

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

March 17, 2006



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Systems Appraisal conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program of The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools provides a comprehensive examination of Lorain County Community College conducted by a trained team composed primarily of higher education peer reviewers. In order to provide fresh and objective insights and perspectives the team also included reviewers from outside higher education.

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

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

ELEMENTS OF LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY 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: Critical Characteristics Analysis, Category Feedback, and Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

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

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

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

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 Lorain County Community 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 Lorain County Community 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 Lorain County Community College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

Data Gathering and Analysis:

LCCC's data presentation often lacks adequate legends, indications of scale, and narrative or source information, making it unclear how these data relate to the criteria under discussion. Many data are presented, but little in the way of genuine statistical analysis (essential to a total quality environment) is evident, raising concerns about the validity of interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data. Specific examples were observed in the portfolio's responses in sections 2r1, 3r1, 3r2, 4r1, 4r3, 7p1, 7r1, 8r3, 8r4 and 9r2. An action plan to apply standard statistical analysis to the available data as they relate to the AQIP categories would lead to more dependable and meaningful interpretations and conclusions and enable the college to better understand the implications of its gathered data.

LCCC reports many processes and gathers an impressive quantity of assessment data. It is not always clear, however, that the processes employed or the data gathered are relevant to the desired ends of continuous quality improvement (i.e., Are existing processes "working"? Are the right processes in place to achieve the college's goals in support of its mission?) For example, if the desired end is "happy faculty," then contributing \$243K (Figure 4r-4) toward faculty-driven participation in professional development is relevant to this end. If the desired end is that professional development result in improved student learning or in some other mission-related objective, then more strategic selection and measures of processes would better ensure the mission-relatedness of institutional processes.

Benchmarking:

Little to no evidence of benchmarking is presented for the areas of Measuring Effectiveness or Planning Continuous Improvement. Despite the recognized difficulty of obtaining comparative information for these particular categories, LCCC

would be well served to seek assistance from AQIP or other available resources in identifying a cluster of institutions against which such comparisons could be made as you continue your pursuit of quality improvement in these areas.

Measures:

While LCCC reports using nine methods of assessing student performance, it identifies only three data sets that do not depend on student opinion. LCCC's assessment of student learning could be strengthened by identifying additional direct measures of student success.

It is unclear how LCCC measures department and unit results and ensures that department and unit analysis of information aligns with institutional goals for student learning. The College may wish to consider having IS&S employ unit-level analysis to ensure mission-driven improvements at the unit level.

Student Learning:

Results for "Concern for you as individual" exhibited the greatest gap between LCCC and the national mean on the ACT survey. This gap may result from a combination of rapid enrollment growth and declining funding. Nonetheless, such a trend may affect student retention. Assessment of the relationship between this trend and the decrease in PACE (see category 4) scores for the student focus item among the faculty and professional technical groups could drive improvement of processes intended to promote and enhance interaction with students.

Leadership:

Though the College mentions a succession planning process, it is not clear how the College determines whether individuals promoted internally are qualified for advanced positions. The development of a comprehensive succession process, including articulation of desired critical characteristics for future leaders and a progression of preparatory activities designed to develop those desired characteristics in internal candidates, coupled with a commitment to supplementing the management system with qualified external candidates may better assure continuity in leadership.

The rapid expansion of LCCC's student body, mandated by state government, and scheduled to continue through 2015, will pose ongoing challenges to LCCC in areas

ranging from fiscal management to teaching and advising. Continued careful and strategic planning, combined with continuing aggressive efforts to identify new revenue streams, will be necessary to ensure that the college maintains an adequate funding base and to maintain educational quality. Participation in the Course Transformation Project is a good first step in the latter area; additional ways to strengthen teaching and learning without increasing costs might also be considered.

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.

APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

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

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

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

01 Distinctive Features (type of control, vision, mission, values)

- 01a LCCC, a single-campus comprehensive, open-enrollment, public community college established in 1963, was the first permanent state-aided institution of higher learning in Lorain County and the first public community college in Ohio to have a permanent campus.
- 01b LCCC's culture values community partnerships and collaboration, mission and data-driven planning processes based on community needs, a flat organizational structure that responds quickly to identified needs, professional development, and continuous assessment and improvement.
- 01c An Operations Council, comprising the President, Vice President, and the Presidents of Student Senate, Faculty Senate, and Staff Council, convenes weekly to address significant operational activities, issues, and results.

- 01d LCCC seeks to play a major role in economic and workforce development in Lorain County, a part of its mission that may become increasingly important in a region that recently lost 7,500 jobs. For example, the college is part of the Great Lakes Innovation and Development Enterprise, a public/private partnership intended to catalyze development and expansion of area businesses.
- 01e LCCC has completed three strategic planning processes since 1989 and involved the community in its planning.
- 01f The current president of LCCC has been in office since 1987, providing stable top-level leadership to the college.

02 Scope of Educational Offerings

- 02a Lorain County residents have the highest number of associate degrees in the state, but the lowest number of bachelor's and master's degrees. The University Partnership (UP) was created to provide county residents with access to bachelor's and graduate degrees; it offers more than 30 bachelor's and higher degree programs delivered by nine universities to over 2,500 students.
- 02b LCCC offers the AA degree via an array of distance technologies (Internet, blended courses, telecourses, videoconferencing, and interactive video distance learning, for example) and over a quarter of the student body takes at least one distance learning course each semester.
- 02c The Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees allow students to transfer with junior standing to baccalaureate degree programs. Four Applied Associate degrees in Science (including Allied Health, Nursing, and Engineering Technologies), Business, Individualized Studies, and Technical Studies and numerous certificates and short-term training programs allow students to move directly into the job market or to acquire or improve skills needed in their current jobs.
- 02d Under the leadership of the Office of Corporate and Community Outreach Services (CCOS), LCCC provides an array of non-credit public offerings, customized credit and non-credit education offerings, corporate retainer contracts, consultative services, and economic development support services to business, industry and the community.

03 Student Base, Needs, and Requirements

- 03a Enrollment has grown 41 percent over the past four years to 9,967 students in credit classes and 5,070 students in non-credit programs, making LCCC one of Ohio's fastest-growing colleges.
- 03b The College has defined seven distinct segments of its student population and analyzed the needs of each segment.
- 03c The majority of LCCC students are employed and attend college part-time during the day. Half are enrolled in applied programs related to their jobs.
- 03d Reflecting local demographics, the LCCC student body is 82 percent Caucasian, 7 percent African-American, and 5 percent "other." The mean age is 27 and 66 percent of students are female.
- 03e Between 2000 and 2003, the College's tuition and fees remained among the lowest in its peer group. In addition, 67 percent of students received some type of financial aid.

04 Collaborations

- 04a The College seeks and values partnerships that support its mission, vision, and values. For example, key partners include colleges and universities participating in the UP program and the county's 14 school districts.

05 Faculty and Staff Base (number, types, educational level)

- 05a The Faculty Senate Executive Council and the Staff Council are the main governance units. A representative Joint Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee negotiates salaries and benefits, using mutual gains bargaining. (The College is not unionized.)
- 05b LCCC employees include 27 administrators, 117 full-time faculty members and 599 adjunct faculty, 106 Professional/Technical personnel, 155 full-time support staff, and 192 part-time staff members. A high percentage of faculty, administrators and Professional/Technical staff hold master's or higher degrees.
- 05c LCCC invests in employees through training and development programs, employee recognition and celebration programs, screening and hiring processes, and a performance appraisal process. As a result, the College has been recognized as one of the top 99 Employers of Choice by the NorthCoast 99 program.

06 Facilities, Equipment, Technologies, Regulatory Environment

06a LCCC continuously improves its facilities, equipment, and technology through three distinct master plans.

07 Organizations Competing for Students

07a LCCC is the only public higher education institution in its county and the primary provider of post-secondary education in its area. Competitors include colleges, universities, online degree programs, proprietary schools, and local vocational education districts.

07b LCCC benchmarks its human resources processes and results, using 98 organizations in the Employers Resource Council NorthCoast 99 process as its comparison group. Information from OBOR, HEI, and other national and local sources is used to compare progress in other areas.

08 Key Opportunities and Vulnerabilities

08a Funding per FTE student has been reduced by 29 percent since 2001, while employee health care costs have increased by 52 percent. The College needs to seek external funding to address these challenges.

08b In order to enhance service to new and underserved markets, the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE) has recommended that LCCC continue to increase enrollment by four to five percent annually through 2015.

08c LCCC uses multiple indicators, with student recruitment and retention as key indicators, to track the quality of its services and programs. Process improvement is driven by Lean/Six Sigma principles and processes, while information from the Voices & Choices project, a collaborative effort to transform the regional economy, provides a foundation for identifying new opportunities.

08d District residents approved additional tax levies for the College in 2001 and 2004.

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 Lorain County Community 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 LCCC, a single-campus comprehensive, open-enrollment, public community college established in 1963, was the first permanent state-aided institution of higher learning in Lorain County and the first public community college in Ohio to have a permanent campus.
- O2b LCCC offers the AA degree via an array of distance technologies (Internet, blended courses, telecourses, videoconferencing, and interactive video distance learning, for example) and over a quarter of the student body takes at least one distance learning course each semester.
- O2c The Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees allow students to transfer with junior standing to baccalaureate degree programs. Four Applied Associate

degrees in Science (including Allied Health, Nursing, and Engineering Technologies), Business, Individualized Studies, and Technical Studies and numerous certificates and short-term training programs allow students to move directly into the job market or to acquire or improve skills needed in their current jobs.

- O3b The College has defined seven distinct segments of its student population and analyzed the needs of each segment.
- O3c The majority of LCCC students are employed and attend college part-time during the day. Half are enrolled in applied programs related to their jobs.
- O5b LCCC employees include 27 administrators, 117 full-time faculty members and 599 adjunct faculty, 106 Professional/Technical personnel, 155 full-time support staff, and 192 part-time staff members. A high percentage of faculty, administrators and Professional/Technical staff hold masters or higher degrees.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1p1	S	Using the output of AQIP action projects, processes have been developed to monitor, assess, and improve learning. LCCC is currently in the second year of a three-year project to assess General Education and departmental programs, on three- and five-year cycles, respectively. This process involves representatives from both the faculty and staff.
1p2	S	LCCC employs a data-driven process for developing new courses and programs. This process relies on feedback from both internal and external sources, including community stakeholders, faculty and staff, and national program reviews and research.
1p3	S	Students are assessed in reading, writing, English usage, and math. Students scoring below a specified cut-off level are placed in developmental courses prior to enrolling in their majors.
1p3	O	While LCCC indicates that student preparedness is important, no indication is given that the College performs assessment beyond the level of basic skills. Additional assessments, for example of program readiness, could help LCCC better prepare its students for the programs

they are going into, which in turn could promote a higher level of readiness upon graduation.

- 1p4 S Using the Office of Marketing and Media Relations, LCCC has developed a comprehensive program for communicating expectations to both current and potential students. This is accomplished through multiple approaches, including orientation courses, catalogs, websites, and curriculum guides.
- 1p5 O Assistance in career planning and selection does not appear to take place until after students have started their major programs (College 101 course). Career planning assistance earlier in students' education may help improve their readiness and retention.
- 1p6 SS The effectiveness of teaching and learning is systematically and continuously documented and aggregated through the PAR and CAR processes. The number of full-time faculty participating in outcomes assessment has risen from 70 percent to 81 percent, with adjunct faculty participation doubling to 42 percent. The documentation is stored in the Course Assessment Records Database (CARD) and made available campus-wide through the College's CampusNet.
- 1p6 O It is not clear how teaching and learning expectations are communicated to faculty prior to their participation in the CAR and PAR processes. LCCC will best serve its faculty by making expectations clear prior to conducting assessment.
- 1p6 O Although the Systems Portfolio mentions numerous processes for determining and documenting effective learning, only student evaluations are mentioned in this category for documenting effective teaching. Using multiple methods of evaluating teaching could help LCCC document and improve teaching practices.
- 1p7 S Relying on enrollment trends and other data, academic division directors, the Enrollment Planning Council, and faculty work together to determine course offerings one year in advance. This process allows for a balance between college and student needs in planning course delivery.

- 1p8 S Using faculty and cross-functional teams, course and program improvements are made on the basis of research and trend data.
- 1p8 S LCCC participates in the Program in Course Redesign (PCR) and has designated \$125,000 in support of whole-course redesign.
- 1p8 O Having individual faculty members select which courses and outcomes will be assessed could result in under-assessment (see table in 1r1) of some objectives. Assignment of the courses and objectives through an external validation process, a key characteristic of effective assessment, might be provided by a system that allows faculty to review work from courses other than their own and could in turn lead to a more balanced and representative data set.
- 1p9 S The identification of learning support needs is accomplished through the use of feedback mechanisms, including the Committee Development Process, along with survey data from CCSSE, OSR, and ACT.
- 1p10 S The college recently combined learner services and academic affairs into a single unit to promote alignment between the formal curriculum and co-curricular activities. Representatives from both academic and student development areas serve on the Curriculum Committee and on academic program/cluster review committees.
- 1p11 S Processes for assessing student learning are implemented at the classroom, program, and General Education levels
- 1p12 S The effectiveness of learning is measured through several mechanisms. Systems such as GTS, OBOR, CCSSE, CAR, and PAR are some examples. In addition, LCCC administers an alumni survey six months after graduation. This, in conjunction with input from advisory committees, assists LCCC in improving the effectiveness of its offerings.
- 1p12 O A mechanism for determining success rates for students who transfer to four-year institutions would complement LCCC's existing methods of determining graduate preparedness.
- 1p13 S The college collects data on student performance from a variety of sources, including surveys, ongoing assessment, and program/cluster

- reviews. There are currently nine measures of student performance in use.
- 1r1 S LCCC reports a 69 percent attainment rate of benchmarks for students in its 11 identified outcome categories.
- 1r1(b) O Areas in which fewer than 60 percent of students attained benchmarks for student learning include written communication and math concepts. Because these are core skills for many disciplines, LCCC may wish to consider a writing and/or math across the curriculum project.
- 1r1 O A potential next step in LCCC's quality journey is to engage additional faculty in the assessment of student learning outcomes.
- 1r2 S RN and LPN licensure rates are generally above the averages for LCCC's cohort institutions.
- 1r2 OO While LCCC reports using nine methods of assessing student performance, it identifies only three data sets that do not depend on student opinion. LCCC's assessment of student learning could be strengthened by identifying additional direct methods of measuring student success.
- 1r4 O The use of additional benchmarking tools and additional benchmarking partners could help LCCC to identify gaps, as well as best practices that could be used for process improvements. For example, results of other locally, state, or nationally normed data would complement the CCSSE results.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 01b. LCCC’s culture values community participation and collaboration, mission and data-driven planning processes based on community needs, a flat organizational structure that responds quickly to identified needs, professional development, and continuous assessment and improvement.
- 01d. LCCC seeks to play a major role in economic and workforce development in Lorain County, a part of its mission that may become increasingly important in a region that recently lost 7,500 jobs. For example, the college is part of the Great Lakes Innovation and Development Enterprise, a public/private partnership intended to catalyze development and expansion of area businesses..
- 02d. Under the leadership of the Office of Corporate and Community Outreach Services (CCOS), LCCC provides an array of non-credit public offerings, customized credit and non-credit education offerings, corporate retainer contracts, consultative services, and economic development support services to business, industry, and the community.
- 08a. Funding per FTE student has been reduced by 29 percent since 2001, while employee health care costs have increased by 52 percent. The College needs to seek external funding to address these challenges.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2p1	S	Other distinctive objectives, including addressing a difficult financial environment, responding to statewide enrollment goals, and enhancing economic development, are determined through OBR and the ORC 3354. Significant participation by employees and stakeholders (75 percent of full-time employees and 600+ external stakeholders) has been evident in the strategic planning

process, demonstrating LCCC's commitment to collaboration and community partnerships.

- 2p2 S LCCC utilizes a variety of written and verbal communications, including the convocation, catalog, non-credit publications, reports to various groups, the College web site, print media, brochures, and direct mailings, to communicate expectations regarding other distinctive objectives to internal and external constituents.
- 2p3 SS LCCC encourages creativity and innovation on the part of employees; the Continuous Improvement Council has budgeted \$45,000 for the immediate implementation of new ideas that enhance accomplishment of other distinctive objectives. Needs related to other distinctive objectives are identified and communicated by the responsible project teams, committees, and councils.
- 2p4 S For the purpose of continuous improvement, specific measures are defined and objectives are assessed and reviewed through strategic visioning, indicators of effectiveness, surveys, and stakeholder Engagement Sessions.
- 2r1 S LCCC has used grant funding, foundation resources, and levy millage to maintain programs and services as state appropriations have decreased. For example, nineteen grant applications between January and July 2005 yielded \$4.2 million in grants, including \$2.9 million in congressionally directed funds (Figure 2R-2).
- 2r1 S LCCC has expanded offerings of non-credit courses, youth service events, and workshops for business and industry, and increased participation in community events, despite considerable economic challenges. Additional increases have occurred in Tech Prep enrollment and matriculates and in the number of employed persons served via contract training.
- 2r1 S To address local economic development needs, the GLIDE public/private partnership has created 223 jobs in Lorain County since 2002 and assisted 211 companies.
- 2r1 O Unduplicated headcount in non-credit courses has fluctuated during the past five years, hitting a five-year low in 2004. Failure to address this trend could limit non-credit offerings as a revenue source.

- 2r1 O Scholarship dollars dispensed by LCCC have decreased by about 16 percent since 2001. Identifying effective strategies for increasing these resources could help to offset the impact of funding decreases elsewhere.
- 2r2 O The portfolio offers comparative data only for developmental education success rates, not for any other distinctive objectives. Further, neither data sources nor comparison groups are identified. LCCC would be well served by broadening the categories for which it gathers comparative information and by benchmarking its practices against other organizations in accomplishing other distinctive objectives.
- 2r3 O LCCC partners with the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce and the Lorain County Commissioners in enhancing workforce development and community economic development and provides a variety of educational and cultural services to the community it serves (Figures 2R-6-10 & 2R15-18). Though these efforts have been very successful, the portfolio does not completely address the question posed here. Addressing internally how your results strengthen your institution and enhance your relationship with the communities you serve will inform quality improvement in this category.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 01b LCCC's culture values community partnerships and collaboration, mission and data-driven planning processes based on community needs, a flat organizational structure that responds quickly to identified needs, professional development, and continuous assessment and improvement.
- 01d LCCC seeks to play a major role in economic and workforce development in Lorain County, a part of its mission that may become increasingly important in a region that recently lost 7,500 jobs. For example, the College is part of the Great Lakes Innovation and Development Enterprise, a public/private partnership intended to catalyze development and expansion of area businesses.
- 03b The College has defined seven distinct segments of its student population and analyzed the needs of each segment.
- 03c The majority of LCCC students are employed and attend college part-time during the day. Half are enrolled in applied programs related to their jobs.
- 03d Reflecting local demographics, the LCCC student body is 82 percent Caucasian, 7 percent African-American, and 5 percent "other." The mean age is 27 and 66 percent of students are female.
- 04a The College seeks and values partnerships that support its mission, vision, and values. For example, key partners include colleges and universities participating in the UP program and the county's 14 school districts.
- 05b LCCC employees include 27 administrators, 117 full-time faculty members and 599 adjunct faculty, 106 Professional/Technical personnel, 155 full-time support staff, and 192 part-time staff members. A high percentage of faculty, administrators and Professional/Technical staff hold master's or higher degrees.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3p1	S	LCCC has identified two prospective and seven enrolled student groups. A cross-functional Enrollment Planning Council reviews data gathered

from a variety of satisfaction surveys and performance reports administered by the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Office and the Joint Center for Policy Research.

- 3p2 S Various marketing strategies (e.g., television, print media, direct mail, and web approaches) are deployed to attract and build relationships with prospective students. In addition, other student service-related units such as Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, and the Bursar's Office assist in building and maintaining relationships with prospective students through customer service and timely and accurate information. Faculty have primary responsibility for building and maintaining relationships with currently enrolled students. Advisors and counselors contribute to building these relationships as well. Surveys such as the CCSSE and ACT are used to measure effectiveness in this area.
- 3p2 O The strong majority of faculty are adjunct. The Enrollment Planning Council has an opportunity to educate adjunct faculty about the importance of building meaningful relationships with students both inside and outside the classroom.
- 3p3 S LCCC seeks feedback from key stakeholders through the strategic visioning process, while relying on academic program/cluster reviews, operation systems, Community Engagement Sessions, and surveys to provide timely, ongoing information for distribution and analysis. Also, the JCPR and IEP collect and analyze data on performance of recent high school graduates by school district and share these data with superintendents.
- 3p4 S LCCC builds and maintains relationships with seven key stakeholder groups through a variety of activities that provide opportunities for active participation in college events and planning.
- 3p5 S LCCC uses feedback from relationship-building processes, academic/program cluster reviews, OSR processes, reports/data (e.g., reports from the OBOR, League for Innovation), advisory councils, and analyses of survey results to identify new stakeholder groups and determine whether their needs should be addressed.

- 3p6 S LCCC uses a formal process for handling student complaints. External stakeholders can use a web portal or e-mail. Complaints are directed to the department best able to form strategies to address the concerns. This appears to provide for timely handling of complaints.
- 3p6 O Employees might benefit from a formal complaint process parallel to the process for student complaints and published in employee materials. Also, there is no indication that complaints are systematically analyzed for trends that could help the College identify areas for improvement or that it monitors effectiveness of its responses to complaints. These gaps could cause complaints to go unaddressed and opportunities for improvement to be missed.
- 3p7 S The College uses a variety of formal measures to determine student and stakeholder satisfaction, including regularly administered surveys (ACT, CCSSE, and so on), as well as informal methods (e.g., President's Forums for students) and measures of institutional effectiveness. Further, results from surveys are made available to the faculty, administrators, and other employees and groups who are participating or have an investment in the academic program/cluster review process.
- 3r1 S Data tables indicate steady positive trends in attainment of goals in a number of areas including: endorsement of PSEO programs [Figure 3R-9], general satisfaction with enrollment services [Figure 3R10], and satisfaction with the general environment [Figure 3R13], registration [Figure 3R14], facilities [Figure 3R15], and admissions [Figure 3R17]. In the academic areas [Figure 3R18], the majority of these measures indicate increases at above 3.5 on a 5-point scale. Also, 75 percent of students report achieving their original educational goals, while fewer than 10% of students report that their original goals for enrolling were not met. On the ACT Survey, items related to class size, variety of courses offered, and challenges offered by programs of study are consistently the top rated items.
- 3r1-4 O Since 2000, the percent of all recent Lorain County high school graduates who enroll at LCCC has remained stable at 29 percent per year. Additional recruiting efforts in this population may help the College

respond to the enrollment goals set by the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE). Additionally, trends in students' satisfaction with course availability, study areas, athletic facilities, advising, achievement of educational goals, and flexibility to design their own programs may indicate the potential benefits of focused improvement efforts in these areas (Figures 3R-14, 15, 18). For example, an assessment of course scheduling might yield information to explain and address the low scores on the ACT survey for availability of courses. A stronger focus on appropriate student placement and success in the UP program could improve student satisfaction.

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| 3r2 | S | The use of several data-gathering approaches provides feedback from stakeholders about satisfaction with College services and reflects the College's commitment to employing data resources and measuring results from stakeholders. Five-year trends indicate that HS enrollment, PSEO and overall headcount are steadily increasing. |
| 3r2 | O | No data are indicated that suggest significant improvements in building relationships with adult learners. Since adult learners form a major constituency, renewed efforts in building these relationships could prove valuable to these stakeholders as well as to the college. |
| 3r3 | S | Approximately 94 percent of Lorain County citizens have reported favorable perceptions of the College for the past 15 years. |

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 05a The Faculty Senate Executive Council and the Staff Council are the main governance units. A representative Joint Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee negotiates salaries and benefits, using mutual gains bargaining. (The College is not unionized.)
- 05b LCCC employees include 27 administrators, 117 full-time faculty members and 599 adjunct faculty, 106 Professional/Technical personnel, 155 full-time support staff, and 192 part-time staff members. A high percentage of faculty, administrators and Professional/Technical staff hold master's or higher degrees.
- 05c LCCC invests in employees through training and development programs, employee recognition and celebration programs, screening and hiring processes, and a performance appraisal process. As a result, the College has been recognized as one of the top 99 Employers of Choice by the NorthCoast 99 program.
- 07b LCCC benchmarks its human resources processes and results, using 98 organizations in the Employers Resource Council NorthCoast 99 process as its comparison group. Information from OBOR, HEI, and other national and local sources is used to compare progress in other areas.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4p1	S	A human resources consulting group (Hay Group), the SkillsMAX program, and the Strategic Asset Model assist the College in establishing hiring standards. A peer screening committee process provides for review of how well individual applicants match those standards.
4p1	O	The portfolio does not indicate how specific credentials, skills, and values are identified for faculty candidates. Development of procedures for identifying needed characteristics will be especially helpful in managing the recruitment and retention of large numbers of adjunct faculty.

- 4p2 S LCCC's process for recruiting and hiring employees includes advertising through community organizations to ensure diversity. Applications for full-time positions are reviewed by cross-functional screening committees that recommend 3 candidates to the hiring decision-maker. New employees, including new faculty, are provided with a comprehensive orientation.
- 4p2 O No indication is given as to how LCCC plans for personnel changes. Such a plan could help to ensure that current and future personnel decisions are aligned with institutional mission and goals.
- 4P2 O Applicant screening committees composed of representatives of organizational units, employee groups, and students review applicants for the hiring process. It is unclear whether external stakeholders serve on these groups or how internal stakeholders are appointed to serve this critical component of the hiring process. Establishing a predictable procedure for such internal and external appointments could strengthen the hiring process.
- 4p3 S Cross-functional committees and councils and the mutual gains philosophy provide a foundation for work processes that contributes to communication, cooperation, high performance, innovation, empowerment, organizational learning and skill sharing. (See Figures 4.3 and 4.4.)
- 4p3 O The portfolio does not address the question about how the institution ensures the ethical practices of all employees, other than through the faculty orientation. LCCC may wish to review its processes to identify other opportunities to discuss ethical practices.
- 4p4 S The College trains employees through the HRD process, individual work plans, and individual training and development funds. Professional development needs are identified through the performance appraisal process and tuition waivers are offered to employees.
- 4p5 S The College uses the HRD process to produce campus-wide and individual Professional Development Matrices based on employee surveys, input from committees and councils, performance appraisal, and evaluation of organizational priorities. Noteworthy training efforts include faculty sabbaticals and staff educational leaves.

- 4p6 S A comprehensive performance appraisal system for all employees is currently in place, and the College has established an action project team to review the process.
- 4p7 S LCCC benchmarks salary and compensation data against cohort institutions, budgets for regular salary increases and engages in a variety of recognition and reward programs, including one for adjunct faculty.
- 4p7 O There is no evidence that any of these recognition systems (with the exception of the Outstanding Faculty Award) are aligned with Helping Students Learn or Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. Such alignment would reward employee efforts in support of these key AQIP categories.
- 4p8 SS LCCC uses the PACE/Climate Survey, Employee Engagement sessions, the annual Convocation Survey and the staff progression plan to identify key issues related to motivation of faculty, staff, and administrators. The AQIP HR Design Team analyzes these data and determines courses of action.
- 4p9 S LCCC measures staff satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being through several surveys and has identified indicators of performance in related areas. The College is currently engaged in the design phase of an additional assessment that will directly measure employee engagement through the Gallup Organization's Q12 survey.
- 4p10 S LCCC identifies 8 measures of Valuing People that it analyzes regularly.
- 4r1 S PACE results indicate highest satisfaction among administrators. In addition, results indicate a significant amount of commitment to measuring and improving employee satisfaction, addressing preventive health issues, and measuring the impact of employee development.
- 4r1 O PACE results indicate lowest satisfaction among professional/technical staff, while results for faculty and support staff are mixed. Other measures include budget expenditures for professional development, but budgeted funds were not fully spent during the years reported. Additional efforts to improve professional/technical staff satisfaction and to improve

- communication about available funds for professional development could boost employee retention in these and other units of the college.
- 4r2 O Processes associated with valuing people include the LiveSmart! Program and tuition and fee waivers for employees. While this is a good start, additional initiatives based on survey data such as PACE might yield more substantial results. Analysis of the reasons for the decrease in PACE scores on the student focus item among the faculty and professional technical groups could help to improve processes for interacting with students.
- 4r2 S LCCC has spent nearly \$700,000 in the past three years on travel related to conferencing and training, with annual expenditures increasing 14 percent since 2002/03 and increased activities in every employee group. In addition, the College has increased its resource allocation for training, HR development, travel and sabbaticals over the past 3 years.
- 4R2 O While resources are allocated to professional development, the portfolio does not indicate whether goals for professional development are being met. Some attention to the results of these processes could yield useful data for improvement.
- 4r3 OO No clear evidence of how employee productivity and effectiveness support college goals for valuing people is presented. Identification and collection of relevant data would provide a basis for informed improvement efforts in this area.
- 4r4 S LCCC staff satisfaction as measured by PACE has been higher than that for cohort institutions on all scales since the first administration of the survey in 1998.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 01b LCCC's culture values community partnerships and collaboration, mission and data-driven planning processes based on community needs, a flat organizational structure that responds quickly to identified needs, professional development, and continuous assessment and improvement.
- 01c An Operations Council, comprising the President, Vice President, and the Presidents of Student Senate, Faculty Senate, and Staff Council, convenes weekly to address significant operational activities, issues, and results.
- 01e LCCC has completed three strategic planning processes since 1989 and involved the community in its planning.
- 01f The current president of LCCC has been in office since 1987, providing stable top-level leadership to the college.
- 05a The Faculty Senate Executive Council and the Staff Council are the main governance units. A representative Joint Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee negotiates salaries and benefits, using mutual gains bargaining. (The College is not unionized.)

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5p1	S	LCCC leaders use a strategic visioning process and performance indicators to plan, measure performance, and align initiatives with strategic goals. These processes involve community members and take into account the needs and expectations of students and other key stakeholder groups. The DBT schedules two Community Engagement Sessions annually and invites other boards or representatives of essential

community functions to meet for a dialogue around issues of common interest.

- 5p2 SS Beginning in 2005 LCCC identified three to five Lean/Six Sigma projects that have the potential to result in a minimum of \$20,000 in cost savings and efficiency. Projects under way include employee contract automation, grade verification, student attendance, non-credit course delivery, and mechanical services and information systems contracts.
- 5p2 S The Academic Transformations initiative is focused on redesigning the top 30 enrolled courses to increase student achievement, while lowering the overall per student costs.
- 5p3 S The decision-making process includes opportunities for all staff to be involved; mechanisms include the Faculty Senate, Engagement Sessions, and a linear decision-making structure (Figure 5.5).
- 5p4 S College leaders use results, including indicators of effectiveness data, for planning, continuous improvement, and decision-making. In addition, results are reviewed by various standing committees, and frequencies of review activities are specified (Figure 5.6).
- 5p5 S Use of multiple communication channels, including print, electronic and oral media, promotes a free flow of ideas among levels in the College.
- 5p6 S LCCC's leaders communicate a shared mission, vision, values, and high performance expectations via newsletters (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually), brochures, catalogs, tabloids, memoranda, community newspapers, a policy and procedures manual, signs around campus (e.g., CC Mall balcony), the Internet, e-mail, cable/television, the telephone system, Marquees, President's Forums, Convocation, Employee Engagement Sessions, and performance appraisals.
- 5p7 S Leadership abilities are encouraged, developed and strengthened among faculty, staff and administrators by using the College's HR Strategic Asset model as a framework. Other key strategies include the performance appraisal process, College-sponsored development opportunities (e.g., SLF, Strategic Horizon, Leadership Lorain County), internal and external leadership development programs, tuition waivers and reimbursement,

- conferences and workshops, educational leaves, tenure and promotion, and opportunities to participate in institutional initiatives.
- 5P8 S LCCC's leaders and board members ensure that its mission, vision and values are passed on during leadership succession by identifying potential or emerging leaders, jointly identifying and selecting leadership opportunities, and discussing and monitoring progress. LCCC has sponsored three teams of leaders from all levels of the organization to participate in the CCCD Strategic Horizon College and SLF initiatives.
- 5p8 O LCCC should consider monitoring processes that encourage promoting from within to ensure balance between internal hiring and opportunities for infusion of new ideas through outside hires.
- 5p9 S The College's use of the PACE/Climate Survey, Convocation, Strategic Horizon, passage of levies, and the Ohio Award for Excellence provides a sound basis for measuring the effectiveness of communication.
- 5p9 O There is no evidence that meaningful measures of leadership qualities at LCCC have been identified or analyzed. Clear measures could help campus leaders improve performance of assigned responsibilities and help to identify candidates for succession to positions of greater responsibility.
- 5r1 S The above average results of the PACE/Climate Survey and local support of the College (demonstrated by passage of tax levies) provide evidence of effective communication both within and outside the institution. In addition, survey results indicate that LCCC ranks high in commitment to developing leaders and in leadership, as measured by the Ohio Award for Excellence process.
- 5r1 O The data in this section are limited to employee response to the Convocation, providing minimal information. LCCC would be well served to identify additional meaningful measures of success in Leading and Communicating to substantiate the claim that it excels in these areas.
- 5r2 O The only comparison provided in this area is with other community colleges participating in the Strategic Horizon study. Analysis of the reasons for the low score on "ability to design and manage change

effectively” in this study might assist with future improvement efforts in this category.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- O8c LCCC uses multiple indicators, with student recruitment and retention as key indicators, to track the quality of its services and programs. Process improvement is driven by Lean/Six Sigma principles and processes, while information from the Voices & Choices project, a collaborative effort to transform the regional economy, provides a foundation for identifying new opportunities.
- O5b LCCC employees include 27 administrators, 117 full-time faculty members and 599 adjunct faculty, 106 Professional/Technical personnel, 155 full-time support staff, and 192 part-time staff members. A high percentage of faculty, administrators and Professional/Technical staff hold master's or higher degrees.
- O6a LCCC continuously improves its facilities, equipment, and technology through three distinct master plans.
- O8a Funding per FTE student has been reduced by 29 percent since 2001, while employee health care costs have increased by 52 percent. The College needs to seek external funding to address these challenges.
- O8b In order to enhance service to new and underserved markets, the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE) has recommended that LCCC continue to increase enrollment by four to five percent annually through 2015.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6p1	S	LCCC identifies student support service needs through the COMPASS exam, ACT survey, the Operations System Review process, the OBOR performance report and the graduate tracking survey. Students who do not meet required math, composition, and reading entry standards are required to complete developmental courses.
6p1	O	Identification of other information sources to determine needs of students who are not at risk could help to enhance the academic experience of a broader group of students.
6p2	S	The College identifies administrative support service needs through surveys, the Operations System Review process, the OBOR performance report and NorthCoast99. A process for submitting improvement ideas is well defined and supported by a \$45,000 rapid response budget. Improvement suggestions may also be submitted through an on-line suggestion box.
6p2	O	The development of a process to identify the administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, administrators, and key stakeholder groups (e.g., oversight board, alumni) could lead to processes to support specific groups of employees and enhance the efficiency of the entire community.
6p3	O	Each of the academic support organizational units determines its own performance measures based on OSR. This process might benefit from input from representatives of other campus groups who could contribute different perspectives. Additionally, since the OSR process (identified as the primary process used to ensure that student and administrative support services processes are effectively managed) reviews areas on a five-year cycle, it is not evident how they are managed on a day-to-day basis. Clear identification of regular management procedures could better ensure overall effectiveness for these areas.

- 6p4 S Each academic support unit is assessed on a five-year cycle through the Operations System Review (OSR) process, which utilizes the Peters Four Disciplines of Execution model to design and regularly monitor continuous improvement plans.
- 6p5 S LCCC has identified 24 measures of effectiveness for student and administrative services (Figures 6-1, 6-2).
- 6r1 S Positive results are reported on many fronts. For example, students indicate strong satisfaction with Career Services, Tutoring, and Distance Learning. These results appear to confirm the success of institutional efforts. Also, satisfaction with the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Office and the Controller's Office has been measured and areas of lower scores are being addressed in the five-year continuous improvement plans. Similarly, a marked increase in student satisfaction with counseling services has occurred in the last year. In addition, the Opening Doors program has had a positive impact on student success for the treatment group when compared with the control group. Finally, distance learning success rates approach those for traditional program success.
- 6r1 O Taking analysis beyond simple presentation of raw descriptive data to the interpretation of the meaning of those data would enable the College to make action plans based on that analysis. For example, data are provided showing satisfaction with a variety of services, including Career Services, the library, tutoring, financial aid, and the bookstore. The actual impact of these services on student learning is not identified, however. Also, looking at trend data over longer periods may help LCCC identify gaps and key points for improvement within the area of support for faculty, staff, and stakeholders. Further, assessment of the impact of students' use of tutoring, the Testing Center, and/or the Counseling Center on retention and academic performance could provide data to encourage more students to use the services or to improve the programs. Similarly, the library might investigate ways to help students distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information, since they score a 6.12/9 (lower than other CCs) on this item in the LibQual survey.
- 6r2 O An action plan to address comparatively low student satisfaction with selected service areas might focus the College community on ways to

address these issues. Areas of focus might be overall services (58 percent); explanation of available data (55 percent); accessibility of the people handling requests—which was seen as critical (53 percent); responsiveness to customer needs (52 percent); and the accuracy of the Controllers Office. Similarly, an action plan to examine those areas below national norms on the ACT could be beneficial. These included Student Government, Opportunities for Student Employment, Concern for Students as Individuals, Opportunities for Involvement in Campus Activities, Attitudes of College Non-Teaching Staff, and Racial Harmony.

- 6r3 O Concern for you as an individual” had the greatest gap between LCCC and the national mean on the ACT survey. Assessment of the relationship between this and the decrease in PACE (see Category 4) scores for the student focus item among the faculty and Professional/Technical groups could benefit processes for interacting with students. Addressing this area now could help the College as it meets the challenge of continued growth at the targeted pace.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 01c An Operations Council, comprising the President, Vice President, and the Presidents of Student Senate, Faculty Senate, and Staff Council, convenes weekly to address significant operational activities, issues, and results.
- 01e LCCC has completed three strategic planning processes since 1989 and involved the community in its planning.
- 06a LCCC continuously improves its facilities, equipment, and technology through three distinct master plans.
- 07b LCCC benchmarks its human resources processes and results, using 98 organizations in the Employers Resource Council NorthCoast 99 process as its comparison group. Information from OBOR, HEI, and other national and local sources is used to compare progress in other areas.
- 08c LCCC uses multiple indicators, with student recruitment and retention as key indicators, to track the quality of services and programs. Process improvement is driven by Lean/Six Sigma principles and processes, while information from the Voices and Choices project, a collaborative effort to transform the regional economy, provides a foundation for identifying new opportunities.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1	S	LCCC has developed processes and instruments to organize and track student assessment results, including the CAR, the academic cluster review process, and the Design Team Report (CARD). Information is managed through a centralized CMDS/Jenzabar system.
7P1	OO	LCCC uses demographic and programmatic data from its MIS, CAR, and CARD processes to manage and use information to support student learning. The portfolio does not address how information is selected or used to support other institutional objectives. Identifying systematic methods for selecting relevant information and data would enhance the efficiency of data gathering and analysis.
7P2	S	The College determines data needs through a well-structured Technology Master Plan. IS&S regularly conducts a comprehensive SWOT analysis,

- including employee Engagement Sessions to learn about individual and department needs, literature review, and identification of best practices, to provide revised input into the Technology Master Plan.
- 7P3 S LCCC adjusts the use of comparative data depending on the issues being addressed, availability of data, reliability and validity of data, and the types of organizations employed for comparison. Sources of data include the OBOR report, which compares data across 38 state institutions, and surveys, including NorthCoast 99, PACE/Climate, CCSSE, HSSE, ACT, LibQual, Strategic Horizon, Bookstore, and the Ohio Award for Excellence.
- 7P4 S Data and information, including timelines, are collected regularly on identified indicators of effectiveness. Key areas that must be managed effectively for success and associated measures are analyzed through the IEP Office and reviewed at the leadership level. The ALT and DBT determine which indicators will be the focus of efforts over the coming months.
- 7P4 O A plan for continuous monitoring and analysis of all key indicators, beyond the monitoring of two or three key indicators each year, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of institutional effectiveness. In addition, the College community would be better able to act on results if they were more widely shared.
- 7P5 OO It is unclear how LCCC measures results and ensures that department and unit analysis of information aligns with institutional goals for student learning. The College may wish to consider having IS&S use unit-level analysis to ensure mission-driven improvements at the unit level.
- 7P6 S The Technology Master Plan, which includes a three-year cycle of upgrades, provides a basis for ensuring the effectiveness of the College's information systems and related processes.
- 7P7 O The response to this question appears to focus on use of data systems, not on measures of process effectiveness. Developing process measurement methods would support College efforts to measure effectiveness.

06a LCCC continuously improves its facilities, equipment, and technology through three distinct master plans.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8p1	SS	The strategic planning process is well defined and time-tested, involves students and other identified stakeholders, and includes long-range visioning; program reviews; operations system reviews; and annual planning processes by the IPC and EPC. Phases of the strategic visioning process include: Listening and Learning (identifying stakeholder needs through extensive external and internal feedback); Building (completed by a 70-member council); Sharing (internal communication of the Vision Council's work); and Acting on the Vision (strategy development and implementation).
8p2	O	LCCC's determination of short- and long-term strategies appears to be driven by unit-level budget requests. While budget and vision are inextricably connected, LCCC would benefit from setting budgetary priorities that are driven by strategic visioning, rather than setting visioning priorities that are driven/limited by budget.
8p2	S	The defined annual budget planning process integrates and aligns the facilities, enrollment, and technology planning processes. Significant departmental involvement complements the strategic visioning process.
8p3	S	Action plans are developed during the strategic visioning process and leaders are assigned to each initiative. Results are monitored regularly and communicated by the IPC and Strategic Visioning Project Coordinator through an annual vision scorecard report, during Convocation, at President's Forums, and on the LCCC NOW cable TV show, which is available to many households in the region.
8p4	S	The annual budget planning process ensures initial coordination between the College's planning processes and its overall institutional strategies and action plans.

- 8P5 O Each strategic initiative team determines its own milestones and measures. Unless measures are reviewed and approved at the organizational level, results will not be clear or meaningful and the College may miss opportunities for improvement.
- 8p6 S The College addresses resource needs through an integrated and comprehensive annual budget process and several annual planning processes (facilities, equipment, technology), along with an annual process for prioritizing strategic vision initiatives.
- 8p7 S Human resources needs and staffing patterns are addressed during the planning phase for each strategic initiative.
- 8p8/8r1 O The percentage of strategic visioning initiatives completed by 2013 is the only indicator used to determine the effectiveness of the planning system. The College may wish to consider collecting more extensive data on the effectiveness with which it is meeting its objectives. A more comprehensive approach would help the College gauge whether the system is working successfully and to better target and address improvement needs.
- 8r2 O Developing short-term projections of performance for strategies and action plans could assist the College in detecting problem areas. Additionally, a more comprehensive plan to analyze information at the institutional level (beyond the monitoring of two or three key indicators) would provide LCCC with a more thorough, reliable indication of institutional success.
- 8r3 O Data comparing LCCC's performance and projections for strategies and action plans with those of other higher education institutions and, if appropriate, organizations outside the education community could serve as a "reality check" and provide valuable input into future long- and short-term planning processes.
- 8r4 S Involvement of over 600 external stakeholders and students in the Vision 21 process and the results of the NorthCoast 99 and Ohio Award for Excellence processes provide evidence of the effectiveness of the system for planning continuous improvement.

- 8r4 OO Specific descriptions of the criteria used to measure results for and compile relevant data related to the NorthCoast 99 and Ohio Award for Excellence processes could assist LCCC in determining the extent to which its systems for planning continuous improvement are effective.

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 Lorain County Community 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

- 01b LCCC's culture values community partnerships and collaboration, mission and data-driven planning processes based on community needs, a flat organizational structure that responds quickly to identified needs, professional development, and continuous assessment and improvement.
- 01d LCCC seeks to play a major role in economic and workforce development in Lorain County, a part of its mission that may become increasingly important in a region that recently lost 7,500 jobs. For example, the college is part of the Great Lakes Innovation and Development Enterprise, a public/private partnership intended to catalyze development and expansion of area businesses.
- 02a Lorain County residents have the highest number of associate degrees in the state, but the lowest number of bachelor's and master's degrees. The University Partnership (UP) was created to provide county residents with access to bachelor's and graduate degrees; it offers more than 30 bachelor's and higher degree programs delivered by nine universities to over 2,500 students.

02d Under the leadership of the Office of Corporate and Community Outreach Services (CCOS), LCCC provides an array of non-credit public offerings, customized credit and non-credit education offerings, corporate retainer contracts, consultative services, and economic development support services to business, industry and the community.

04a The College seeks and values partnerships that support its mission, vision, and values. For example, key partners include colleges and universities participating in the UP program and the county's 14 school districts.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9p1	S	Successful collaborative relationships with local schools, with business and community-support services, and with eight state universities and one private college (through the UP) are outcomes of LCCC's well-developed process for building and maintaining collaborative relationships. This process involves PSI, which creates and builds relationships through education, training, and facilitation of group and community processes, and JCPR, which provides research, and includes regular meetings with key groups to ensure systematic feedback.
9p2	S	LCCC ensures that the needs of its partners are met by soliciting and receiving feedback from the District Board of Trustees, community engagement sessions, discussions with key partners, and academic program advisory board members, as well as by seeking extensive stakeholder input during the strategic visioning process.
9p3	SS	LCCC creates and builds relationships within the institution through the use of cross-functional committees and councils that include staff, Professional/Technical employees, faculty, administrative employees, and, when appropriate, representatives from the Student Senate.
9p4	S	Several data sources are used to measure collaborative relationships. These include student mobility, high school graduates attending LCCC, UP programs and enrollments, levy support from the community, the Ohio Award for Excellence Feedback Report, and HLC and specialized accreditation results.

- 9r1 S Results indicate that LCCC has an impact on community socioeconomic development and on educational attainment (through the University Partnership). Recognition from The Ohio Award for Excellence in 2001 attests to the value of LCCC's community partnerships and collaborations.
- 9r1 O Results indicate that the UP partnership is effective; however, data relating to other collaborative partnerships are not provided. Analysis of the results of other key collaborative relationships would assist the College in effectively nurturing and enhancing these partnerships.
- 9r2 O The development of comparative data could assist in highlighting the accomplishments of LCCC in building collaborative relationships.