SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

March 14, 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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

Western Technical College has a well ingrained culture of assessment that includes the systematic gathering of data and the establishment of realistic goals. The portfolio did not establish a strong connection between that culture and institutional change. Western's focus on the institutional and program-specific scorecard would lead one to believe that the scorecard data would be presented in the portfolio and highlighted throughout the results sections.

The portfolio does not convey how data is incorporated into the processes of improvement. Comparisons are made mainly to institutions within the state's borders. It is unclear what benchmarks have been established for accomplishing other distinctive objectives and if they have been met.

Western does not specify other distinctive objectives outside of the objectives determined under Wisconsin state statute. In addition, the institution does not have processes that involve decision making at the faculty and staff levels. The institution could become much stronger through the implementation of formal staff and faculty surveys and the analysis of feedback from those constituencies.

Western has done a good job on understanding the needs of their students and stakeholders through several assessments and measures. The College has a well ingrained culture of assessment that includes the systematic gathering of data. This data has been used in concrete ways to meet the needs of students and other stakeholders. However, the College also has an opportunity to expand measurements of student and stakeholder needs by program and to provide additional information in response to this AQIP category.

Western is heavily invested in the PACE survey for determining employee satisfaction. Processes and methods are in place to gauge employee satisfaction as measured by the surveys, and Western adjusts its support mechanisms to continuously improve employee satisfaction and productivity. However, results gained from those processes

remain below national norms. The Portfolio does not provide any insight into how Western's leadership is using data to improve employee satisfaction or any indication about how employees who do not participate in the Employee Success Plan receive evaluation.

Western has documented its commitment to the development of its human resources, has measurements in place to assess culture and has identified opportunities to improve the culture. Western should be commended for their holistic approach to valuing people. However, the Portfolio does not identify any systematic attempt to improve the diversity of the faculty, staff, or administration.

Western continues to move toward a comprehensive team approach to leading and communicating that is closely tied to the College's vision, mission, and values. The College has the opportunity to utilize the results of internal surveys to move the organization from a consultative to collaborative culture. The creation of the position of Manager for Organizational Development will support this initiative.

Western has made progress in collecting, managing and sharing data to support more efficient management and to drive continuous improvement within student and administrative support services. However, presentation of data lacks sufficient narrative support. The College has identified, through a new Action Plan, that significant opportunities exist to expand their efforts in these areas and through benchmarking efforts which support a systems thinking organization.

Western collects and analyzes data regarding its information systems infrastructure and availability of data. There does not appear to be a process in place to examine the relevance and usefulness of the data used to measure effectiveness. Western currently collects no national benchmarking data in this area. Western has begun to implement a number of processes designed to measure effectiveness. The institution has implemented a scorecard approach that should yield many benefits as information is analyzed.

Western has a history of continuous improvement with its planning process and continues to utilize a mature planning process that appears to tie specific unit plans and activities to the general college planning and improvement process. However,

insufficient data on actual results and corrections made from those results is provided to judge whether or not the process itself is regularly assessed and revised. No benchmark data is provided. Fiscal challenges raise concerns about the viability of initiating and maintaining continuous improvement programming. Finally, Western faces the challenge of controlling all the initiatives derived from the master plans.

Western has several significant collaborative efforts under way with a variety of partners. These collaborative relationships directly benefit the students. The College is also a key economic engine for the region. Assessment and improvement of its collaborative relationships appear to be informal and not part of a comprehensive, continuous improvement process.

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

ELEMENTS OF **Western Technical College's** FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

Western has a long history of accreditation, good reputation, and familiarity with the AQIP process and the Portfolio indicates that the institution collects and analyzes vast quantities of data. The institution faces a strategic challenge in the analysis and application of this data, specifically tying the data analysis to planned activities and demonstrating what changes were made as a result of the data analysis. Western has the opportunity to focus on intentional and consistent data collection and analysis. The institution should make a serious effort to identify and utilize important data, identify relevant processes, identify and compare results, and initiate and embed quality improvements. Using the data analysis for process improvement will allow them to move toward establishing a culture of continuous improvement.

Western should implement consistent measures of data identification, data collection and data analysis clearly tied to specific actions/goals. The Portfolio should align the use of the data with process improvement.

Western should continue to develop processes and strategies for including all constituencies in its planning and decision-making. As Western continues to strive for a collaborative environment, it should commit to communicating the processes and outcomes of its planning and decision-making to all constituents.

Although Western has implemented many processes for Valuing People, the results indicate lower-than-norm satisfaction levels in many categories. The institution should endeavor to discover the reasons for those levels and adjust communication and processes for improvement.

Although Western mentions a commitment to the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle for processes, the illustrated processes and results shown in the Portfolio indicate implementation of the Plan, Do, and Study portions of the cycle but not the Act portion, followed by another cycle.

The entire Western results section seems incomplete as written. While the Portfolio provides a significant number of graphs and charts, many of the results do not align with processes.

Western has demonstrated success in quality improvement and discusses the use of tools such as the balanced scorecard for communication and benchmarking. The institution could illustrate its success in quality improvement through the inclusion of balanced scorecard results for major institutional strategies and goals throughout the portfolio.

Western has reported that it has established numerous, valued collaborative relationships that provide opportunities for faculty and students. However, the institution does not provide clear and appropriate evidence about processes involved with the collaborative relationships, an analysis of the results of those relationships with regard to faculty, student, alumni, and other constituent satisfaction, or methods for improving the relationships.

The Portfolio provides evidence about institutional initiatives and action projects. In some instances, the initiatives and action projects seem overly reliant on financial resources rather than overall institutional priorities. As an example, a detailed process

that describes the potential combining, eliminating, or filling of vacant positions with temporary part time staff suggests that financial issues take precedence.

The Portfolio does not provide evidence about the type of financial, human, and physical resources required to support the initiatives, a current budget plan, or a projected budget plan. Moreover, the report does not provide any evidence of processes for assessing or analyzing the financial impact or effectiveness of the initiatives. As a result, the report suggests that a gap exists between vision and implementation. The implementation of the large-scale initiatives could result in a financial deficit for the institution.

Western has shown steady progress towards a culture of continuous improvement. However, the institution could take major steps towards this goal by showing a strategic progression from the processes, results, and improvement initiatives shown in the first portfolio to the processes, results, and improvement initiatives shown in the second portfolio.

Western should demonstrate the impact of institutional action plans on its culture of continuous improvement. This impact should become apparent through the improvement of processes and the analysis of results, followed by another plan, do, study, act cycle.

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

Item	*Critical Characteristic*

O1a   Western Technical College is a 90 year old comprehensive, publicly-supported technical college and provides career and technical education and training for the La Crosse, Wisconsin region.

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western is committed to improvement which is evidenced by their involvement through the following: adopting the Malcolm Baldrige framework; taking a balanced scorecard perspective; implementing the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle; and participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

O2a   Western offers 42 associate of applied science degree programs, 22 technical diploma programs, 6 certificates, and 40 internal certificates.

O2b   Western consists of 5 instructional divisions: Business, Family and Consumer Sciences, General Studies, Health and Public Safety, Technology and Industry.

O2c   Western delivers educational content through face-to-face courses, distance learning courses, and blended courses.

O2d   Western's Business and Industry Services Division provides customized training and technical assistance to local businesses and employers as well as apprenticeship training, non-credit occupational and avocational courses.

O3a   For the 2005-2006 academic year, Western had approximately 12,778 students enrolled at the main campus in La Crosse and 7714 students enrolled at one of the six extended campuses.

O3b   Western segments students into eight primary markets based on the Wisconsin Technical College System educational design aid codes: 1) Associate Degree Students; 2) Technical Diploma Students; 3) General Adult/Occupational Adult Students; 4) Apprentices; 5) Adult Avocational students; 6) Adult Basic Education Students; 7) Customized Training Clients; and 8) Certificates/Special Certificate Students.

O3d   Student characteristics at Western indicate: 52% female, 49% male, 1% American Indian, 1% Pacific Islander, 82% White, 3% Asian, 1.6% African American.

O4a   Western's key collaborative stakeholders are alumni, employers, the local community, the district board, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and local legislators.

O4b   Western has collaborative relationships with educational institutions, consortia, regional/community partners, labor organizations, institutional and program accrediting bodies, non-profit agencies, state and national partners, donors, the Western Foundation, Inc., and suppliers.

O5a   The non-administrative employees at the College are represented by Local 3605 of the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers. Custodial staff are represented by the Teamsters Local 695. Skilled craft employees are non-unionized.

O6a   Western delivers programs, courses, and services to students in an area that encompasses 4,736 square miles and serves all or part of 11 counties in Wisconsin.

O6b   The Western Technical College main campus is located in La Crosse, Wisconsin.   The College also has extended campuses in the smaller communities of Black River Falls, Independence, Mauston, Sparta, Tomah, and Viroqua.

O6c   Western operates under a shared governance model with responsibilities balanced between the District Board and the Wisconsin Technical College System. WTC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association in addition to 17 professional association accrediting agencies.

O6d   Western has invested more than $50 million in equipment and improved facilities since 1990.

O6e   WTC draws students from an 11 county area. Western's competitors include the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Viterbo University, Southwest Technical College,

Chippewa Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, St. Mary's University, Winona State University, and Minnesota Southeast Technical College as well as private companies that offer onsite technical training and online education providers.

O6f   The College's website is the primary information source for prospective and current students and includes online registration, grade retrieval, and annual technology updates. The College's intranet provides a method for information sharing between staff at all campuses.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resource; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

O7b   In 2006, Western officially dropped the word Wisconsin from its name and developed a new branding strategy entitled "The Essential Experience" in an attempt to enhance its competitive advantage.

O7c   Western Technical College believes that its 20 year commitment to continuous quality improvement and performance excellence is its greatest key opportunity and has solicited external feedback from the Wisconsin Forward Award, Malcom Baldrige, Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). The College was one of the thirteen charter members of AQIP.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Western is a 90 year old comprehensive, publicly-supported technical college and provides career and technical education and training for the La Crosse, Wisconsin region.

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O2a   Western offers 42 associate of applied science degree programs, 22 technical diploma programs, 6 certificates, and 40 internal certificates.

O2b   Western consists of 5 instructional divisions: Business, Family and Consumer Sciences, General Studies, Health and Public Safety, Technology and Industry.

O2c   Western delivers educational content through face-to-face courses, distance learning courses, and blended courses.

O3b   Western Technical College segments students into eight primary markets based on the Wisconsin Technical College System educational design aid codes. The markets are 1) Associate Degree Students 2) Technical Diploma Students 3) General Adult/Occupational Adult Students 4) Apprentices 5) Adult Avocational students 6) Adult Basic Education Students 7) Customized Training Clients and 8) Certificates/Special Certificate Students.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
1P1a	S	Western's program and curriculum development is enhanced through the use of state wide curriculum standards and the World-Wide Instructional Design System software which encourages and assists faculty adoption

of a variety of learning strategies and activities to foster active and applied learning.

1P1b	O	While the portfolio briefly describes an initial process for establishing key student learning outcomes and mentions updating, there is no description of a comprehensive process for defining, refining and assessing these "core abilities" that includes input from students, employers, and other stakeholders as well as faculty.
1P2a	S	Western uses the New Program Development Process to design new programs and courses that facilitate student learning. The institution also uses the Quality Review Process to assess and analyze changing student, stakeholder, and market requirements. In addition, Western uses the Curriculum Modification Process for the revision and updating of courses.
1P2b	O	The Improvement Section speaks of a program specific scorecard, however the process does not reference or specify how the measurement and use of data is incorporated into the process of program and curriculum development, review, and approval.
1P3	S	Western utilizes COMPASS scores, course placement exams, grades in General Studies courses, advising, and program entrance requirements for placement.
1P4	SS	Western communicates student learning expectations through its website, face-to-face communication, and one-to-one discussion. Each of the techniques is supplemented through the use of a degree summary program, and feedback from the COMPASS test.
1P5a	S	Western helps students select programs through its general admission guidelines, program entrance requirements, personal and career counseling, and advising. The institution also implemented a new student advising pilot during 2007.

1P5b	O	The pilot plan of faculty/student advising model provides the opportunity to improve retention and success rates for students in Western's programs.
1P6a	S	Western has a comprehensive system to document effective teaching and learning that includes use of WIDS to incorporate a variety of teaching methods and outcomes, student evaluations, faculty observations and input from employers.
1P6b	O	An opportunity exists to define assessment processes to align more specifically to student learning outcomes.
1P7	S	Western has designed a course delivery system based upon identified critical characteristics. Individual courses are also run through a profitability algorithm to determine the level of financial outlay required and potential profitability of the course.
1P8	S	Western utilizes the Quality Review Process and feedback from adjunct faculty, current and former students, employers, and industry experts to determine course currency. If a course requires improvements, the institution applies the Curriculum Modification Process.
1P9a	S	Western determines student support needs during the student intake process and academic advising. Students who are program ready take the COMPASS test series while students who are not program ready work with the Instructional Services Support Division.
1P9b	O	The portfolio does not describe a comprehensive improvement process for assessing the effectiveness of the various learning support services.
1P10	S	Western offers a variety of co-curricular opportunities for students including 30 professional student clubs directly associated with occupational programs, student learning opportunities, a wellness center and other club and student government opportunities.
1P11a	SS	Western has a comprehensive process in place for student assessment that includes entry-level measures, ongoing assessment and exit

assessment. Each level includes feedback loops to enable continuous improvement and monitoring.

1P11b	O	Western has identified improving their current assessment model as a strategic priority for 2007-2009.
1P12	S	Western assesses student preparedness through the following instruments: annual faculty and employer assessment of student learning outcomes, six month graduate follow-up survey, five year graduate follow-up survey, annual employer follow-up survey, feedback from advisory committee members, graduate and employer focus groups, and licensure and certification results.
1P13	S	Western measures student performance through the Quality Review Process scorecard, retention rates, graduation rates, job placements, licensure pass rates, and probation and suspension reports.
1R1	O	While the portfolio describes a process for the collection of results related to common student learning outcomes going back six years, there is no actual discussion or analysis of the results including what they show about current processes or what changes are needed to improve.
1R2a	S	Western utilizes graduation rates, licensure rates, course-completion rates, employer follow-up satisfaction rates, and graduate follow-up surveys to determine that students have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills required by the institution and its stakeholders.
1R2b	O	Although Western's performance according to figure 1R2-1 is exemplary, clarification in the text and better labeling of the data might demonstrate more clearly Western's improvement in performance. The portfolio also does not connect any improvement to concrete actions by the college.
1R3	S	Western has initiated five new programs and expanded sixteen programs as a result of their processes.
1R4a	S	Western uses the Quality Review Process to compare its results with other institutions in the Wisconsin system and also reviews comparative

data from CQIN, the Kansas Study, and Community College Benchmark Project.

1R4b	O	Although the process is in place to compare Western's occupational to all other 15 colleges in the system, there is no evidence presented that indicates Western's comparative performance and the use of those measures to create action for improvement.
1I1	S	Western has implemented improvement and review processes through its Quality Review Process and the PDSA cycle.
1I2	S	Western uses the College Scorecard and individual program scorecards to set targets for improvement. Western also sets targets for improvement in student learning and development through the Perkins accountability efforts.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* **section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:**

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Western is a 90 year old comprehensive, publicly-supported technical college and provides career and technical education and training for the La Crosse, Wisconsin region.

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O2b   Western consists of five instructional divisions: Business, Family and Consumer Sciences, General Studies, Health and Public Safety, Technology and Industry.

O2c   Western delivers educational content through face-to-face courses, distance learning courses, and blended courses.

O2d   Western's Business and Industry Services Division provides customized training and technical assistance to local businesses and employers as well as apprenticeship training, non-credit occupational, and avocational courses.

O3b   Western Technical College segments students into eight primary markets based on the Wisconsin Technical College System educational design aid codes. The markets are 1) Associate Degree Students 2) Technical Diploma Students 3) General Adult/Occupational Adult Students 4) Apprentices 5) Adult Avocational students 6) Adult Basic Education Students 7) Customized Training Clients and 8) Certificates/Special Certificate Students.

O6a   Western delivers programs, courses, and services to students in an area that encompasses 4,736 square miles and serves all or part of 11 counties in Wisconsin.

O6b   Western's main campus is located in La Crosse, Wisconsin.   The College also has extended campuses in the smaller communities of Black River Falls, Independence, Mauston, Sparta, Tomah, and Viroqua.

O6e   Western draws students from an 11 county area. Western's competitors include the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Viterbo University, Southwest Technical College, Chippewa Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, St. Mary's University, Winona State University, and Minnesota Southeast Technical College as well as private companies that offer on-site technical training and on-line education providers.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
2P1a	S	Western's distinctive objectives grow out of its mission and are intricately connected with its strategic plan and master plan, for example: the GOAL program facilitates literacy within Western's community by providing education and basic skills for community constituents.
2P1b	O	Western's other distinctive objectives are determined by Wisconsin state statute. While methods for achieving the objectives are determined at the local level, the process as described in the portfolio appears to be very top-down and not very inclusive.
2P2	O	While Western uses a variety of methods to communicate its other distinctive objectives, the communication process as described in the portfolio appears to be very top-down and without any feedback loops.
2P3	O	Determination of faculty and staff needs in relation to other objectives appears to be primarily internal. There is not enough information in the portfolio to conclude if this list of instruments provides Western with the ability to identify the needs of the faculty and staff.
2P4a	S	Western uses a comprehensive review and assessment process that includes the use of a scorecard analyzed by faculty, staff and administration with changes tied to specific action plans.

2P4b	O	While Western uses feedback to assess other distinctive objectives, no formal survey mechanisms exist for assessing success at the staff and faculty levels.
2P5	O	Although the Portfolio provides a list of measures connected to other distinctive objectives that align with student learning, it does not show any measures connected to any other distinctive objectives. The portfolio indicates that in "most cases," Western is able to measure effectiveness. It is unclear which distinctive objectives and associated processes are effective and which are not.
2R1a	S	Western collects and analyzes a significant amount of relevant data for accomplishing other objectives. The institution has demonstrated positive results in most categories defined under other distinctive objectives that align with helping students learn.
2R1-2R2	OO	Western shows an increased trend in the enrollment of academically disadvantaged students. This trend reaffirms the need to address the strategic challenge of providing services to meet the needs of this group.
2R2	O	Comparative results are provided only within the Western Technical College system. The portfolio does not provide comparative data for accomplishing other distinctive objectives.
2R3	O	While Western does provide a list of potential reasons why accomplishing other distinctive may be beneficial to the institution, it is unclear how these are connected to actual benchmarks, strategic planning and goals.
2I1	O	Although the response to improving systems and processes connected to accomplishing other distinctive objectives mentions PDSA, the QRP, and the Baldrige Award, the response does not provide any direct response to the other distinctive objectives.
2I2	S	Western has a mature, well developed process for setting improvement targets and goals.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1a   Western is a 90 year old comprehensive, publicly-supported technical college and provides career and technical education and training for the La Crosse, Wisconsin region.

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goals attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resources development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western is committed to improvement which is evidenced by their involvement through the following: adopting the Malcolm Baldrige framework; taking a balanced scorecard perspective; implementing the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle; and participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

O2c   Western delivers educational content through face-to-face courses, distance learning courses, and blended courses.

O2d   Western's Business and Industry Services Division provides customized training and technical assistance to local business and employers as well as apprenticeship training, non-credit occupational, and avocational courses.

O3a   For the 2005-2006 academic year, Western has approximately 12,778 students enrolled at the main campus In La Crosse and 7714 students enrolled at one of the six extended campuses.

O3b   Western segments students into eight primary markets based on the Wisconsin Technical College System education design aid codes. The markets are 1) associate Degree Students 2) Technical Diploma Students 3) General Adult/Occupational Adult Students 4) Apprentices 5) Adult Avocational Students 6) Adult basic Education Students 7) Customized training Clients and 8) Cetificates/Special Certificate Students.

O3d   Student characteristics as Western indicate: 52% female, 49% male, 1% American Indian, 1% Pacific Islander, 82% White, 3% Asian, 1.6% African American.

O4a   Western's key collaborative stakeholders are alumni, employers, the local community, the district board, the Wisconsin technical College System, and local legislators.

O6e   Western draws students from an 11 county area. Western's competitors include the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Viterbo University, Southwest Technical College, Chippewa Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, St. Mary's University, Winona State University, and Minnesota Southeast Technical College as well as private companies that offer on-site technical training and on-line education providers.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and experiences of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

O7c   Western believes that its 20 year commitment to continuous quality improvement and performance excellence is its greatest key opportunity and has solicited external feedback from the Wisconsin Forward Award, Malcom Baldrige, Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). The College was one of the thirteen charter members of AQIP.

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

Item	S/O	Comment
3P1a	S	Western uses processes and tools to assess student needs both prior to enrollment and after enrollment. Western has organized the Welcome Center as a one-stop shop for registration and has incorporated student satisfaction inventory, student complaint/suggestion mechanisms, course evaluations, and advising.
3P1b	O	While Western has articulated several significant strategies to address the changing needs of its students, an opportunity exists to re-engineer student intake processes utilizing Lean concepts.
3P2	S	Western has identified key relationship building mechanisms such as orientation sessions, high school visits, campus visits, online media, the tech prep curricula and a recently designed website.
3P3a	S	Western uses a comprehensive and diverse set of listening and learning strategies that include formal assessment methods to stay abreast of the ever-changing needs of students. Western utilizes these results to benchmark with peer institutions and to make appropriate changes. This recently included adding more classes to the extended campuses and an increased emphasis on more online offerings.
3P3b	O	While Western utilizes many methods of gaining input from key stakeholders, the portfolio provides only a vague description of the process for acting on the information.
3P4	O	Figure 3-2 denotes key stakeholders other than students. While the list of key stakeholders appears to be fairly comprehensive, faculty and employees of the College are notably absent.
3P5b	S	Western uses environmental scans, labor trend analysis, and feedback from employers to address the needs of new stakeholder groups. Any

new initiative that results from this analysis must remain consistent with their mission and vision.

3P5b	O	The portfolio does not fully address the question for this segment.

3P6	S	Western uses a formal complaint system to process complaints from students, staff, and stakeholders. This system includes structured process, timelines, appeals processes and student advocates. Stakeholder satisfaction is supported by Western providing additional courses and support services for those who have not found employment within six months of graduating with an associates degree or technical diploma.

3P7	S	Western determines student and stakeholder satisfaction through formal surveys, course and instructor evaluations, and the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction inventory results.

3R1a	S	Western has responded to three years of data trends gleaned from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey. In some instances, Western results exceed national means. Longitudinal data shows general student satisfaction with college operations. Western's use of data informed decision making is evident through the use of student satisfaction survey information along with follow up focus groups to reengineer student registration and related processes that include financial aid procedures.

3R1b	O	SSI results show a consistent drop in student satisfaction in all reported categories. Most data in student satisfaction with college services seems to trend down. The visual data presentation provided in the portfolio does not provide the detail needed to determine whether these are significant decreases.

3R2	O	Western's analysis of graduate and employer satisfaction surveys shows increased satisfaction among those stakeholder groups in job knowledge, reading, writing, and math skills. However, Western has an opportunity to articulate the building of relationships with students through transfer and retention reports. Although a program of team visits to area high schools

appears to be successful, Western does not provide information about the results of these visits. No other activities are described that are specifically designed to build a relationship with Western students.

3R3	S	Western's graduate satisfaction remains at or above the mean for the Western Technical College System for the past three years. The results of Western's survey of employers and other stakeholders show significant satisfaction with Western's outcomes.
3R4	SS	Western has significant results for building relationships with key stakeholders in several critical areas. Western consistently out performs the WTCS mean in students who find employment within six months as well as those graduates remaining in the region. As an example, Western's net promoter score indicates parent perceptions of Western are nearly twice that of the WTCS members. According to the employer survey, Western's graduates are well prepared to contribute.
3R5a	S	Western compares itself to colleges in the WTCS for graduate and employee satisfaction and to national peer colleges in student satisfaction and has demonstrated positive results.
3R5b	O	Western collects limited national or regional comparative data for understanding key stakeholder needs. No summation of comparative results is given. The portfolio refers to charts that depict process rather than charts that indicate results.
3I1a	S	Western uses the National Student Clearinghouse for the purpose of understanding individuals and cohort student enrollment patterns which has resulted in the development of program offerings that better meet the needs of students. Western has effectively tied results from surveys and efforts within the AQIP and Baldrige framework to efforts to improve stakeholder satisfaction.
3I1b	O	The portfolio describes a variety of methods for the collection of relevant data but does not list any actual improvements that have been implemented as a result of the use of the data.

3I2   S   Western has a mature, well developed process for setting improvement targets and goals. Western has identified three areas that focus on improving their processes as a result of measurement in student and stakeholder needs: 1) development of prospect tracking software system; 2) investment in additional survey instruments and processes to measure student engagement; and 3) integration of student satisfaction at the program level.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource

development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O5a   The non-administrative employees at the College are represented by Local 3605 of the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers. Custodial staff are represented by the Teamsters Local 695. Skilled craft employees are non-unionized.

O6f   Western's website is the primary information source for prospective and current students and includes online registration, grade retrieval, and annual technology updates. The college's intranet provides a method for information sharing between staff of all campuses.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
4P1a	S	Western has a comprehensive process to insure faculty, staff and administration are well qualified and share the college's values. This process includes a regular examination of job classifications, structured certification and other job requirements, enrichment opportunities and a structured hiring process that includes behavioral questions to insure applicants share the college's values.
4P1b	O	Although Western has a broad-based identification of faculty and staff credentials, no specific processes exist for the review of those credentials. The analysis relies on contract negotiations, licensure requirements, and state requirements.

4P1c	OO	The portfolio did not include any discussion of efforts to increase the gender/ethnic diversity of Western's faculty, staff, and administration.
4P2a	S	Western's processes for recruiting and retaining faculty include paper and electronic advertising, community links, orientation, mentoring, Employee Success Plan, and assistance with health issues.
4P2b	S	Western utilizes multiple methods to recruit and retain employees, and the retirement succession plan suggests timely forethought.
4P2c	O	Whereas Western uses a variety of activities for recruiting and retaining employees, there is no description of how these are used to benefit employees.
4P3a	S	Western's leadership has implemented an infra-structure conducive to work process that deliberately integrates areas of the institution with the purposes and areas of focus indicated in figure 5-2, which illustrates the intentionality of the leadership.
4P3b	S	Checks and Balances embedded in financial procedures and the institution's Code of Ethics encourage ethical behavior in employees.
4P3c	O	Although Western has a strong team/committee structure, according to membership listing in figure 5-2, communication appears to be one-way to the employees from an upper level administrative-heavy committee structure.
4P4a	S	Western provides funding and a wide spectrum of training opportunities (including internal workshops, professional leave, professional development funds, and tuition reimbursement) for professional development.
4P4b	O	The portfolio does not provide sufficient evidence of a process for allocating professional development funds across campus.
4P5a	S	Western determines employee training needs through feedback gained from the PACE climate survey, Employee Success Plans, and the Quality Review Process. Evaluation of training occurs through formal and

informal processes and is integrated with the college's quality improvement process.

4P5b	O	The feedback loop between the Human Resources Department and those responsible for the training is unclear.
4P6a	S	Western's structured mature personnel evaluation system has grown from its Employee Success Policy. The evaluation system aligns individual goals with department, unit, and institutional goals.
4P6b	O	The portfolio does not clearly indicate how feedback is given to employees and how/if results from assessments/evaluations are used for continuous improvement.
4P7a	O	Western's recognition, reward, and compensation system occurs through actions by the District Board. The Portfolio did not indicate that the process provides any decision making or governance at the faculty or staff level.
4P7b	O	Little mention is made of the negotiation process with the various unions.
4P8a	S	Western determines key issues for faculty, staff, and administrators' motivation through feedback gained from the PACE climate survey. Feedback flows through the Senior Leadership Team and Management Forum and then to the faculty for additional feedback and review.
4P8b	O	An opportunity exists to use methods in conjunction with PACE to provide more frequent, immediate input.
4P9a	SS	Western provides for employee safety, health, and well-being through an Employee Safety Committee and feedback gained from Informal Pulse Check and PACE surveys. Western uses a variety of coordinated and monitored activities and initiatives to provide for and evaluate employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being including a Wellness Center, Safety Committee, Crisis Team, Health Benefit Improvements Team and Security Services.

4P10	O	Western apparently uses only one regularly collected measure of valuing people. Multiple measures would provide more complete information.
4R1a	O	Western's results from a climate survey indicate they are below the national averages for all areas of employee satisfaction.
4R2a	S	Western has shown positive results for the number of employees who have completed Employee Success Plans.
4R2b	S	Western shows a low employee attrition rate as compared to national norms while the percentage of employees who have completed Employee Success Plan continues to rise.
4R2c	O	Western also acknowledges the need to increase employee participation in the Employee Success Plan program.
4R3	O	The portfolio acknowledges the downturn in perceived levels of productivity and satisfaction as indicated by 2007 PACE survey. Western has identified this as an opportunity and addressed the opportunity in their strategic plan.
4R4	O	Western uses some nationally normed data for comparison, though the portfolio does not include any reference to other institutions as benchmarks for improvement.
4I1a	SS	Western developed a more proactive approach to managing health care costs as a result of evaluative findings and in collaboration with local unions, resulting in renegotiated healthcare agreements for all groups.
4I1b	S	Western uses the results of formal surveys to take the appropriate steps to set improvement targets for activities associated with valuing people.
4I2	O	Although Western sets targets for improvement by reviewing results related to strategic goals and objectives, an opportunity exists to demonstrate the usefulness and the focus of its improvement processes by including the targets for improvement in the portfolio.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 Strategic Plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western is committed to improvement which is evidenced by their involvement through the following: adopting the Malcolm Baldrige framework; taking a balanced scorecard perspective; implementing the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle; and is a member of the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

O6c   Western operates under a shared governance model with responsibilities balanced between the District Board and the Wisconsin Technical College System. WTC is

accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association in addition to 17 professional association accrediting agencies.

O6f   The College's website is the primary information source for prospective and current students and includes online registration, grade retrieval, and annual technology updates. The College's intranet provides a method for information sharing between staff at all campuses.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

O7c   Western believes that its 20 year commitment to continuous quality improvement and performance excellence is its greatest key opportunity and has solicited external feedback from the Wisconsin Forward Award, Malcom Baldrige, Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). The College was one of the thirteen charter members of AQIP.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
5P1	S	The Senior Leadership Team along with the College Steering Committees and College Implementation Teams integrate the mission, vision, and values through the Strategic Planning Process.
5P2	S	The creation of the new position of Manager of Organizational Development demonstrates leadership's commitment to improving institutional climate and movement toward a learning college.
5P3a	S	Western has implemented a team-based infrastructure for decision making.

5P3b	O	The question asked in the Principles and Categories booklet requests that description of processes for decision making and implementation be given. The charts shown in the portfolio merely describe committee structure rather than process.
5P4	O	Internal key stakeholder groups regularly review enrollment, retention, learning and satisfaction reports. An opportunity exists to expand to other institutional measures.
5P5	S	The comprehensive team structure in place at Western facilitates significant communication among the various levels and stakeholders at the College.
5P6	S	Western has identified several key communication tools and events which provide a constant flow of communication on a variety of topics throughout the organization.
5P7	S	Support of leadership development is demonstrated through the Employee Success Plan, participation in leadership development programs, tuition reimbursement program and support of employee attendance at leadership conferences; these initiatives are integrated into the College's regular assessment and improvement processes.
5P8	O	Western recognizes the need to develop a formal leadership succession plan.
5P9	S	The College collects both formal (PACE) and informal survey data to measure leading and communicating.
5R1	O	While Western has achieved success with results associated with leading and communicating, the overall results are below the national norm.
5R2	O	Western's results are slightly below the national norm. The portfolio does not discuss why the results are below the national norm or how the College plans to improve those results.

5I1   O   Although Western cites usage of PACE survey results as a basis for improvement, the portfolio does not provide any specific evidence about improvements or improvement processes.

5I2   S   Western has identified several targets as priorities for improvement in communication and leadership: motivation of performance; the sharing of information; problem solving techniques; recognition and rewarding of effort; decision making at the appropriate level; and the organization of the college.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western is committed to improvement which is evidenced by their involvement through the following: adopting the Malcolm Baldrige framework; taking a balanced scorecard perspective; implementing the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle.

O6a   Western delivers programs, courses, and services to students in an area that encompasses 4,736 square miles and serves all or part of 11 counties in Wisconsin.

O6d   Western has invested more than $50 million in equipment and improved facilities since 1990.

O6f   The College's website is the primary information source for prospective and current students and includes online registration, grade retrieval, and annual technology updates. The College's intranet provides a method for information sharing between staff at all campuses.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities;: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
6P1	S	Western uses a variety of methods to identify student service needs that includes surveys, focus groups, suggestions, grievances, and other feedback.
6P2	S	Administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, and administration are identified through the biennial PACE survey, pulse checks, open forums, employee success plans and the annual planning process.
6P3a	O	Unit manager and key administrative student support utilize informal feedback, student surveys, and the Quality Review Plan to address and monitor specific process improvements and key performance requirements.

6P3b	O	Although the Portfolio discusses the management of student and administrative support processes, it does not provide any specific evidence about those processes. Western has initiated an Action Project designed to improve student and administrative support services.
6P4a	S	Western uses feedback from a variety of sources to make improvements. One such improvement is the one-stop-shop for intake services.
6P4b	O	While the College has implemented processes and programs designed to apply information to decision making involved with student and administrative support services processes, the analysis of the information is in the beginning stages. An opportunity exists to enhance student success through the one stop shop for student intake services and by completing Lean analysis.
6P5	S	The College has implemented a significant number of efforts that collect measurements of student and administrative support services processes.
6R1a	S	Western shows improvement through the declining financial aid default rate.
6R1b	O	Western has an opportunity to articulate results that reflect student support services to include: Student Communications, Admissions and Registration, Counseling and Advising, Student Development and Career Placement.
6R2	O	Western has identified a strategic challenge of providing high quality education with limited resources. With decreases in grant funding and state aid, an opportunity exists for the College to be more aggressive with resource development initiatives to include private fund raising and grant development.
6R3	O	Comparative data for student and administrative support services is in its early stages. Western recognizes the need for improving efforts to compare itself against other institutions.
6I1	O	Western is currently implementing a pilot program for improving student and administrative support services.

6I2	S	Western has prioritized improvements for the following: reengineering centralized intake procedures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency; aligning of costs through focused negotiations; establishing college enterprise areas as profit centers; increasing the efficiency of purchasing across the district; and increasing the emphasis on grant writing and partnerships that will either share costs or create revenue streams.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western is committed to improvement which is evidenced by their involvement through the following: adopting the Malcolm Baldrige framework; taking a balanced scorecard perspective; implementing the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle; and is a member of the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

O6f   Western's website is the primary information source for prospective and current students and includes online registration, grade retrieval, and annual technology updates. Western's intranet provides a method for information sharing between staff at all campuses.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

O7c   Western believes that its 20 year commitment to continuous quality improvement and performance excellence is its greatest key opportunity and has solicited external feedback from the Wisconsin Forward Award, Malcolm Baldrige, Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). The College was one of the thirteen charter members of AQIP.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
7P1a	S	Western uses a variety of methods to select, manage, and use information and data. These sources are tied into the strategic goals and directions and program specific requirements. Western has clearly identified focus areas in which data is collected and analyzed.
7P2	O	An opportunity exists for Western to elevate conversation and plans to create a process for identifying and prioritizing data and information

		requests. Western lacks an institution wide process for identifying and prioritizing data needs at the department/unit level.
7P3a	S	Western utilizes several sources to compare key data and information to ensure effectiveness related to its strategic goals and objectives.
7P3b	O	Western does not currently benchmark itself against other colleges or non educational entities. It is unclear how these data are used to foster improvement.
7P4	SS	Western analyzes data and performance through scorecards, static reports, dynamic reports, and its redesigned team structure. The data analysis processes include baselines, trend analysis, review at the senior level, and meetings. This information is available on the college's intranet and integrated into the planning process.
7P5	S	Western's department and unit information analysis through a College-wide scorecard provides the ability to consider data at the institutional/strategic objective level and drill down to the unit and department levels.
7P6	S	Western uses a team approach to monitor the effectiveness of its information systems which are upgraded and evaluated on a regular basis.
7P7a	S	Western has identified key indicators of the effectiveness of its information systems infrastructure and operations and examines those on a regular basis.
7P7b	O	The portfolio does not clearly indicate how Western measures the effectiveness of its general systems, activities, and processes for quality improvement.
7R1	O	Western has identified an opportunity to establish a formalized process for collecting information related to internal satisfaction, data systems management analysis and use.

7R2   OO   Western collaborates with other WTCS institutions about matters of information technology, but does not appear to collect any state or national benchmark data on the effectiveness of continuous improvement data.

7I1   O   Western has an opportunity to improve and enhance current processes and systems for measuring effectiveness through an enhanced strategic planning process; the College Scorecard; and by administering the Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE) and CC Benefit's Gap Analysis.

7I2   OO   The portfolio describes some beginning attempts to measure the effectiveness of the college's information systems infrastructure. However, the portfolio does not describe a process for examining the effectiveness of the actual data used in their continuous improvement processes.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* **section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:**

Item   Critical Characteristic

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1c   Western uses a leadership and performance model that integrates mission, vision, values, strategic goals, the Baldrige Framework, and the balanced scorecard perspective.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment, improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resources development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O1e   Western's five-year strategic plan includes increasing student goal attainment, improving program effectiveness and efficiency, enhancing human resource development, enhancing the competitive advantage, improving College effectiveness and efficiency, and maintaining financial stability.

O1g   Western uses a Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle as the foundation for its Continuous Quality Improvement efforts.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities;: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

O7c   Western has maintained a 20-year commitment to continuous quality improvement and performance excellence and has solicited external feedback from the Wisconsin Forward Award, Malcolm Baldrige, The Continuous Quality Improvement Network, and AQIP.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
8P1	S	Western has a mature, dynamic 5-year planning cycle for program and services, budget and facilities that includes an alignment process that

incorporates input from all levels of staff, faculty, leadership and Board members.

8P2	S	Western selects short- and long-term actions through trend analysis, consideration of strategic goals and objectives, and analysis of stakeholder expectations. In addition, Western is aware that too much data can take the college in a direction away from its strategic goals and mission. Western reorganized the Steering Team with senior leadership to focus more on strategic planning and decision making.
8P3	S	Western plans well and has developed a thorough communication system to disseminate the information to stakeholders.
8P3	SS	Action planning for key institutional strategies is driven by Western's strategic plan and unit master plans. Action plans are created at the closest point of impact–the program level. The comprehensive process for the development of the action plans includes an action description, performance measures, alignment with at least one strategic goal, capital expense detail, operational expense detail, a list of possible alternative funding sources, and specific, measurable outcomes.
8P4a	S	Western describes a system for aligning planning with strategic goals at all levels of the institution.
8P4b	O	The portfolio does not describe specific methods for coordinating and aligning plans of action at differing levels of the institution.
8P5a	S	Western bases target selection on WTCS standards and benchmarks set by other higher education institutions and fellow AQIP and CQIN institutions.
8P5b	O	It is unclear from the brief portfolio description how performance projections that are consistent with Western's strategic plans and that include college-wide input are set.
8P6a	S	Budget development appears to be closely aligned with the strategic planning process. Western identifies resource needs based on unit and

department budget development. The information is used to create an overall college budget.

8P6b	O	Budgeting is the primary means listed for identifying resource needs. The institution has other data available (previously listed surveys, etc) that could be used to inform the administration about resource needs.
8P7	S	Western uses human resource planning, employee success plans, and employee education and training plans that are closely aligned with institutional strategic and action plans to insure that faculty, staff and administrator capabilities remain consistent with the college's mission and goals.
8P8a	S	Western measures its continuing improvement effectiveness through the AQIP process, its QRP improvement feedback, the Baldrige application process, and an analysis of key factors.
8P8b	O	The portfolio mentions participation in several quality improvement processes. However, the portfolio does not describe any specific measures of effectiveness of the continuous quality processes that are collected and analyzed regularly.
8R1	OO	Western has identified only results for goal one of their strategic plan. Although the figure referenced in the portfolio response demonstrates positive results in some areas, other areas of goal one remain as opportunities. A process for collected results is described but no actual results or analyses are listed.
8R2	O	Western remains in the early stages of providing performance measures for its strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts and notes that it is in the early stages of establishing performance projections.
8R3	O	Western references the collection of internal, state educational, national educational, and external national benchmark data. However, the portfolio does not include any actual data or analysis.
8R4	O	Although Western uses feedback from externally reviewed organizational assessments to gauge its effectiveness in continuous improvement, the

portfolio does not provide any analysis of the data or description of the results.

8I1   O   Western uses feedback from its action projects and AQIP portfolios as well as informal feedback to improve its current processes and systems for continuous improvement. However, the processes do not appear to provide the college with the frequent, measurable feedback needed to maintain a healthy, thriving continuous improvement culture.

8I2   O   Western has identified the following improvement opportunities as priorities: completion of an external environmental scan/ market research and study of trend data; development of a master academic plan to drive instructional planning and decision making; the development of a master human resource plan; development a QRP model for all of Westerns' services; and continuing the development and integration of the scorecard system.

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 Western Technical College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item   *Critical Characteristic*

O1b   Western's mission includes excellence in learning, continuous improvement, student success, employer satisfaction, and community partnerships.

O1d   Western's 2005-2010 strategic plan identifies five goals: increase student goal attainment; improve program effectiveness and efficiency; enhance human resource development; enhance competitive advantage; improve college effectiveness and efficiency; and maintain financial stability.

O2d   Western's Business and Industry Services Division provides customized training and technical assistance to local businesses and employers as well as apprenticeship training, non-credit occupational, and avocational courses.

O4a   Western's key collaborative stakeholders are alumni, employers, the local community, the district board, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the local legislators.

O4b   Western has collaborative relationships with educational institutions, consortia, regional/community partners, labor organizations, institutional and program accrediting bodies, non-profit agencies, state and national partners, donors, the Western Foundation, Inc., and suppliers.

O6b   The Western main campus is located in La Crosse, Wisconsin—an economic center of the region.

O7a   Western has identified four strategic challenges that it sees as key vulnerabilities: providing high quality technical education with limited resources; supporting the ever-changing needs and expectations of its diverse student segments; the increasing developmental needs of students; and anticipating the needs and expectations of key stakeholders.

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

Item	*S/O*	*Comment*
9P1a	S	Western has significant partnership activities under way including a health collaborative that includes working relationships with other colleges and universities and health care facilities; the promotion of interactive research initiatives in the clinical sciences; transfer agreements; K-12

partnerships; alliances with local employers and unions; and a proactive approach to local economic development and partnerships (e.g. the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium, Inc).

9P1b	O	Although examples of collaboration are provided in the portfolio, Western seems to lack a formalized process for pursuing and tracking opportunities for collaborative efforts in an institution-wide focused manner.
9P2	O	While Western uses a variety of techniques to provide structure to its collaborative relationships, there does not appear to be a comprehensive, continuous assessment plan in place to judge the effectiveness of these collaborative relationships.
9P3	O	Western appears to have several informal methods for internal collaboration, but no systematic approach to creating and building internal relationships is evident. Communication described in this section appears very top-down.
9P4	OO	Some general data points regarding collaborative relationships are described in the portfolio. However, the portfolio does not describe any formal process of data collection and analysis.
9R1a	S	Western's participation in the WTCS contract for third party determination of socio-economic benefit impact provides Western with not only the measurement and data to influence decision making but also a useful public relations tool. Figures 9R-2 and 9R-3 indicate that the institution has a positive impact on the surrounding community both in the form of employment and charitable giving and by increasing the number of students seeking a higher degree.
9R1b	O	While Western provides a significant amount of results of collaborative relationships, the portfolio does not describe whether these results are part of a planned effort for improvement.

9R2	O	Western does compare itself to some other state colleges. Yet, no state or national benchmarks are specifically identified as part of a purposeful benchmarking effort.
9I1	O	The portfolio describes only an informal process for improvement.
9I2a	S	Western has identified two priorities for improvement in collaborative relationships: 1) the increased transfer of general education credits from WTCS to the University of Wisconsin system; 2) targeting of training investments career pathway models in a regional initiative.
9I2b	O	The portfolio does not describe the process used to identify priorities for improvements in collaborative relationships.