



Academic
Quality Improvement
Program

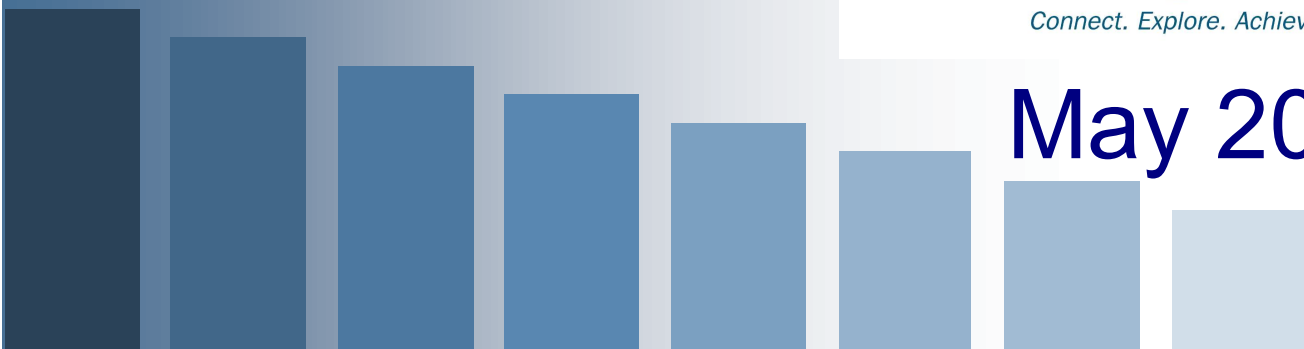
The Higher Learning Commission NCA

Response to Critical Strategic Issues and Systems Appraisal Feedback Report



Connect. Explore. Achieve.

May 2007



Section I

Introduction

Lake Superior College submitted its Systems Portfolio to the Higher Learning Commission in March, 2006. Upon reflection, and considering the reviewers comments in the Feedback Report, we are convinced that we did not fully convey the extent of our progress in regard to the components of many of the AQIP category questions. As a process, the self-assessment conducted in preparation for writing the Systems Appraisal resulted in improved awareness and communication; however, we found it difficult to condense all that we learned and/or developed within the stated page limits and structured questions.

The following comments are organized by category chapter and start with a summary of the college's strengths in each category. Following the strengths, we have described processes or results that were in place at the time of the writing of the portfolio but were inadequately explained as well as those processes within each category that have been developed since the submission of the portfolio one year ago. Lastly, we have identified areas within each category which will, during the next year, focus our efforts toward improvement.

At the writing of this supplement, Lake Superior College has not yet updated its first portfolio. Our intent is to convert the current PDF of the portfolio to an interactive electronic portfolio within the next six months. This supplement will serve us well in that endeavor. Therefore, the changes noted in this document as well as any additional realized improvements to our processes will be added to the existing document at one time.

Section II – Response to Feedback

Helping Students Learn

Strengths

LSC's strengths in the Helping Students Learn category lie in having laid a strong foundation of expectation of student learning outcomes in three broad areas of college-wide outcomes, transfer outcomes and program outcomes, as well as a curriculum development process that ensures alignment of evaluations and assessment with the college mission and state and program objectives. LSC's programming encompasses credit and non-credit offerings in traditional and online modalities that provide a wide variety of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for multiple student populations. Faculty and academic administrators collaborate on schedule development, considering multiple needs and requirements of both students and program and industry requirements. An indication of the strength and success of the foundation LSC has built is the 58% increase in graduates over the last six years.

Supplemental Information

1P2-

1P4 In the Academic Unit we design programs to accommodate students' ability to learn. Faculty understand the importance of designing course content that is linked to course outcomes. The activities used to measure those outcomes are carefully constructed to match the length of the term, classroom seat time, and placement of course in the overall sequence of courses. When working with the student to construct a schedule, faculty consider where students are in their program, their skill level, and the difficulty of the content. Although we are confident students are learning core content based on board pass/fail data, we have not yet aggregated the individual course data to reflect that belief. We are in the process of researching the instrument/assessment tools available to accomplish that task.

Student Services largely designs programming based on the individual student's needs. Drawing upon a variety of personnel and other institutional resources, advisors and counselors work to create a plan specifically tailored to build upon the student's strengths and address challenges. All advisors within Student Services are active members of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), and work to design intervention strategies from a developmental perspective. In order to intentionally develop the student's sense of autonomy, competence and self-confidence, advisors researched journal, monographs, and established best practices to outline the intended advising outcomes for first and second-term students.

Student Services and Academic Affairs leadership teams meet on a monthly basis to identify opportunities for collaboration, share initiatives, and distribute information.

Additionally, Student Services staffers meet with occupational program faculty on an at least monthly basis to share updates, identify issues, and pursue solutions.

1P6 The Student Academic Achievement (SAA) Committee is continuing the training and support for instructors using eLumen, the assessment tracking software. To date, there have been approximately 90 faculty members trained in the use of the software; however, only about 26 faculty members have been involved in actually using the software. The use of eLumen has been, and continues to be, the catalyst for discussion within departments and programs, and among individual instructors regarding thoughtful and intentional assessment methods and processes. In some cases, faculty have realized their outcomes need revision in order to collect relevant data that will assist them in curricular decision-making. Thus eLumen is contributing, to a large extent, to the development of a broader culture of assessment on campus. However, since eLumen is designed for use by individual instructors with data collected from courses, departments and programs aggregated, a critical mass of users and data must be reached before eLumen will “fully document all learning outcomes.” It is also our intent to use the newly designed First Year Experience course as a means of collecting more comprehensive assessment data on our college-wide outcomes and involving additional instructors in regularly using eLumen.

1P11-

1P13 A matrix located in the team room will identify, by department, the assessment measures collected and analyzed regularly.

1P9 While consistent processes are not in place across the campus to systematically determine needs in terms of learning support, there are areas within various units that can serve as models in developing processes across campus. The following examples demonstrate a few of those processes currently in place:

- Student Services developed, in 2006, a tracking process for retention of new entering students by program type (either occupational or transfer). In 2007, that process was further developed by adding advising assignments. Preliminary results of data collection indicate assigned advising for AA students contributes to greater fall to fall retention rates. Continuing data collection will contribute to validation of that conclusion.
- The Online Course Peer Review process is designed to improve the quality of the course design for online courses. It is considered to be a best practice using the standards of online course design developed by the Quality Matters team at MarylandOnline. The rubric contains thirty-two standards of course design broken into eight major categories. A team of three faculty members make up each review team and provide feedback to the course designer related to how the course design could be changed in order to improve student learning, to reduce barriers or accessibility issues for students, and to increase student interaction and engagement.

- The instructional designer (faculty) and instructional technologist (staff) are available to assist faculty members with improving their uses of technology in instruction, including both traditional face-to-face instruction and online instruction. They are both available by appointment for one-on-one consultations, and they also schedule many open workshops during each semester. These consultations typically help us define which support needs require more campus-wide attention and those needs that can be effectively handled on a one-on-one basis. Based on the input from the instructional designer and instructional technologist, along with input from the Online Faculty Lounge and the Online Programs Advisory Committee, we make every effort to provide the software, hardware, and training support necessary to ensure effective uses of technology in instruction.
- Assessment of learning support needs occurs on a formal and informal basis. Much of the informal assessment occurs through regular meetings of key staff who discuss observations about patterns and trends recognized with regard to learner support needs. Examples of such groups include the Advising Team, the Developmental Education Committee, and the Counseling Team. Other informal mechanisms include the existence of strong partnerships between faculty and Student Services staff which allow for individual student referrals to meet a student's needs. More formal assessment of learner support needs has occurred in a variety of ways. Lake Superior College has, for example, participated in the American College Health Association (ACHA) survey and the CORE Survey to determine students' physical and mental health needs. We are a member of a community coalition which focuses on addressing issues related to college student alcohol use. LSC and the other two higher education institutions participating on this committee have committed to an assessment cycle and have conducted various data analysis efforts to aid us in meeting learner support needs. Additionally, we have utilized the results of the CCSSE and Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory to assess student support needs. One example of our use of the data generated from these surveys relates to modifications made to our advising processes. Specifically, we implemented significant reorganization of our advising model to address student needs identified in the CCSSE and the SSI (i.e., the need to feel connected versus getting the "run around," and the need for improved academic advisement services). Our recent data reflects a statistically significant improvement in student satisfaction in these areas.
- Student Services aggressively seeks input from campus constituents through established meeting structures. In addition, Student Services implemented an assessment process this year to solicit input outside of the established meeting structures. A full day workshop was conducted with an external consultant to familiarize all staff with the assessment planning process. Each unit developed an assessment plan for this current year, geared toward data collection on at least one intended learning or process outcome. Units will reconvene to interpret the data, identify possible areas for improvement, and draft a workplan objective designed to address those areas.

- Student Services regularly reviews best practices of institutions of similar size and mission, and assesses the feasibility of best practice implementation, with regard to existing personnel and other resources.

1R1 The SAA committee is currently in the process of assessing the college-wide outcome for computation skills. Faculty have developed and piloted a common assessment instrument, and implementation will be complete with the close of the spring 2007 semester.

A faculty task force is currently reviewing the college-wide outcome for Citizenship. Last spring, the committee collected over 900 student survey responses relative to the Citizenship outcome as part of our observance of Constitution Day. Responses to three aspects of the same question were each scored against a common rubric. The results, while currently in draft form, will be available to the team upon their arrival on campus. The SAA committee found the assessment and results valuable, with discussions taking place regarding ways to improve the process next fall.

1R4 Discussion and research is currently underway between the SAA committee and the English faculty relative to the possibility of using a standardized, nationally normed test of written communication skills. Such an assessment process would provide the ability to compare LSC learning results with our peer institutions. In addition, the committee believes it will validate our prior written communication assessment results against an outside, objective standard. The committee will rely on the expertise of the English faculty in making the final decision.

The Commercial and Residential Wiring students will pilot use of the standardized knowledge and skills tests from National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) at the close of the Spring 2007 term. The college will then receive benchmarking data from other similar programs.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

Conversations are currently underway between the academic administrators and the faculty evaluation committee regarding the addition of an assessment component to the faculty evaluation process and the faculty portfolio.

Consultation Request

While faculty and student services staff use a variety of individualized methods to determine and accommodate the various learning styles of students, we do not have a systematic process in place. We would be interested in learning the process by which other institutions have institutionalized the accommodation of various learning styles.

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Strengths

The processes in this chapter refer to those that contribute to achieving the major institutional objectives that complement student learning and fulfill the other portions of our mission. Lake Superior College has identified distinctive objectives directly from our mission statement. Our processes in this category include input from all constituent levels and resulting objectives and semi-annual updates on progress are posted to the website. The annual process planning and budgeting process contributes our goal of determining and meeting faculty and staff needs.

Supplemental Information

2C3 As a point of clarification, Lake Superior College has always placed a priority on helping students learn. The recent college priority of Lead Lifelong Learning was an effort to focus attention on the Center for Lifelong Learning and concentrate efforts on reaching out to returning, non-traditional aged students.

2P4 In Chapter Eight, Planning Continuous Improvement, the reviewers identified our planning processes as a strength involving all internal stakeholders and aligning our goals and strategies with our college priorities, the System Strategic Directions, and the AQIP Categories. The unit plans create the LSC Institutional Effectiveness Plan that is posted to the website. Completions of goals and objectives are an integral part of each unit leader's performance review.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

Defining measures, collecting data, and benchmarking improvement for our Other Distinctive Objectives will constitute the focus in this category.

Consultation Request

There seems to be a contradiction between the strengths identified in this category, the opportunities for improvement and the executive summary. Have we misinterpreted some issues? We would appreciate a clearer perspective of needed direction in this area.

Understanding Student and Other Stakeholder Needs

Strengths

Lake Superior College has strengthened its processes for understanding student needs. We actively assess our students' satisfaction in many areas. Multiple years of data have been collected and in many cases the college has benchmarked areas for improvement, implemented actions designed to realize increases, and documented the value of the implementation of those activities with increased satisfaction ratings. The strength of these processes will serve as the model as we develop additional processes in other stakeholder arenas.

Supplemental Information

3P2 LSC has identified a need for improvements in registration and related student services as well as advising and is addressing these issues by making modifications to their operations in order to enhance their relationship with students. Examples of actions taken include: restructuring Student Services in order to serve students better by realignment of advisors that is grounded in a Student Relationship Management philosophy based on the Convoy Model; purchasing a new software system, Qmatic, in order to track students through the entire enrollment process; adopting a new philosophy of student advising; and developing a new approach to New Student Orientation.

In its second year of practice, the services model based on Student Relationship Management principles has resulted in a statistically significant increase in student confidence and satisfaction in Student Services as documented by the most recent SSI survey. Fall-to-fall retention rates of new incoming students have also increased by three percent.

3P6 The Office of the Vice President of Student Services maintains the college's Complaints Log. All formal complaints by constituents are tracked to include information on the nature of the complaint and the resolution reached. The Executive Council conducts an annual review of the log to identify themes, patterns and ongoing issues that need to be addressed. As themes are identified, the appropriate administrator(s) are asked to develop and implement strategies to address challenges and improve processes.

3R1 According to LSC's results from the Noel Levitz SSI there was a significant differential in importance of and satisfaction with "concern for the individual" as noted in the 2004 survey data. The most recent 2006 SSI survey results display a statistically significant increase in student satisfaction with Student Services.

3R3 Lake Superior College recognizes the need to measure other stakeholders' satisfaction with our performance. We have begun to address this issue through a variety of surveys

that have been completed, are in development, or will be implemented within the next fiscal year. Examples include:

- The Constellation Survey, while not a satisfaction survey, does offer employees an opportunity to respond to the open-ended question “Overall, how would you describe your professional satisfaction?” Three themes emerged from the analysis of the responses and discussions regarding suggestions for improvement were held during recent shared governance meetings.
- A community image survey will be implemented in April 2007. Results and analysis will be presented to a variety of audiences during the following months, culminating with a presentation to the college employees during our opening fall session.
- The academic unit is constructing a common employer survey that will be ready to send to employers of recent spring grads during the fall semester of 2007.
- A nationally normed climate survey will be administered to all employees during fall, 2007. Analysis will provide benchmarks within education as well as other industries.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

LSC also recognizes the benefit of consistent use and communication of survey results. It is our goal to define consistent processes that will facilitate not only the communication of the results of our efforts to determine stakeholder satisfaction but also effective use of the results for improvement in identified areas.

Valuing People

Strengths

Lake Superior College is proud of our commitment to and the value we place on the professional development of our faculty, staff, and administrators. We have an excellent record of labor management relations and processes, and enjoy an employee retention rate greater than 95%. Performance evaluations and professional development activities are well-developed, and there is widespread constituent input into the planning and activities of both the Faculty Evaluation Committee and the Professional Development Committee.

Supplemental Information

4P3 The college work processes that contribute to communication in the college community include bi-monthly shared governance meetings with union groups, our newly established blog (and former weekly newsletter) outlining events and accomplishments, and the inclusion of all employees at a variety of communication driven events such as in-service events and Conversation Days.

The college engages in processes that contribute to innovation and high performance including the Merit Award program, the Faculty of Excellence awards, and an all-employee Service Recognition program. The annual Innovation Grant process encourages employees to apply for funds specifically dedicated for innovative projects with the grant requests evaluated and awarded by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

The college governance process is, by nature, empowering. All committees, including search committees and work groups, are composed of representatives of all bargaining units and student groups. All employees and students are encouraged and invited to participate.

Organizational learning is a priority of LSC. The committee and governance structure provides ample opportunity for employees to learn about the organization and experience leadership roles. Many of the training activities provided to employees are the result of in-house experts sharing their expertise and experience with others in a formal manner both in areas of skill development and in teaching and learning topics coordinated for faculty.

4P5 The Professional Development Committee conducts yearly needs assessments with employees to assist in planning training activities. During FY2006, employees across campus expressed a need for additional technology training. As a result, the assessment

focused on identifying the types of training needed. In previous years, assessments and data have led the committee to focus activities in areas such as customer service and soft skills that would contribute to increased retention.

4P6 There has been campus-wide involvement in the development of the performance evaluation tools used within each employee group. The evaluation tool developed for the administrative group is regularly reviewed by that group and has been revised several times as a result of feedback from the user group. The staff evaluation tool was developed by the cross-constituent Professional Development Committee, including representatives from the groups with whom it is used, and was subsequently reviewed by the supervisory group who use the instrument.

4P8 LSC determines the key issues related to the motivation of employees primarily through the use of the 360 degree evaluation process for all supervisors and administrators, and the self-assessment component of the performance evaluations for staff and faculty. These tools have provided a great deal of information on what employees need or want with regard to their performance, motivation and desires for professional development. Specifically tailored plans and more generalized plans for development and activities have been a direct result of the information gleaned in these survey tools. During the fall 2007 term, the college will implement a biennial cycle of employee satisfaction survey, benchmarking and action plans to address issues.

4P9-

4P10 The college maintains an active, cross-constituent Safety Committee charged with ensuring safety issues are addressed and training updated as needed. For example, a web-based OSHA training is scheduled for release in the spring of 2007. The college also participates in the State of Minnesota Health Plans which include a variety of wellness-related opportunities, including an annual health survey, with voluntary follow-up telephone conversations and free, ongoing coaching available. The college also sponsors two health fairs each year, one focused on the features and benefits available to employees and the other focused on a large variety of health information, activities and individualized testing such as blood pressure, etc.

The Constellation Survey, a component of AQIP's Vital Focus process, has provided information relative to workplace climate. The first implementation occurred in fall of 2003 and a second survey was conducted in the fall of 2006. Importance and performance ratings crossed the nine AQIP categories and the comments were analyzed for themes. The broad themes were then discussed at all shared governance meetings and suggestions for improvement were solicited. Discussions will continue around these themes and will provide opportunities for future action projects as well.

4R2 LSC does have results from processes associated with valuing people. Examples include the college's investment in professional development activities, the completion rate of

performance evaluations and turnover rates, as well as benefit dollars spent in relation to the turnover rates.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

Analyzing and benchmarking the results of the employee satisfaction survey as well as continuing focus on the results of the Constellation Survey will provide the focus areas for the Valuing People category.

Consultation Request

Leading and Communicating

Strengths

Peer reviewer feedback identified Lake Superior College's leadership and communication structures, networks, and the processes that guide us in setting direction, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment as some of our greatest strengths. Planning and decision-making is shared across campus constituencies, with student participation in many committees. There are many avenues for shared governance and many opportunities for input into important decisions. Our planning processes, while admittedly complex, are aligned with the many plans of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System as well as the AQIP categories to create our own Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Our employees' involvement in the community creates partnerships that position us to identify new opportunities and sustain relationships. Our commitment to leadership is demonstrated in the separate professional development fund dedicated to developing leadership skills in employees across the various employee groups. Results of administrative performance evaluations over time have shown an improvement in communication, decision-making, management, interpersonal skills, and leadership and planning.

Supplemental Information

5P3-

5P4 A chart available to the team upon their arrival will demonstrate the levels of decision-making attributed to various groups across campus. Union contracts, shared governance policies, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System policies require certain types of decision-making, while campus culture also contributes to different types of data-driven, horizontal empowerment.

5R2 The Student Services Unit is in the first year of a multi-phased assessment project involving each of the departments within the unit. A training retreat for all Student Services staff was held in the fall of 2006 to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct outcomes and satisfaction assessment in their respective areas. A process was developed for staff to follow in conducting their assessment efforts. The reporting template and timelines have been identified as well as clearly stated expectations for an on-going assessment cycle that will allow for continuous review of services, processes, student satisfaction and outcomes. The gathering of benchmark data has ensued and process enhancements will be implemented and measured on an on-going basis.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

Gathering baseline data that will provide the means of assessing improvements in areas not yet benchmarked will provide an opportunity for focused attention.

Supporting Institutional Operations

Strengths

Within the category of Supporting Institutional Operations an institution has many opportunities for developing strength of process, use of results and demonstrations of improvement. Peer reviewers identified the multiple processes in place to address constituent and stakeholder needs as one of the strengths of Lake Superior College. We have endeavored to use a variety of methods to assess needs and strive to meet those needs as efficiently as possible. We have been able to maintain our goal of remaining within the quartile of state institutions with the lowest tuition and still sustain the highest allowable fund balance.

Supplemental Information

6P3 Process review teams have been implemented in many areas throughout the campus. A few examples of how these teams have been used to change processes follows:

- Within the Finance and Facilities unit a task force was formed to examine the system's "Drop for Non-payment" policy and revise the college's process to better accommodate students. The task force included representatives of Student Services, Academics, and Finance. Membership ranged from AFSCME, MAPE, MMA, and Administrators. The taskforce was chaired by the Director of Business Services. During the last year meetings occurred on a regular basis and will continue for at least another year. The task force reviewed the impact on a wide range of existing policies and procedures. Recommendations on changes were communicated to the Executive Council and President's Cabinet for review and approval and as appropriate, forwarded to the Policy Committee for review. Prior to implementation, policy changes are communicated and feedback solicited from all labor groups at regularly scheduled shared governance meetings.
- The financial audit completed in June 2006 caused the Business Services Office to examine many former procedures. The Director of Business Services, under direction of the Vice-president of Finance and Administration, convened several mini-tasks forces to review and amend procedures in the areas of travel reimbursement, credit card usage, inventory tracking, contract preparation and management, etc. These mini-task forces included meetings with all involved business office staff and appropriate staff, faculty, managers, and administrators to solicit insight and suggestions for improvement. The Director of Business Services brings the consensus recommendations of the task force to a monthly meeting of the Business Office Management Team that includes the Accountant and VP of Finance & Administration for finalization. The revised procedures are then communicated to all affected parties through memorandums or e-mail.

6R1 Improvements can be seen in the results from the 2006 Student Satisfaction Inventory when compared to the results from the 2004 administration. When comparing LSC's rankings of importance and satisfaction on the eleven scale items, we continue to see gaps but we no longer see statistically significant gaps. When compared to the national data, the scale that measures safety and security is the only area with a statistically significant difference in the mean. Of the five item questions that comprise the safety and security scale score, "The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate" and "Security staff respond quickly in emergencies" contribute the only statistically significant differences. Since the last administration of the SSI survey, personnel changes have been made in the security personnel. The next administration of the SSI in spring of 2008 will indicate whether those changes have made a difference.

6R2-

6R3 LSC uses a variety of system generated management reports to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of our administrative processes against our sister institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. Each report is available at the system-wide and institutional level and cross the following areas: 1) Academics, 2) Admissions, 3) Custom Training, 4) Distance Learning, 5) Enrollment, 6) Facilities, 7) Finance, 8) HR Payroll, and 9) Students. Within each of these report areas, there is a variety of data available.

For example, within the Finance Unit, the VP of Finance & Administration and the Director of Business Services regularly review system level data on financial performance of all MnSCU institutions to assess our financial effectiveness in comparison to peer institutions. This data includes system generated exception reports, composite financial index, classroom usage, available fund balance, etc. Additionally, internal tracking is done of accounts receivable, budget management of all cost centers, purchasing exceptions, etc. to evaluate the need for procedure revision or training to improve operations.

6I2 The thirty-two recommendations referenced in the feedback report were generated following the first Conversation Day in 2003. Those thirty-two suggestions were consolidated into projects adopted by nineteen task forces. Work was completed over the 2004 fiscal year and reports were posted to the Institutional Effectiveness website. The proposals generated during the most recent Conversation Day were examined and categorized into six themes which formed the basis for IE Committee discussion of our next Action Project(s).

Measuring Effectiveness

Strengths

The category of Measuring Effectiveness presents challenges for many institutions; however, the peer reviewers recognized our efforts to strengthen our processes in this area. The Student Academic Achievement committee has made great strides in the areas of faculty use of common rubrics and measuring student achievement of college-wide outcomes. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee efforts resulting in a set of Mission Indicators and the framework that is linked to measures of the mission is another example of LSC's focus on this category. Within Student Services and Information Technology, we have developed systems that ensure effective information systems and related processes with a particular emphasis on security.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

We understand the importance of measures of effectiveness and systematic data collection and analysis to document achievement and/or improvement. As much as possible, we use the data we have in our decision-making; however, we also recognize the need to develop systematic processes of analyzing, discussing, communicating, and using our data in increasing effective ways. We will be focusing on the development of these processes during our next portfolio cycle.

Planning Continuous Improvement

Strengths

As a corollary to the strengths of Leading and Communicating, we have also developed strong processes for planning continuous improvement. Planning at LSC involves all internal stakeholders, with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee developing college priorities on a four-year cycle. Our long- and short-term goals are clearly articulated and available on the website. Resulting plans are updated twice a year and are an integral component of each senior administrator's performance evaluation. Plans are linked to budget requests, and an internal grant process provides competitive funding opportunities for initiatives that may arise outside the budget cycle.

Supplemental Information

8P8 Following the current planning cycle, we will seek input from various stakeholder groups, such as the Chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Much of our planning must be aligned with the expectations of the Office of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. We will gather input to assist us in defining measures of effectiveness in this area. In addition, discussions of planning effectiveness have taken place at the administrative level during the recent months. Our goal is to conduct a self-assessment in this area and use the results to develop measures against which we can evaluate our processes.

Building Collaborative Relationships

Strengths

Lake Superior College understands the importance of collaboration and has developed strong relationships with other educational institutions, community entities, and governmental agencies. Employees are encouraged, and in the case of senior administrators expected, to be of service to the community by being active board and community organization members. Results of these relationships can be seen in the growth of industry partnerships and High School connections.

Supplemental Information

9P3 All committees are composed of cross-constituent membership from all levels of campus personnel. Upon arrival on campus, team members may access a matrix that indicates the number of employees on each campus committee representing the various levels of the organization.

Section III – Response to Critical Strategic Issues

- **1P2: To help ensure proper placement and address various learning styles, it is important to design curricula, programs, and courses which take student needs into consideration.**

In the Academic Unit we design programs to accommodate students' ability to learn. Faculty understand the importance of designing course content that is linked to course outcomes. The activities used to measure those outcomes are carefully constructed to match the length of the term, classroom seat time, and placement of course in the overall sequence of courses. When working with the student to construct a schedule, faculty consider where students are in their program, their skill level, and the difficulty of the content. Although we are confident students are learning core content based on board pass/fail data, we have not yet aggregated the individual course data to reflect that belief. We are in the process of researching the instrument/assessment tools available to accomplish that task.

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Student Services and Academic Affairs leadership teams meet on a monthly basis to identify opportunities for collaboration, share initiatives, and distribute information. Additionally, Student Services staffers meet with occupational program faculty on an at least monthly basis to share updates, identify issues, and pursue solutions.

- **1P9: Although LSC has multiple learning support systems in place, it is not clear that LSC has processes for determining what students and faculty need in terms of learning support. Determining these needs will help to ensure success for all students.**

While consistent processes are not in place across the campus to systematically determine needs in terms of learning support, there are areas within various units that can serve as models in developing processes across campus. The following examples demonstrate a few of those processes currently in place:

- Student Services developed, in 2006, a tracking process for retention of new entering students by program type (either occupational or transfer). In 2007, that process was

further developed by adding advising assignments. Preliminary results of data collection indicate assigned advising for AA students contributes to greater fall to fall retention rates. Continuing data collection will contribute to validation of that conclusion.

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the need for improved academic advisement services). Our recent data reflects a statistically significant improvement in student satisfaction in these areas.

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- Student Services regularly reviews best practices of institutions of similar size and mission, and assesses the feasibility of best practice implementation, with regard to existing personnel and other resources.

- **2R1, 2R2: LSC has not yet established a consistent or systematic process for benchmarking with peers relative to the data collected respective to achieving other distinctive objectives. LSC will benefit from comparing its performance against benchmark data collected from peer institutions and therefore needs to establish systematic cycles for capturing and comparing results with and among their peers.**

Lake Superior College requests team consultation on this AQIP Category.

- **4R4: Results of the 2004 Student Satisfaction Survey indicate that LSC students are less satisfied than the national average of students in 10 of the 12 scale areas. LSC recognizes the need to develop benchmark institutions and collect and analyze comparative results.**

It is our intent to select a peer group using IPEDS and cross-reference those institutions with AQIP membership. We will be contacting Noel Levitz to determine comparative ratings of the peer group once it is established. We will then be able to conduct comparative analyses and develop appropriate benchmarks.

- **5R2, 5I1, 5I2: LSC has not yet designed systems with which to capture data, improve processes and systems, and establish targets in these categories. Establishing robust systems will better enable LSC to benchmark data, evaluate and measure improvement and work consistently toward achieving its goals.**

The Student Services Unit is in the first year of a multi-phased assessment project involving each of the departments within the unit. A training retreat for all Student Services staff was held in the fall of 2006 to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct outcomes and satisfaction assessment in their respective areas. A process was developed for staff to follow in conducting their assessment efforts. The reporting template and timelines have been identified as well as clearly stated expectations for an

on-going assessment cycle that will allow for continuous review of services, processes, student satisfaction and outcomes. The gathering of benchmark data has ensued and process enhancements will be implemented and measured on an on-going basis.

Areas of Focus for Improvement

Gathering baseline data that will provide the means of assessing improvements in areas not yet benchmarked will provide an opportunity for focused attention.