-Now academy initiative, the Tech-prep program and the Achieving the Dream initiative.
- 112a S Strategies have been enacted by the President and Board of Trustees that have enabled a Planning Advisory Council, the Achieving the Dream Core Team, the AQIP Action Project Team, the Assessment Committee, and others to move boldly to enact processes for enabling improved learning outcomes
- 112b O The College has established strategic goals and reports a process for setting targets on strategic initiative and Core Learning Outcomes; however it is not clear if targets have been established for these goals. Specific, well articulated targets could help the College know how successful it has been in its initiatives.

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 North Central State 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

- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational excellence, a learner focus, community responsiveness, diversity, access, innovation, and teamwork.
- O2a The College offers 44 different credit degrees (Associates in Applied Business, Associate in Applied Science, and Associate in Technical Studies) and certificates, new transfer degrees, workforce training through the Advanced Learning Center to meet the needs of the district businesses and industry, and professional non-credit continuing education.
- O2b The College has an extensive workforce development program that served almost a fourth of the total headcount in 2006.
- O2c The College relies on federal, state, and local grants to maintain its Tool and Die Training Center, Integrated Systems Technology Lab, and the Customized Training facility.
- O4a The College has established numerous partnerships with educational institutions (K-12 school districts and higher education) and industries including General Motors and the local UAW for specialized training through their Tool and Die Training Center and the Integrated systems Technology Lab.
- O4c The College's involvement in the local community includes participation in the North Central Ohio P-16 Council, the Advanced Manufacturing Training Grant, the Tech Prep initiative, career awareness projects, and the development of the Ohio Skills Bank.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as North Central State 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	The College determines objectives related to workforce development through a regional planning effort. The planning effort involves: defining the region; convening a leadership group; conducting a regional

- assessment; developing an economic and corresponding talent development strategy; and identifying resources.
- 2P2 S Specific steps have been taken to improve communication about workforce development objectives, both internally by realigning the Academic Division and externally by establishing articulation agreements related to technical coursework at career centers for credit toward associate degrees.
- 2P3 O The process for determining faculty and staff needs related to other distinctive objectives is unclear. Developing a clear process to align the human and natural resources of the College will help improve the effectiveness of being responsive to identified needs.
- 2P4-2P5 O The College describes an assessment and reporting process related to the RIG grant. However, it does not address how workforce objectives and tasks (2C2 Chart) are assessed and how the feedback is used in decision-making. Assessing all measures should help the College evaluate whether its effort to accomplish other distinctive objectives is effective.
- 2R1 O The College has collected data on the number of people who have participated in other distinctive objective programs, but there does not appear to be information about how effective the programs are. While it is helpful to know how active a program is, knowing how successful a program is can provide information about how to improve it.
- 2R2a S The coordination of training services with five area adult career centers, the establishment of articulation agreements with these centers, and the use of data for planning related to workforce issues, are areas in which the College has been ahead of the competition.
- 2R2b O The collection of peer institution data, while limited, provides beginning evidence of processes being established that will enable the school to undertake competitive collaborative workforce projects to serve its region.
- 2R3 O To date, the College has collected only anecdotal information about its relationship with internal constituencies and with the community. While

preliminary information has been positive, the College will benefit from additional prioritized data collection about its distinctive objectives.

- 2I1-2I2 OO It is unclear how improvement targets are set beyond the RIG grant and how the processes for accomplishing other distinctive objectives are improved. A clear process for improving processes related to accomplishing distinctive objectives should help the College be more effective.

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 North Central State 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

- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.
- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O1d The College is an open-enrollment institution with 1004 full-time students, 2180 part-time students.

- O2a The College offers 44 different credit degrees (Associate in Applied Business, Associate in Applied Science and Associate in Technical Studies) and certificates, new transfer degrees, workforce training through the Advanced Learning Center to meet the needs of the district businesses and industry, and professional non-credit continuing education.
- O3a The College's participation in the Achieving the Dream project is intended to improve success rates amongst students who face traditional barriers to academic success.
- O3b The College provides a variety of support services, including the Student Success Center, Mathematics Lab, Writing Center, peer tutoring, accommodations for students with special needs, and a proactive advising process.
- O4a The College has established numerous partnerships with educational institutions (K-12 school districts and higher education) and industries including General Motors and the local UAW for specialized training through their Tool and Die Training Center and the Integrated Systems Technology Lab.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1a	SS	Prospective and current students, alumni, parents, high school counselors, and others are provided with frequent and varied opportunities to rate their satisfaction with NC State's programs and services and to communicate unmet needs.
3P1b	O	The College recognizes the challenge to continue the improvement in the efficient organization and communication of stakeholder satisfaction and the need to use data in decision making.
3P2a	S	Personal contact with students, beginning with the initial meetings with recruiters, "intrusive" advising, and meetings with individual faculty advisors in the majors is seen at the College as the most important means to build and maintain relationships. The College effectively utilizes several

forms of communication – electronic, paper, phone – to contact, monitor, encourage, and direct students toward academic success.

- 3P4 SS Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders occurs through meetings (e.g., Chamber of Commerce), social events (e.g., alumni meetings), community functions (e.g., community boards), and one-on-one interactions. Communicating through various forms of the media (e.g., newsletters) also fosters relationships with these groups.
- 3P5 S The determination of stakeholder needs is the responsibility of each functional area, working within the strategic planning process in an annual planning cycle linked to the College budget.
- 3P6 S The institution uses conventional, well-tested processes to collect complaint information (i.e., policy statement in student and faculty handbooks, student evaluations, Grade Appeals process, etc), and to communicate resolution of complaints to students and stakeholders.
- 3P7 OO While the institution systematically collects student satisfaction information, it appears to be much less than methodical about collecting information on the satisfaction of other key stakeholders. A distinct opportunity exists for the institution to design and implement a general approach to collecting and analyzing information on the satisfaction of stakeholders other than students, allowing improvement, growth and development outside the limited parameters currently being utilized.
- 3P8 OO The institution acknowledges that consolidation of satisfaction data is necessary; a systematic, holistic process for collection and analysis of satisfaction data from all key stakeholders will result in highly contextualized (and thus more usable) evidence from which to create and implement improvement action plans.
- 3R1a, 3I1a S The College has processes in place for collecting, discussing, and analyzing student satisfaction results for use in improvement.
- 3R1b O Data on graduate satisfaction in several areas of perceived competence indicate drops from 2004 to 2006, while in other areas satisfaction has

increased. This represents an opportunity for faculty to discuss their understanding of this data and to strategize ways to possibly replicate effective practices from some areas and attempt to improve satisfaction where it seems to be on the decline.

- 3R2 O Results from student satisfaction instruments and focus groups suggest that the College faces some challenges in the area of building relationships with students; for example, the results of the 2006 administration of CCSSE indicates that the College ranks much lower than comparison groups in student-faculty interaction and support for learners. The institution has the opportunity to make use of such evidence to plan improvement actions.
- 3R5 O Evidence suggestive of continuous improvement trends in the reported results is indicative of a still maturing process of converting data into actions.
- 3I1b S In response to data from the Community College Benefits Regional Job Growth Report about predicted growth in Health Services jobs, the College is seeking OBOR approval for a bioscience program and investigating new programs in occupational therapy and medical technology.
- 3I1c OO The institution recognizes the need to consolidate and systematize results so that trends and patterns of evidence can be identified that can drive improvement actions. A systematic process is essential to avoid data redundancy, uninformed decision making, and identification of cross-campus student satisfaction issues.
- 3I2 OO The College plans improvements in understanding stakeholder needs through the new strategic plan, but reports that targets have not been set and processes for improvement are not systematic. By establishing measurable targets for improvement, the College will be better able to align its strategic plan with stakeholder needs.

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 North Central State 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

- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational excellence, a learner focus, community responsiveness, diversity, access, innovation, and teamwork.
- O4b A variety of program advisory committees made up of community representatives provide evaluation of, and input to, the College on program content and marketability.
- O5a The College has 71 full-time and 155 part-time faculty, and 131 staff, including six administrators.
- O5b The College has 13.7% of its instructional staff hold less than a bachelor degree, 31.9% a bachelor degree, 44.6% a master degree, and 4.8% hold more than a master degree.
- O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.

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

Item S/O Comment

- 4P1 S The College has developed a rigorous hiring criteria (e.g., job descriptions, skills) identified by the faculty and staff. The Human Resources department is responsible for reviewing and documenting each applicant's credentials and for performing reference checks, meeting timelines, etc.
- 4P2a O A stated institutional value is diversity, but there appears to be no procedure for recruiting and employing minorities or women or for a review system to assure their proportional representation in candidate pools. This is an opportunity for the College to create staff and faculty diversity that represents the global diversity students will face in the work place.
- 4P2b O The College acknowledges the need to develop a more uniform, comprehensive, and formal orientation and mentoring process for new employees; otherwise, new employees may not receive the needed enculturation and development to be successful.
- 4P3a S During 2007, the College implemented a clearly defined, comprehensive, and (state of) Ohio mandated ethics training plan for newly hired full-time and permanent part-time employees.
- 4P3b O There appears to be minimal communication between various departments because each department develops its own programs and processes. This is an opportunity for the College to create programs and processes that are uniform and consistent across the campus.
- 4P3c O Historically, the strategic planning process has not encouraged high performance or empowerment for each employee. The College has an opportunity (e.g., by using cross-departmental teams) to provide the information, tools, and decision-making authority to create a strategic planning process that fosters communication, cooperation, innovation, valuing people, and organizational learning.
- 4P4a S During the past three years, faculty and staff development has been supported with increased yearly funding. This funding appears adequate since there is money left unused each year.

- 4P4b OO There is no comprehensive policy or developmental goals that address professional development. What should be evaluated, who is responsible, and whether adjunct faculty should be included, are not addressed. The College has the opportunity to structure goals to help employees acquire the necessary skills to accomplish the College's mission statement, to allow professional development funding to be used in a uniform and systematic way, and for employees to endorse development and review as a necessary, fair, and rewarding process.
- 4P5 OO The College has an opportunity to accrue immense benefits (e.g. satisfying critical needs) from using a more evidence-based, inclusive process for creating professional development plans. Without evidence professional development plans can be viewed as uncertain and unclear leading to an environment without trust.
- 4P6 O There is a formal process for evaluating faculty. However, the College recognizes a lack of consistency in evaluating the same attributes or performing the same evaluation steps. This is an opportunity for the College to create a consistent process that provides meaningful feedback for increasing employee morale, appreciation, and satisfaction.
- 4P7 OO There is an opportunity for the College to better define and align employee expectations for recognition and awards with the primary objectives of the College. Employees are better able to judge their perceived and real value and worth to the College when the employee reward system is consistently and obviously linked to the College's strategic outcomes.
- 4P8 S The College determines what key issues are related to the motivation of the faculty, staff, and the administration through a variety of means, most notably the "Our College Initiative," and an internal environmental scanning project initiated during the 2002-2003 school year.
- 4P9 O Even though the College provides medical insurance benefits and wellness programs for employees, it does not adequately address,

promote, evaluate, or improve these employee health, wellness, and safety programs. This is an opportunity for the College (e.g., using a task force) to regularly and systematically assess what is needed for improvement.

- 4R1a O There were “performance gaps” on two survey items regarding how much the faculty and staff feel valued. This is an opportunity for the College to explore and promote better employee morale, satisfaction, and recognition.
- 4R1b S The data from the 2003 Gardner-Shaw Survey was similar to the national norm and employee satisfaction improved according to the 2005 Campus Survey results.
- 4R1c O Triggered by the disbanding of the Faculty Assembly, the College implemented surveys and other follow-up actions. However, without the use of a consistent tool to trend the data, it will be difficult to make conclusions and to target areas for improvement. For example, relating a performance reward system to the strategic outcomes could improve employee productivity and satisfaction.
- 4R2a S The results from an AQIP Action Project regarding improving communication, indicated that email was the most effective mode of communication for full-time faculty and staff, while the regular postal service worked best for adjunct faculty and most community members.
- 4R2b S The results of a 2007 Professional Development email survey of faculty and staff indicated that most of them attend professional development conferences not sponsored by the College.
- 4I1a OO Even though a new Faculty Caucus was developed in response to the Gardner-Shaw report, continued feelings of being devalued have led the faculty to explore representation by a national faculty union. This is an opportunity for the College to improve employee collegiality and self-worth, by focusing upon increasing the support and communication between the

- faculty and the administration, and decreasing the frustrations that are creating a movement toward unionization.
- 411b O Even though the College attempts to react to recent survey results and studies about its systems and processes, there is no systematic process to collect, analyze, or utilize valid data that adequately addresses employee issues (e.g., self-worth). This provides an opportunity for the College to strengthen its evidence-driven decision-making processes when implementing solutions to employee issues.
- 412a OO Improvement items are decided upon by top administrators, which creates a top-to-bottom, one-way communication process. This limits the recognition and formation of meaningful and necessary targets, goals, and priorities for creating improvement. This is an opportunity for the College to strengthen its commitment toward valuing people by institutionalizing a “top-down-bottom-up” communication and decision-making structure.
- 412b S By focusing upon its administrative processes, consultant results, a professional development study, the AQIP Action Project, and by utilizing the AQIP Steering Committee, the College is attempting to improve how it communicates with and values people. This gives the College an opportunity to improve its processes for determining staff positions, pay structures, etc.

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 North Central State 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

- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O5a The College has 71 full-time and 155 part-time faculty members, and 131 staff members including 6 administrators.
- O6a The College works closely with the Ohio Board of Regents, which coordinates higher education in the state, and is directed by a Board of Trustees whose members are public representatives of Ashland, Crawford and Richland Counties.
- O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	S	In 2006, the College's Board and administration adopted a new strategic planning process that is intended to be more open and inclusive, inviting participation of all College constituents except students through the Planning Advisory Council.
5P2	O	While the President and administration have developed a number of communication mechanisms, the College is just beginning a process that intends to include more input from internal stakeholders.
5P3	O	While the College has developed a number of teams and task forces, it appears they may not participate in the decision making process. This is a concern of the faculty caucus and has lead to their intent to investigate unionizing. The College has an opportunity to value its internal stakeholders by being more inclusive in the decision-making process.

- 5P4 OO The College acknowledges that its decision-making process lacks articulated key performance indicators, without which the organization cannot assess its relative success. It is currently working to identify them. This is a significant opportunity to greatly improve and enhance its decision-making process.
- 5P5 O The College has an opportunity to improve its depth and breadth of communication about change implementation in order to reduce frustration resulting from poor communications.
- 5P6 S The College has numerous processes in place for the Board and senior administration to articulate mission, vision and goals.
- 5P7 S The Board and senior leadership at the College have identified numerous opportunities for faculty and staff to develop leadership skills in a variety of committees, task forces, etc. Encouraged by the Board's adoption of a specific leadership model, the institution's administration adheres to a leadership paradigm that emphasizes vision and results. The President has regular discussions about leadership with Senior Staff.
- 5P8 SS The Board of Trustees maintains a succession plan for the President that requires that the President annually inform the Board about the interim leadership plans. In addition, no fewer than two other executive staff members are informed of relevant issues and procedures and are prepared to step into the role of President if circumstances warrant this action.
- 5P9 OO The College does not have a clearly defined process for collecting and analyzing information about leading and communicating. Having a good process should enable it to better address the communication challenges and decision making (5P3 and 5P5).
- 5R1 O The information collected on leading and communication was focused on identifying problems and possible solutions rather than assessing leadership and communication. While the College has instituted changes, it has an opportunity to close the feedback loop with formal assessment of leadership and communication to inform future decision making.
- 5R2 OO The College has not collected data that can readily be compared to other institutions, nor has it attempted to compare the information it has collected. Collecting meaningful data and benchmarking with similar

institutions can help a College identify how it needs to improve its operations.

- 511-512 O While the College has developed the new strategic planning model, it has not yet identified targets for improvement or had a chance for prioritizing. It is possible that the strategic planning process will provide a mechanism to develop targets.

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 North Central State 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

- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.
- O1c The institutional values of the College are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O3b The College provides a variety of support services, including the Student Success Center, Mathematics Lab, Writing Center, peer tutoring, accommodations for students with special needs, and a proactive advising process.
- O6b The main campus in Mansfield houses a branch of The Ohio State University and shares services including a student center, cafeteria, recreation center, and childcare.

O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	The College uses a variety of ways to identify learning support needs including direct student feedback from surveys, focus groups, data generated from Achieving the Dream, and use of comparisons with Higher Education Information Systems data.
6P2a	S	The College uses various methods to identify administrative support service needs of faculty, staff and administrators including surveys, forums, and data on requests for service.
6P2b	O	The College uses performance evaluations as a means of determining faculty, staff, and administrator needs. The context and conditions of performance evaluation can significantly skew such data, providing less than accurate results, perhaps resulting in less than optimal use of resources, and a lost opportunity to engage and empower these stakeholders.
6P3a	S	The College has restructured its organization in order to better manage its services.
6P3b	O	While unit-based operations might be strengthened and spur unit innovation, development of a comprehensive campus-wide policy and associated processes for resource development, student support and academic program directions could eliminate duplication of data collection, preserve resources, and provide institutional data for greater continuity in decision making.

- 6P4 O It is not clear that the College has a process for identifying how it will use information to improve operations. Unit ownership for making operational decisions may promote quick attentiveness to user needs, but prevents systemic solutions from being addressed. The College could benefit from clarifying how it uses information to improve operations.
- 6P5 S The College collects and analyzes a wide range of student and administrative support service data and uses this information to predict staffing needs, improve processes, and/or determine trends. Examples include the non-enrollment student survey and academic alert system.
- 6R1, 6R3 S While mixed results are reported by the College pertaining to support service needs, results are being used to set expectations, make comparisons (e.g. Governor's Performance Report), satisfy goals, establish policies, reallocate resources, and improve student support needs.
- 6R2 OO Results demonstrating other than financial viability are lacking in areas identified in 6C1. This prevents examination of support mechanisms, strategies, policies, and processes in place supporting needs of faculty, staff, administrators and other non-student stakeholders.
- 6I1a O The College has identified a process to improve administrative operations. However, the process appears to take place at the departmental level, and the institution could benefit from a system of review that would include looking at changes in an institutional context with institutional prioritization.
- 6I1b S The use of cross-disciplinary teams to quarterly assess and take action on institutional operations, as well as utilization of data from Achieving the Dream, is an important step in achieving the systems thinking that is central to AQIP processes.
- 6I2 S Targets for improvement of administrative and student support services are formulated in response to the institutional mission and strategic goals, that look at institutional targets and provides a mechanism for communicating back to stakeholders.

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 North Central State 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

- O3a The College's participation in the Achieving the Dream project is intended to improve success rates amongst students who face traditional barriers to academic success.
- O4b A variety of program advisory committees made up of community representatives provide evaluation of, and input to, the College on program content and marketability.
- O8a The College identifies a number of positive institutional factors including low cost, reputation, partnerships in industry and education, and improvement in educating under-prepared students.
- O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.
- O8c The College's significant progress in the area of assessment constitutes an opportunity for the institution to expand and enhance campus-wide assessment, and thus its ability to use data for continual improvement of student learning.

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

Item	S/O	Comment
7P1	O	The College reports that managers make research requests of IT programmers, and that IT is responsible for collecting and archiving commonly-used data queries. Functional areas maintain spreadsheets and databases that are not kept by the general administration because of limitations, convolutions, or lack of access rights. As a result of these access and system limitations there is data duplication, errors due to reliability of data, and “silo” decision making. The College has an opportunity to implement scalable, efficient, centralized and accessible analysis processes.
7P2a	S	The College is in the process of implementing a migration of data storage to a new database (Colleague) under a phased plan extending over 18 months.
7P2b	OO	The institution does not articulate an organization-wide, centralized, or standardized process for determining the information needs of units, or for data retrieval, collection, analysis, and use. There is an opportunity to apply structure and discipline to measurement in an effort to increase quantity, quality, accuracy and reliability in decision making.
7P3a	S	In addition to the usual sources of comparative institutional data (e.g., IPEDS, National Clearinghouse, ACT), NCSC makes use of available state-collected comparative data, Regents reports, and CCSSE for benchmark and comparative assessments of the institution’s standing among peers inside the educational community.
7P3b	O	The College does not articulate criteria for gathering comparative information outside of the educational system. Given the College’s commitment to regional workforce development and collaboration, there is an opportunity to develop criteria for decision making based on strategic goals.

- 7P4 S Many specific examples are given of the analyses and reports that are generated based on collected information; in most instances, the dissemination of these is described.
- 7P5 S The College is developing 11 dashboard indicators of institutional effectiveness adapted from the Core Indicators of Effectiveness of the American Association of Community Colleges and surveys of PAC membership.
- 7P6 S The College assures the integrity and security of its information system(s) through the implementation of policies and procedures addressing regular updating of core software, a hardware replacement cycle (4 years), established user policies and security procedures, firewall applications and hardware, secure facilities for critical hardware, an information backup process, and a disaster recovery plan.
- 7P7 S An indicator of the effectiveness of the College's system for measurement and analysis rests with a consultant survey completed in 2003 and again in 2005 regarding various college employee groups' opinion on whether the institution's quality of measurement and analysis in terms of decision support was effective.
- 7R1a S The creation of an Institutional Research Office with responsibility to centralize the measurement and analysis functions of the College is a positive step towards achieving a data based decision capability across all functional areas.
- 7R1b O The College is hampered by a deficit in human resources in its effort to address the internal negative perception of measurement and analysis. The College has the opportunity to enhance scalability and overall efficiency of organizational data collection, retrieval, and analysis more effectively with the addition of staff.
- 7R2a S The College is able to compare some effectiveness measures with peer institutions involved in the Achieving the Dream initiative.

- 7R2b O The College has an opportunity to develop enhanced common measurement traits such as, universal dashboard indicators, an annual IR calendar or data reports with links. This is in an effort to collect accurate comparative data for multiple constituencies.
- 7I1 SS The College's phased implementation of a relational database system and centralization of measurement processes and systems within the Institutional Research department are measurement improvements.
- 7I2a O While the College indicates the need for identifiable targets, there is no evidence that they have been identified yet. An opportunity exists to identify specific and concrete goals in furthering the focus of resources and decisions toward meeting those goals
- 7I2b O There is an opportunity to collect, on a regular and frequent cycle, standardized data to track trends over time for continuous improvement.

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 North Central State 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

- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.

- O1c The institutional values of the college are: Educational Excellence, a Learner Focus, Community Responsiveness, Diversity, Access, Innovation, and Teamwork.
- O3a The College's participation in the Achieving the Dream project is intended to improve success rates amongst students who face traditional barriers to academic success.
- O4b A variety of program advisory committees made up of community representatives provide evaluation of, and input to, the College on program content and marketability.
- O6a The College works closely with the Ohio Board of Regents, which coordinates higher education in the state, and is directed by a Board of Trustees whose members are public representatives of Ashland, Crawford and Richland Counties.
- O8a The College identifies a number of positive institutional factors including low cost, reputation, partnerships in industry and education, and improvement in educating under-prepared students.
- O8b The College identified 17 challenges for the institution including a need for data driven decisions, insufficient funding, regional economic decline, decreasing new enrollments, and tensions between faculty and administration.
- O8c The College's significant progress in the area of assessment constitutes an opportunity for the institution to expand and enhance campus-wide assessment, and thus its ability to use data for continual improvement of student learning.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as North Central State 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	The College has implemented a strategic planning process that uses a rolling two year time frame managed by an institutionally representative planning and budgeting committee with clearly defined responsibilities and time lines to support the comprehensive continuous planning cycle.
8P2	O	Insufficient time has elapsed for the initial implementation of the planning/budgeting cycle to be realized using data collected from internal

and external sources thus presenting an opportunity for the school to fully realize the benefits of using this information.

- 8P3 SS Quality Improvement Project Commitment Proposals require submission of clearly defined requirements and expectations that align with AQIP category expectations enabling the PAC to reach consensus on projects to be supported in the planning/budget process.
- 8P4 S The composition of the PAC ensures representation of faculty from the three academic departments, middle management and staff from academic affairs, student services, and institutional research has allowed for simplification of processes and reduced timelines for planning and action.
- 8P5 OO An opportunity exists for the College to establish measurable performance projections and to incorporate such metrics into its processes to better enable the achievement of continuous improvements in its operations.
- 8P6 S Planning and budgeting are joined in the PAC process enabling projects to be realistically undertaken within budget limitations.
- 8P7 S The College uses open forums, in-service days, and a monthly presidential newsletter to keep internal stakeholders informed and to enable receipt of inputs from the campus community although “asking for comments” may not be the best way to involve stakeholders in planning for continuous improvements.
- 8P8 O The College has set forth goals with associated metrics to measure effectiveness that may serve as a model for setting additional targets and tracking results enabling the benchmarking of performance and making improvements.
- 8R1-4/8I1-2 OO Results are not reported by the College at this time. Targets for improvement have yet to be set by the PAC against which to benchmark the school performance. The lack of defined targets can result in misinformed decisions, misappropriation of funding, and dissatisfaction of staff and faculty.

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 North Central State 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

- O1b The College's mission and vision statements clearly reflect a commitment to preparing students for the workforce by promoting a flexible and responsive, learner-centered environment that is committed to meeting the education and training needs of the communities it serves.
- O4a The College has established numerous partnerships with educational institutions (K-12 school districts and higher education) and industries including General Motors and the local UAW for specialized training through their Tool and Die Training Center and the Integrated Systems Technology Lab.
- O4b A variety of program advisory committees made up of community representatives provide evaluation of, and input to, the College on program content and marketability.
- O4c The College's involvement in the local community includes participation in the North Central Ohio P-16 Council, the Advanced Manufacturing Training Grant, the Tech Prep initiative, career awareness projects, and the development of the Ohio Skills Bank.
- O6a The College works closely with the Ohio Board of Regents, which coordinates higher education in the state, and is directed by a Board of Trustees whose members are public representatives of Ashland, Crawford and Richland Counties.

O8a The College identifies a number of positive institutional factors including low cost, reputation, partnerships in industry and education, and improvement in educating under-prepared students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as North Central State 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	SS	The creation of a cabinet level position for community and government relations has resulted in the development of a set of strategies that create or enhance collaborative relationships with four sectors of external stakeholders: sources of entering students, institutions and organizations that are destinations for existing students, organizations that serve students, and external agencies and consortia partners.
9P2	S	A range of strategies, most notably the P-16 Council, bring stakeholders and the College together to coordinate various efforts.
9P3	OO	The College provides little evidence of processes used to sustain and strengthen its collaborative relationships with other educational, business, and community organizations resulting in unrealized opportunities for the College and these partners.
9P4	OO	The College acknowledges not having well defined metrics for measuring and analyzing its collaborative relationships, internally or externally creating a significant opportunity for developing robust metrics to accomplish this goal.
9R1a	S	The College is collecting and using data about its entering and matriculating students to better serve both student and employer needs.
9R1b	S	There appears to be promising student participation and success data resulting from collaborative efforts with community educational and social service agencies.

- 9R1c O Opportunity exists to develop strategies for conversion of survey data into actions that strengthen curricular offerings, better serve stakeholder needs, and drive other campus improvements and external collaborations.

- 9R2 OO The development of a 'dashboard' as described in Category 8 will enable the College to benchmark its collaborative relationships against competitors and to design focused improvements to serve its stakeholders.

- 9I1-2 O Although the College acknowledges having limited data for use in improving its collaborative building processes, current efforts with the P-16 Council may provide an opportunity to create practical modeling strategies.