Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500 | Chicago, IL 60604-1411
312-263-0456 | 800-621-7440 | Fax: 312-263-7462 | ncahlc.org

February 21, 2014

John T. Marrin
President
Lamar Community College
2401 S. Main
Lamar, CO 81052

Dear President Marrin:

Enclosed is a copy of Lamar Community College's *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. Your Systems Appraisal Team provided extensive detail in the full report by identifying nine distinct groups of what they view as your institution's *strengths* and *opportunities for improvement*, one group for each of the nine AQIP Categories. We are also emailing your institution's Accreditation Liaison a copy of this report.

To receive maximum benefit from your Systems Appraisal, you and your colleagues should plan to invest substantial time in discussing it, considering the team's observations and advice, and identifying which actions will best advance your institution.

We ask that you formally acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Your response will become part of your institution's permanent HLC file. Please email your response to AQIP@hlcommission.org.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Green
AQIP Process Administrator

Systems Appraisal Feedback Report

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 21, 2014

for

The Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

Contents

Elements Of Lamar Community College's Feedback Report

Welcome to the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. This report provides AQIP's official response to an institution's *Systems Portfolio* by a team of peer reviewers (the Systems Appraisal Team). After the team independently reviews the institution's portfolio, it reaches consensus on essential elements of the institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by AQIP Category, and any significant issues related to accreditation. These are then presented in three sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*: "Strategic Challenges Analysis," "AQIP Category Feedback," and "Accreditation Issues Analysis." These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating institutional performance, surfacing critical issues or accreditation concerns, and assessing institutional performance. Ahead of these three areas, the team provides a "Reflective Introduction" followed closely by an "Executive Summary." The appraisal concludes with commentary on the overall quality of the report and advice on using the report. Each of these areas is overviewed below.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team has only the institution's *Systems Portfolio* to guide its analysis of the institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the team's report may omit important strengths, particularly if discussion or documentation of these areas in the *Systems Portfolio* were presented minimally. Similarly, the team may point out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving widespread institutional attention. Indeed, it is possible that some areas recommended for potential improvement have since become strengths rather than opportunities through the institution's ongoing efforts. Recall that the overarching goal of the Systems Appraisal Team is to provide an institution with the best possible advice for ongoing improvement.

The various sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* can be described as follows:

> **Reflective Introduction & Executive Summary**: In this first section of the *System's Appraisal Feedback Report*, the team provides a summative statement that reflects its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served (Reflective Introduction), and also the team's overall judgment regarding the institution's current performance in relation to the nine AQIP Categories (Executive Summary). In the Executive Summary, the team considers such factors as: 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 each AQIP

Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic Challenges Analysis: Strategic challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues (discussed below) through careful analysis of the Organizational Overview included in the institution's Systems Portfolio and through the team's own feedback provided for each AQIP Category. These collected findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

AQIP Category Feedback: The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* addresses each AQIP Category by identifying and coding 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. Through comments, which are keyed to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by AQIP Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is often considered the heart of the *Feedback Report*.

Accreditation Issues Analysis: Accreditation issues are areas where an institution may have not yet provided sufficient evidence that it meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. It is also possible that the evidence provided suggests to the team that the institution may have difficulties, whether at present or in the future, in satisfying the *Criteria*. As with strategic challenges, teams formulate judgments related to accreditation issues through close analysis of the entire Systems Portfolio, with particular attention given to the evidence that the institution provides for satisfying the various core components of the *Criteria*. For purposes of consistency, AQIP instructs appraisal teams to identify any accreditation issue as a strategic challenge as well.

Quality of Report & Its Use: As with any institutional report, the *Systems Portfolio* should work to enhance the integrity and credibility of the institution by celebrating successes while also stating honestly those opportunities for improvement. The *Systems Portfolio* should therefore be transformational, and it should provide external peer reviewers insight as to how such transformation may occur through processes of continuous improvement. The AQIP Categories and the Criteria for Accreditation serve as the overarching measures for the institution's current state, as well as its proposed future state. As such, it is imperative

that the *Portfolio* be fully developed, that it adhere to the prescribed format, and that it be thoroughly vetted for clarity and correctness. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution following this review, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Reflective Introduction and Executive Summary For Lamar Community College

The following consensus statement is from the System Appraisal Team's review of the institution's *Systems Portfolio Overview* and its introductions to the nine AQIP Categories. The purpose of this reflective introduction is to highlight the team's broad understanding of the institution, its mission, and the constituents that it serves.

Lamar Community College (LCC) located in Lamar, Colorado is a relatively small coeducational, comprehensive, two-year post-secondary institution serving the residents of a four-county area in the southeastern portion of the State. LCC has a service area of over 7,800 square miles. As a member of the Colorado Community College System, the College is governed by the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education whose members are appointed by the Governor. The College has a local advisory council to help stay connected to the surrounding region and LCC's Foundation Board serves as the fund-raising branch of the institution.

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

Category One

- LCC has made substantial progress since its last portfolio in formalizing processes and systems for *Helping Students Learn*. Most data presented in this Portfolio appear to reflect a starting point for decision-making and the development of benchmarks and trend lines. It is evident that the college's culture and infrastructure currently support continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement, and attention to student and stakeholder needs. While LCC recognizes its deficiency in benchmarking practices, it has made strides in identifying appropriate data for comparison with other higher education institutions, including NCCBP results, Transfer and Remedial Course Completion Data from CCCS, IDEA Class Quality data, and feedback from the CCSSE. These data provide LCC with the opportunity to analyze results in the context of

institutional goals and to make programming and budget decisions as well as set targets for improvement. Another opportunity is to expand beyond the cited measures (which are primarily indirect metrics) by pursuing more direct measures of benchmarking.

Category Two

- LCC is in the beginning stages of developing formalized processes and systems for two of its three Other Distinctive Objectives. The Athletic Department has its own department and employee structure along with its long history of serving internal and external stakeholders. The other objectives, economic development and promoting a culture of enrichment, tend to be embedded in other departments which can dilute employee focus and strain departmental budgets. LCC may be able to make improvements and begin formalizing processes for accomplishing these objectives through studying best practices from other colleges or organizations. Since these non-instructional objectives significantly impact the social, cultural and fiscal fabric of the College's service area, LCC may wish to develop more systematic processes with viable metrics for analysis and decision-making in order to further enhance the College's role in its community. Additionally, the College has opportunities in all three areas for developing both direct and indirect assessment measures and establishing comparisons and meaningful targets for improvement.

Category Three

- While LCC has developed methods for identifying student and stakeholder needs, the College is still in the early stages of developing and implementing formalized and comprehensive processes and systems for *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs*. The college culture appears to be service-oriented and supports improvements. LCC's small size may enhance an intuitive understanding of students' needs, which promotes one-on-one interaction with students. Currently missing may be an infrastructure which frames institutionalized processes and promotes effectiveness, efficiency and data-based decision-making for all stakeholders, both internal and external.

- The College has begun to use third-party measurements to provide information about student needs and to benchmark success against national measures. The long-term, comprehensive collection of data that is assessed, discussed college-wide, and used to improve current processes and systems is one of the most reliable methods to promote

a culture of continuous improvement as well as teaching and learning. As it continues to mature, LCC may wish to consider building formal and comprehensive processes for understanding the needs of both external and internal stakeholders.

Category Four

- LCC has made significant progress in *Valuing People* over the last several years. The institution should be proud and commended for using information from the last AQIP Feedback Report to make many identified changes and for using Action Projects in such a collaborative, inclusive and highly effective manner. The College now has the opportunity to further expand its learning, growth and development to implement formal processes and systems that will support its culture of valuing continuous improvement and *Valuing People*. As an institution, LCC has worked to become more intentional in planning for growing employees' value to the institution.

- LCC has multiple processes and events for new employees, but it is not clear from the evidence provided if measures of effectiveness are being captured. Although the Portfolio states that cross-training occurs, it is not clear how LCC creates and monitors the cross-training system. Also, it is unclear whether a succession plan exists for key leadership positions other than the president. Such planning may aid institutional progress and continuity during such transitions.

Category Five

- The College is beginning to mature in the development of strategic planning, formal processes and systems, and the use of data in decision-making. LCC's use of data focuses on two institutional goals: 1). strategic growth on a solid foundation, and 2). integrated marketing and enrollment management. Through the efforts of college leadership and the CCCS, LCC has achieved significant progress with its *Leading and Communicating* processes and developed a process for creating employee-driven plans linked to the strategic plan.

- LCC is also developing processes for the collection and analysis of short- and long-term data performance results. The College has an opportunity to develop multiple measures for comparative and longitudinal data. As performance results mature, significant benefits in decision-making and in the strategic and operational planning processes may result and lead to a more systematic and integrated model. These data-based processes for decision-making may provide a foundation for the use of other data

sources such as benchmark data and national surveys, that the College has begun to collect. This, in turn, can enhance the institution's ability to identify trends, set baselines, develop targets, and determine if improvements worked as planned. Such data analysis helps promote and provide further evidence of a culture of continuous improvement and effectiveness.

Category Six

- LCC has not yet fully reached alignment in developing formalized processes and systems in all departments involved in *Supporting Institutional Operations*. The College identified the departments that have reached or moved toward alignment, while indicating those departments that are still working toward this goal. Most areas within the institution's support services appear to depend on indirect measures to assess the effectiveness of their processes and have not implemented the use of existing data to help with measuring stakeholder satisfaction and the long-term impact on student learning, retention and success. The institution could clarify if data from the CCCS Climate Survey are longitudinal in nature and used to establish trend-lines and benchmarks for more extensive comparison of performance results. LCC may also wish to build upon successes from departments that have more fully aligned their systems and processes to provide a model to help other departments with their continuous process improvement efforts.

Category Seven

- While some processes and systems are not yet formalized or institutionalized, the College is able to provide evidence of a culture committed to continuous improvement. LCC has invested heavily in improving its *Measuring Effectiveness* processes. It has hired a Vice-President for Administrative Services and Institutional Effectiveness, developed a partnership with a more experienced college to help with data mining and establishing best practices, and improved its information technology and data infrastructure. These investments position the College to move forward in identifying metrics for evaluating processes for measuring its institutional effectiveness and analyzing resulting data. The College has an opportunity to examine these needs in its future strategic and operational planning efforts in order to discuss options and prioritize needs and goals.

Category Eight

- LCC provides evidence of multiple improvements throughout the organization in *Planning Continuous Improvement* with strong stakeholder participation in planning processes and a culture of inclusiveness. Strategic planning progressed since the last Systems Portfolio. Adding sustainable measures that are then analyzed could help LCC more effectively use its limited resources. The institution has a key opportunity to become more systematic in its processes. Including examples of institutional and department plans, objectives, measures, and performance targets can enhance the Systems Portfolio, provide further evidence of this linkage and comprehensiveness of LCC's planning processes, and provide differentiation between alignment and integration.

Category Nine

- One of LCC's strongest attributes is appreciating the long-time relationships cultivated within the community, region and state. The College's mission, vision and location within a rural, isolated area influences its culture and infrastructure in selecting specific processes to improve and setting targets for improved performance results in *Building Collaborative Relationships.* The relatively small size of LCC and its service area foster an environment of informal communication and relationship-building with internal as well as external stakeholders. These efforts are guided by state mandates, strengthened by the institution's mission and values, and founded upon mutual benefit for both partners. Within the context of continuous process improvement, the College may benefit from more formally establishing a systematic model for partnership-building to enhance evaluative feedback and provide process consistency during periods of internal and external personnel changes. In particular, developing this system with centralized oversight and strong criteria that aid prioritization may prove to be highly effective for future planning and resource management. Measuring its relationships using the elements it identifies (enhanced services, additional revenue, and professional development) may further inform the extent to which the institution is achieving stated objectives.

Note: Strategic challenges and accreditation issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

Strategic Challenges For Lamar Community College

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the Systems Appraisal Team attempted to identify the broader issues that would seem to present the greatest challenges and opportunities for the institution in the coming years. These areas are ones that the institution should address as it seeks to become the institution it wants to be. From these the institution may discover its immediate priorities, as well as strategies for long-term performance improvement. These items may also serve as the basis for future activities and projects that satisfy other AQIP requirements. The team also considered whether any of these challenges put the institution at risk of not meeting the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. That portion of the team's work is presented later in this report.

Knowing that **Lamar Community College** will discuss these strategic challenges, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified the following:

- **Data and Data Use:** LCC has improved data collection since its last Portfolio as evidenced by results provided in several categories. However, the College could clarify key performance indicators, measures of effectiveness, how it establishes improvement targets during decision-making, provide an analysis of its results in the context of the institution's goals and expectations, and present data so that it more consistently shows trending and makes use of segmenting. Such analysis might not only provide the College with actionable information but also help the College set targets. Segmenting data by groups or by participation/non-participation in persistence/success initiatives might provide insight into how efforts are working and for which populations they are effective. Lamar has collected data which presents the College with opportunities, and CCCS data seems to offer a breadth of possibilities for comparison with peer Colorado institutions. Combined with the President's accountability measures and external national surveys, the data might help Lamar Community College chart its quality journey.

- The College notes that it has initiated efforts to improve the institution's dashboard in partnership with Front Range Community College (FRCC). Although it appears the

College relies upon external agencies and governing boards to determine data reporting needs, it is unclear whether LCC employs its own criteria for identifying data and information needs. The College may benefit by identifying and prioritizing data needs specific to its strategic plan and measures for its institutional effectiveness. The wealth of data available for analysis could enable LCC to conduct comparative analysis and establish improvement targets for multiple processes.

- **Assessment of Learning Outcomes:** LCC has a faculty-driven process for assessing Institutional Learning Objectives; however, the College has an opportunity to refine this process so that evaluation is more consistent across instructors and across disciplines. A formalized process could enable faculty to identify which competency areas need improvement and could help faculty determine if they have been successful in improving student learning. Working on validating data gives the College the opportunity to initiate longitudinal studies to track changes in results. LCC recognizes that its processes and performance results for specific academic program learning objectives are not fully articulated and therefore not measureable. To achieve a comprehensive student learning outcomes assessment process, the College is challenged to delineate learning outcomes for individual transfer and CTE programs, identify multiple direct and indirect measures, collect assessment data, and craft benchmarks and targets for improvement at the program level. Expanding the existing process by focusing on direct measures for each program could enhance faculty insight related to student learning specific to individual program outcomes. Having specific learning objectives often helps programs scaffold their curriculum and assure identification of when and how outcomes are included in coursework. Developing formalized processes and systems to continually track, assess and trend achievement results may provide valuable data and information for continual program and institutional improvement.

- **Involvement of Student and External Stakeholders:** It is unclear whether LCC uses systematic and formal processes to determine the needs, interests, expectations, requirements, and abilities of its various student segments and groups (e.g., traditional, online, full-time, part-time, first-generation, underserved) or its external stakeholders. The College does not identify key measures that analyze current and changing needs of these student segments and external constituents, and it is unclear whether these groups are consistently consulted or their satisfaction with services is measured.

- **Support Services:** The College is in the early stages of tracking its performance results for all learning support processes and provides mainly service usage data results. Opportunities exist to identify the objectives of learning support processes and measures which indicate that these processes are meeting the stated objectives and to more specifically align learning support processes with academic activities. Developing existing assessment processes to include longitudinal student satisfaction, comparisons of student success, and other measures can indicate that services are meeting stated goals. Additionally, there is no clear indication that the College has identified ways to identify students' and other stakeholders' needs related to the Business Office, Financial Aid, Marketing, Technology, or Physical Plant and Facilities. Finally, there is an opportunity to review existing data and develop tools for identifying needs. Such first steps might help these areas develop systematic processes for measuring results and focus their process improvement efforts.

- **Developing, Documenting and Communicating College-wide Processes:** LCC communicates its support processes to encourage knowledge sharing, innovation and empowerment through the President's Council minutes as well as the internal server and/or LCC Portal where operational processes are published. It is not evident how individual department processes are documented or shared. As a small institution, LCC may benefit by documenting and communicating departmental processes to enhance cross-training as well as limit the extent to which key functions face down time. Providing greater detail by developing and incorporating process maps in future portfolios could also provide additional evidence that the College utilizes systematic processes with evaluative feedback loops. In addition, the College could clearly describe alignment between processes within each Category.

- Although LCC has adopted a strategic planning model that engages all departments in strategic (operational) planning during the budget cycle, the use of this model has not yet resulted in all areas formalizing consistent processes. The College might enhance its work by ensuring that all departments have defined processes consistently and transparently across the institution instead of in some organizational units. LCC may also benefit by incorporating more risk assessment in planning processes by evaluating the probability or likelihood that an event will occur, the outcomes or consequences, and

appropriate controls for risks. Risk assessment planning can be integrated into all functional/service areas.

AQIP Category Feedback

In the following section, the Systems Appraisal Team delineates institutional strengths along with opportunities for improvement within the nine AQIP Categories. As explained above, the symbols used in this section are **SS** for outstanding strength, **S** for strength, **O** for opportunity for improvement, and **OO** for outstanding opportunity for improvement. The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the team members and deserves the institution's 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. This category identifies the shared purpose of all higher education institutions and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. It focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet it also addresses how the entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines the 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 1.

LCC strives to build a solid educational foundation to enhance students' academic success as well as future life experiences. Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment helps the College align processes to ensure that students receive support in learning. The College has focused efforts to promote, improve and support the students' educational growth and goals through every stage of their academic journey. Further, it tracks progress and post-graduation success to help determine if what is being learned is relevant and valuable.

> **1P1, S.** LCC abides by policies established for the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), including course offerings and objectives. The College also uses competencies of Commonly Described Courses and Guaranteed Transfer coursework designed by

statewide discipline groups. In addition, a LCC task force of faculty and administrators designed its own Institutional Learning Outcomes in the 1990s, then reviewed and updated them in 2009. These outcomes apply to all awards at LCC, and every student who attends LCC works to attain these outcomes. The faculty also developed a Statement of Educational Intent. Learning outcomes assessment is managed by a standing faculty committee. These combined processes appear to provide an expanded, global approach for determining and developing common or shared objectives for learning and development. This multi-layered outcomes environment ensures that, when students are successful, "their lives have been expanded in an array of disciplines."

1P2, S. Existing program learning objectives are determined through a combination of CCCS requirements and institutional processes. Internal learning objectives are developed by faculty and administrators. During the operations planning process, learning objectives are presented as part of the department's programmatic goals. All learning objectives are written to be measurable for ongoing assessment. Program faculty and advisory committees review specific learning outcomes for currency and relevance. The Academic Review Committee (ARC) has a robust process for new programs that involves a cross-functional program development team. Proposed programs must have outcomes and an assessment process. After presentation to the ARC, new programs are accepted, denied or returned for corrections. Broad participation in these processes helps ensure that outcomes reflect campus and business/industry needs.

1P3, S. LCC has a six-step comprehensive process for designing new programs and courses that includes active participation, input and approval from a cross-functional Advisory Board, ARC, appropriate dean, VP of Academic Services, Executive Planning Team (EPT), and CCCS governing bodies. These governing bodies include the State Faculty Curriculum Committee, State Discipline Chairs, and State Vice-Presidents. The Advisory Board, and EPT in particular, collect input and data from local business and community leaders regarding training and education needs, industry trends, program outcomes, existing curriculum, support of strategic and overall CCCS goals and performance measures, and available budgetary resources. Consultation with all stakeholders ensures that programming will meet community needs as well as CCCS goals and aligns with LCC's strategic directions.

1P4, S. The College designs responsive academic programming that balances and

integrates learning goals, students' career needs, and realities of the employment market using a variety of internal and external collaborative processes that provide timely and program-relevant feedback. Examples include: CTE three- and five-year systematic program reviews; articulation agreements with transfer institutions; program advisory committee input; VTE-135 program data; dual credit/concurrent enrollment programs; developmental education programming; and LCC's partnership with Microsoft Corp. Such extensive collaboration can positively inform the College's decision-making and build relevant academic programming that provides students with enriched opportunities as well as strong academic and student support.

1P5, S. LCC abides by the requirements of Colorado state law that stipulate basic skill proficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics. New degree-seeking students must complete mandatory assessment and academic remediation as suggested by their scores on Accuplacer® or the ACT/SAT. Additionally, the College has general and program specific policies pertaining to prerequisites. Faculty and administration determine course or program prerequisites framed by best practices, content experts or program accreditation requirements.

1P6, S. LCC uses an array of strategies to communicate with students about program preparation and learning objectives including: the catalog, college and CCCS websites, and individual interaction with faculty and staff. Admissions, academic and support services, and faculty provide assistance during enrollment and new student orientation. Career exploration, library resource presentations, financial aid communication, seminars, and a Default Prevention Team (DPT) augment informational processes. Programs with additional admissions requirements have developed more intense processes for communicating with students and assessing readiness for admission. The implementation of a degree audit reporting system that integrates placement results, transcripts, GPA, course information, and degree requirements for more effective advising and the development of a new student orientation process have enhanced the College's ability to reach and engage with students.

1P7, S. The College employs advising processes that are proactive, ongoing and cross-functional. LCC helps students select programs of study that match needs, interests and abilities beginning with the application process, and advisors are assigned to students according to their program of study. Student Services continues developing relationships through guidance and counseling as well as referencing other student support service

programs as appropriate. The student advising flowchart demonstrates a systematic pathway to guide faculty, staff and students in appropriate course and program placement, while the Advising and Tracking Worksheet provides a resource that communicates academic progress to students. These tools help understand LCC's processes and strategies that encourage students to seek meaningful guidance in selecting a career pathway.

1P8, S. The enrollment criteria/threshold is established by state statute, so LCC employs a variety of programs to support the diverse needs of students who do not meet that threshold. Assistance with admissions and financial aid applications, support services, developmental education, a GED program, and similar life- and academic-skill counseling programs enhance the student's transition to college life and its academic expectations. Two courses designed to teach students key skills such as time management, note-taking and study methods aid students who are underprepared for college-level coursework. Additionally, the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), "designed for positive impact…for those who may face barriers to enrollment," serves as additional evidence of LCC's commitment to diversity.

1P9, O. LCC encourages faculty to employ a variety of teaching strategies to improve student learning. Although the College identifies various approaches to address auditory, visual and experiential learners, it does not mandate formal identification and action regarding learning styles. An integrated methodology for determining an effective method to assess and address differences in students' preferred learning styles can enhance student learning, retention and achievement. The College has an opportunity to use professional development and Conversation Days to provide faculty with ideas about how to determine ways that individual students learn best and how to customize and diversify instruction to meet the needs of individual learning styles within courses and programs. There is also an opportunity to formally assess student learning styles, perhaps during the orientation process, to better inform students regarding their own preferences. Doing so may equip students with additional self-awareness that enhances academic, professional and personal success.

1P10, S. LCC serves a diverse population of learners and built formal processes and systems to help address the special needs of student subgroups. LCC incorporates its philosophy regarding human diversity through its World Awareness Institutional Learning Outcome. This frames multiple programs and services to support efforts that address the

various needs of subgroups. Through programs such as TRIO, the Educational Opportunity Center, ASCENT, high school concurrent enrollment, dropout recovery program, Phi Theta Kappa, Adult Open House, and various course delivery systems for commuter students, the College provides strong support to students with disabilities, first-generation, and/or low income, as well as services and encouragement to area high school students.

1P11, S. LCC's mission, *enriching lives through learning*, frames its foundation for effective teaching and learning. The College defines, documents and communicates expectations for effective teaching and learning through key institutional documents and processes including the faculty handbook, new faculty orientation, adjunct faculty mentoring, faculty development workshops, faculty evaluations, course observations, and student course evaluations. The Faculty Senate provides a forum to dialogue teaching and learning expectations. LCC grounds its expectations for academic freedom in accordance with the "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," formulated by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Universities. In addition, the College abides by state policy regarding faculty workload.

1P12, S. LCC's P-3 model provides a three-year schedule framework that ensures that course requirements for various degree programs are offered routinely enabling students to complete course sequences. Data from enrollment patterns, course success rates, and other sources augment the scheduling process. LCC also employs a variety of course delivery modalities to meet the needs of various student subgroups. Collaborative relationships with University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (UC-CS) and online courses through Desire to Learn (D2L) also expand opportunities for students.

1P13, S. LCC ensures that its programs and courses are up-to-date with a combination of state-mandated monitoring, internal processes and data collection, and the participation of advisory boards that support effectiveness and communicate business and industry needs. Faculty expertise, advisory committee feedback, professional certification requirements, and statewide discipline group meetings provide input to update courses and programs. The CDHE and CCCS provide oversight for associate degree program requirements. Data sources such as VE-135 provide student success data for decision-making.

1P14, S. Although the College does not have the authority to change or discontinue

Transfer programs or courses, LCC's Career/Technical Education programs undergo five-year assessment cycles to evaluate viability and are also reviewed by program faculty and advisory boards. Additionally, LCC monitors key metrics such as enrollment to evaluate fiscal health. The College employs a systematic internal process for CTE course or program changes.

1P15, S. LCC uses multiple data inputs to determine and address the learning support needs of students. Library usage variables and internal survey data provide feedback enabling improvement. Participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) offers other insights for identifying students' needs and concerns. The Early Alert process and Course Signals are additional tools to strengthen student support efforts.

1P16, O. LCC recognizes that it does not follow a formal process to align co-curricular development with its academic curriculum. The College identified relationships between ILOs and co-curricular activities that might form the foundation for a pilot project to identify specific objectives aligned with ILOs and guide assessment and analysis. New campus opportunities, clubs, athletic offerings, or similar activities could articulate an alignment during the college approval process. Developing these processes may provide an enriched learning environment for students and other stakeholders and reinforce the concept of life-long learning as well as the idea that not all learning occurs in the classroom. Also, a formal process that links classroom and co-curricular activities might create service learning opportunities to aid students in identifying a career path through more exposure to their areas of career interest.

1P17, O. Grades, capstone courses, licensing exams, and internships combined with successful completion of degree plans are the primary methods that LCC uses to verify that students have met learning and development objectives. LCC has an opportunity to expand the assessment process in place for Institutional Learning Objectives to individual program assessment. This could further inform faculty and administration regarding student learning specific to stated objectives. Methods that are currently used can serve as key metrics in a more comprehensive assessment process where assignments/activities are aligned with objectives.

1P18, O. Although LCC has a faculty-driven process for assessing Institutional Learning Objectives, there does not appear to be systematic processes for assessing student learning outcomes for individual programs. Expanding the existing process to individual

programs by focusing on direct measures for each program could enhance faculty insight related to student learning specific to individual program outcomes, thereby allowing for more meaningful program improvement efforts.

1R1, S. LCC's Instructional and Learning Support Services Divisions collect a variety of direct and indirect measures to assess student learning and development. Direct measures include course examinations and ILO assessments. Processes are in place to systematically collect work from each student each semester. This work is analyzed to determine the likely success of students (early warning system) and the achievement of learning outcomes (assessment process). Indirect measures include course pass rates, retention rates, student course evaluations, and graduate follow-up data (implemented spring 2012).

1R2, O.   Although LCC provided tables representing aggregated results of three semesters' assessment samples, it is difficult to fully understand what these performance results mean. It is not clear what point in the student's program these data reflect. In addition, it is not clear if the same students are represented in the three semester samples. By clarifying these questions about data points, the College has the opportunity to develop a longitudinal study to track changes in results over time. A formalized process for collecting, tracking, trending, and benchmarking data could allow faculty to identify *which* areas need improvement and, when improvements are applied, *if* they are successful in improving student learning. More clearly-defined data might help the College articulate *how* faculty analyzes the data or *what* the process is for next steps after analysis is completed. Finally, LCC stated that the institution also collects indirect measures of student learning and development and identified them. Including sample results from indirect data could reflect a more comprehensive, systematic approach to complement ILO assessment. The institution might also discuss results in the context of institutional goals and develop trend-lines, benchmarks and improvement targets for both indirect and direct measures to assist with data analysis and decision-making.

1R3a, O. LCC recognizes that its processes and performance results for specific academic program learning objectives are not yet fully articulated, and therefore not measureable. To achieve this component of its comprehensive assessment process, the College is challenged to delineate learning outcomes for Transfer and CTE programs, identify multiple direct and indirect measures, collect assessment data, and develop benchmarks and targets for improvement at the program level. Having specific learning

objectives often helps programs scaffold their curriculum and ensure that they know when and how outcomes are included in coursework. Developing formalized processes and systems to continually track, assess and trend achievement of specific program learning objectives can provide valuable data and information for continual program improvement.

1R3b, OO. Data for Developmental Pass Rates provide a starting point for assessing success of students in developmental education. By articulating program goals and clarifying results in the context of institutional expectations, LCC can enhance data analysis and dialogue for decision-making. Although the developmental education model was implemented relatively recently, previous pass rate data could serve as a point of comparison to current results. Pass rate data presented suggests that there may be an outstanding opportunity for continued evaluation of courses as well as student placement. With diversity playing a key role with respect to institutional goals, actively seeking opportunities to enhance pass rates can help fulfill that goal. Also, since this is programming that has articulated data, it might serve as a best practice model for initiating assessment in other programs

1R4, O. A variety of direct and indirect measures are used to provide evidence that students attain the required knowledge and skills to be successful, especially VE 135 data for CTE graduates. It is unclear if LCC has a consistent and comprehensive process for tracking the success of graduates and transfer students other than for CTE programs. Developing a robust tracking and assessment process for LCC transfer students' success and progress in pursing their educational goals in comparison to those students who are native four-year students could provide valuable information about the College's AA, AS, and AGS programs.

1R5, O. Although students rate their satisfaction with LCC's Learning Support Services Tutoring Lab relatively high, it appears that the College is in the early stages of tracking performance results for all learning support processes and provides mainly service usage data. Opportunities exist to identify the objectives of learning support processes and measures which indicate that these processes are meeting stated objectives as well as to more specifically align learning support processes with academic activities. Further, developing existing assessment processes to include longitudinal student satisfaction data, comparisons of student success for those using the learning support services with those not using the services, and other measures can indicate that

services are meeting stated goals.

1R6, S.   Through the use of targeted Action Projects, the College is making significant progress in building formalized processes and systems to track, assess and benchmark the performance of its processes in *Helping Students Learn* compared with the results of other higher education institutions. Where results are available, the institution appears to be performing at or above the levels/rates of its comparison group (other community colleges in Colorado). Comparative performance results from the NCCBP project also demonstrate several areas of strength for LCC. Results for three years of comparative data reflect that the College ranks in the top 15% of survey participants in student completion and transfer, student performance at transfer institutions, and other factors.

1I1, SS. LCC proactively addressed many of the *Helping Students Learn* comments received from the 2009 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. LCC provided evidence of numerous recent improvements in *Helping Students Learn* and accomplished substantial progress in developing and implementing systematic and comprehensive processes and systems. A key improvement is the design and implementation of Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment. Other improvements impacting this category include improvement of the developmental education program and processes, data gathering, new student orientation, and the Academic Review Process. These improvements can provide long-term benefits to the College and serve as models for continuously improving other processes throughout the institution.

1I2, S. LCC provided substantive evidence that the current culture and infrastructure supports and assists the selection of specific processes to improve and to set targets for improved performance results in *Helping Student Learn*. A flat organizational structure, engagement by all employees in AQIP Action Projects and AQIP related functions, an engaged staff and faculty that are willing to be agile and pro-active, and a collaborative alliance with CCCS all contribute to the quality improvement culture. Action Projects appear to be highly collaborative and involve stakeholders (including students) in improvements throughout the institution.

AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*.* This category addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of its mission. Depending on the institution's character, it examines the 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 2.

LCC's Other Distinctive Objectives focus on athletics, economic development, and providing a culture of enrichment. This emphasis reflects its historic as well as ongoing commitment to the culture and character of its service area. Continuous improvement in this area is facilitated through the President's Council and includes metrics such as return-on-investment, attendance and community support, budget, and resources.

2P1, S. Due to the smaller size of LCC, the College incorporates the design and operation of key non-instructional processes within respective departments. Non-instructional objectives center on the LCC Foundation, Economic Development and Cultural Enrichment, and Athletics. The athletic programs appear to have more identifiable processes and goals serving internal student groups, while providing enrichment for on-campus life and community support; they are also well-established and externally regulated. During redesign of processes for the yearly budget cycle and department planning, the College began to align its non-instructional objectives to create a framework which will help the College understand its efforts in more formalized and less anecdotal ways.

2P2, S. The President's Council oversees and approves the College's *Other Distinctive Objectives*. Council membership includes both internal and external stakeholders. The entire campus also provides input into the selection of non-instructional objectives through the annual Communication Survey, which asks if current objectives are still viable and important to the College. Evidence that the campus voice is heard is clear from revisions made to create "the culture of enrichment" objective. Final determination of *Other Distinctive Objectives* is based upon financial resources and alignment with the mission and vision of the College.

2P3, S. LCC uses several traditional means of communication to inform stakeholders about expectations. Internally, this includes all-staff meetings, program advisory committees, and College advisory council meetings. Recordings of these meetings are available on the staff portal, and information is also disseminated by email and publications. Objectives are communicated to external stakeholders through the local media, relationships with stakeholders, and the College website. In addition, the

President meets regularly with local government and community groups, and the College is represented on the Lamar Chamber of Commerce.

2P4, O. Although the Portfolio mentions some items that are used to assess non-instructional processes, it does not address whether this is done systematically, what expectations/timelines are used, or how the appropriateness and value of objectives are generally reviewed. Further, since non-instructional objectives that were selected are externally centered, it may be more informative to include more than three external constituents in the analysis process.

2P5-6, S. LCC made changes and improvements in determining faculty and staff needs relative to *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives* and operations through revamping and expanding the budget creation cycle and then linking it to annual departmental operations planning. Since individual departments are assigned responsibility for both instructional and non-instructional objectives, LCC's planning model links the needs for faculty and staff to the departmental budget planning process. Personnel, fiscal, and other needs for non-instructional objectives are incorporated as a separate line item in budget requests and integrated within departmental operations. To inform the planning process, a Communications Survey is utilized to provide stakeholder feedback, and individual departments now have improved access to budgeting and operating costs. Employee suggestions resulted in revision or discontinuation of activities within objectives as well as revisions to the objectives themselves as evidenced by changes to the "culture of enrichment" objective.

2R1, O. Although LCC has formalized measures for accomplishing Athletic Program's objectives that are collected and analyzed regularly, the College has the opportunity to develop formalized processes for its other objectives with measures that can be regularly tracked, collected, benchmarked, and analyzed. The economic impact analysis conducted by CCCS is a good starting point for the economic development objective, and an adaptation of the measurement/tracking model used for the Athletic Program might be a consideration for the objective for culture of enrichment. Developing a measurement plan which uses direct and indirect measures might help the College make decisions about various activities under the culture of enrichment umbrella.

2R2a, O. Although LCC provides a sample of variables reported for NJCAA Eligibility, no results (data) are provided. With LCC's emphasis on athletics as its major non-instructional objective and the series of measures noted in 2R1, including recent year-to-

year results with trend-lines, benchmarks, and improvement targets could demonstrate that the College applies data-based decision-making for continuous improvement in this category.

2R2b, O. Figure 2.2 presents data reflecting the 2009-2010 economic contributions of LCC to its service area. Incorporating comparable data for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 could serve as a framework for developing trend-lines and benchmarks. The College has not provided performance objectives for this facet of the institution, so analysis of such data in the context of objectives for economic development is difficult. A focused effort to set concrete goals could assist LCC in its continuous improvement efforts.

2R3, O. LCC indicates that it does not currently have systematic and formalized processes for benchmarking *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*, and the College acknowledges that it needs to develop systematic and formalized processes for benchmarking objectives in this category. The College has an opportunity to develop formalized processes and systems that will help LCC set targets for its distinctive objectives and create improvement plans.

2R4, O. LCC offers a broad range of anecdotal and attendance/participation evidence that seems to indicate the importance of these distinctive initiatives to the college and the region. Developing direct measures that provide the institution with satisfaction, engagement, and return use/participation could give the institution new understanding of target audiences as well as potential improvements. LCC has an opportunity to more clearly articulate what data is collected, how data is analyzed, and how specific processes are improved as a result.

2I1, O. The College notes improvements in athletic offerings as well as promoting new CTE programming as part of its economic development efforts. The institution also acknowledges that it needs to more systematically identify and evaluate processes that impact *Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives*. For example, developing measures to provide evidence of improvement in each of the objectives represented by these activities could provide the College with results on which to build improvement plans. These efforts can further cement the College's role and value to its service area. While the College realizes that performance results need to be measured and assessed, more data is needed to inform the process. Due to budget restraints and the size of the organization, it may take creativity and long-term commitment to achieve this state of maturity in these areas.

2I2, S.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs. This category 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 3.

LCC has focused intentional efforts to increase its Understanding of Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs through internally developed tools to quantify its effectiveness and worked to be more intentional in using the research department of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), both to measure itself as well as compare itself with sister colleges. Additionally, in response to the 2009 Feedback Report, the institution has increased and systematized data collection and measurement of student and stakeholder needs. LCC is known for its personalized service and the individualized relationships that students can establish throughout the institution, and also strives to establish relationships with new stakeholders each year.

> **3P1, S.** LCC uses a variety of methods to identify the changing needs of students. Because LCC is a small institution, the College has an array of structures that allow the faculty and staff to assess student needs through direct contact with students. These include: Student Life, Advising, Disability Services, Tutoring, Career Coaching, and Program Exit Interviews. The College uses a variety of surveys and data including course evaluations, satisfaction surveys, graduation surveys, IPEDS data, withdrawal surveys, and the CCSSE. The President also established a number of goals related to attainment, student success, and diversity that are reported to CCCS; these goals emphasize the importance of understanding and meeting student needs. Increasing attainment, improving student success, and diversifying enrollment relate to retention, persistence, and educational achievement and reinforce the College's objectives.

> **3P2, S.** The College has a systematic process for developing and maintaining strong relationships with students. From the point of initial interest/contact, various strategies

promote and maintain ties with potential students including correspondence, phone calls, and campus visits. Upon application to LCC, a variety of mechanisms such as orientation and student ambassadors continue to foster links with new students. Besides this communication plan, there is a refined campus visit, a redesigned new student orientation, participation by trained student ambassadors, and a variety of get-acquainted activities. The College offers multiple avenues to maintain engagement with students during enrollment, employing a variety of activities such as student government, student organizations, the work-study program, athletics, advising, and residence life. Because LCC is a small school, students also have many opportunities for interaction with administration, staff and faculty.

3P3a, S. LCC works to involve individuals from local businesses and government offices on college and program advisory committees and AQIP action teams. Their voices help the College identify changing needs in the community. Minutes from meetings are recorded, and potential concerns are sent to the EPT for further action. Not only do community members come to campus, representatives from LCC attend local chamber of commerce and economic development meetings. There is also active participation in the community. Input received from stakeholders in each of these venues is taken to appropriate campus meetings for action. Needs are then evaluated and an implementation plan is developed. A follow-up meeting presents resulting data or needs to the relevant college department or committee for discussion and action in order to evaluate if needs of stakeholders were met.

3P3b, O. Although personnel are very involved with stakeholder organizations, it is not clear how key stakeholders are determined or if there is an established process to determine and act on stakeholder needs. LCC lists activities that involve external stakeholders in college and community activities and provides input concerning the changing needs of its service area. Stakeholder input is channeled to respective college groups for assessment and decision-making. However, most processes appear informal, and there is limited information related to how the College analyzes the changing needs of students or the specific steps used to select courses of action regarding these needs. LCC may benefit from a more systematic approach to external stakeholder feedback through community or area high school surveys. Such efforts can strengthen the role that the College plays in relationship-building.

3P4, S. LCC identifies diverse processes described in 3P3 to identify, build, and

maintain relationships and services with key stakeholders. The institution is a vital part of the community, and its employees and students serve in various capacities in community organizations. Information about these relationships is available on the college website and disseminated through local radio talk shows and press releases. Initiatives that involve area high school students promote academic as well as athletic activities, while community events involve outreach and marketing that link the service area and its various subgroups with the College.

3P5, S. CTE advisory committees provide input concerning the need for new programs and courses based upon changing business and industry trends. LCC's Strategic Planning process, which utilizes demographic analysis, national trends, and an integrated marketing plan, also frames decision-making to aid in targeting new student and stakeholder groups. The Strategic Marketing Plan evolved from the strategic decision to diversify student enrollment. Data-based decision-making initiated the on-line distance education program in partnership with CCCOnline.

3P6, O. Although the College outlines a systematic procedure to address four categories of student complaints, there is an opportunity to consider adding a process for external community or business groups who receive services or interact with the institution and its employees. Further, LCC acknowledges that it lacks a formal process to analyze metadata related to all grievances and grievance procedures. Presenting this analysis to a leadership group will allow for improvements and the identification of recurring problems.

3R1, S.

3R2, O. Results from the 2011 CCSSE survey, 2012 LCC Internal Student Satisfaction Survey, and IDEA Institutional Survey indicate that LCC is meeting the expectations of students in its academic courses as well as support services and facilities. However, the College has an opportunity to develop a system of longitudinal surveys to provide data and results that can be tracked, benchmarked and compared to the satisfaction results of other colleges. Analyzing these data longitudinally allows the institution to identify problem areas, make improvements, and then track the impact of those improvements. In short, LCC is collecting data, but does not state how data are being used to identify trends or improve processes.

3R3, O. LCC states that it has multiple strategies for building relationships with

students. However, results presented are limited to noting increases in applicants, participation in new student orientation, and attendance. LCC has an opportunity to develop direct measures of satisfaction and the effectiveness of processes. Such data might shed light on how processes are working, help the institution focus on areas that might need improvement, and celebrate processes that are successful. As these processes and systems mature, data and information will become available for analyses, tracking, benchmarking, prioritizing, and making improvements.

3R4a, O. Even though the number of employees responding to LCC's Climate Survey is limited due to the small size of the College, satisfaction ratings reflect that approximately 83% are satisfied/extremely satisfied with their employment situation. However, there are limitations to this analysis because the data do not appear to be consistently collected. A more routine system may allow the institution to analyze patterns and trends from employees and other stakeholders; more routinely collected data could also be used to compare and benchmark against other schools.

3R4b, O. While the College has presented data that demonstrates employee satisfaction, it has an opportunity to develop measures that allow external stakeholders opportunities to assess their level of satisfaction with how the College is meeting their needs. Additional data might help identify areas where LCC needs to develop new processes or exert more effort. It might also help the College understand which target groups are not satisfied.

3R5, O. LCC recognizes that it does not have a formal process for analyzing its performance for building relationships with key stakeholders. The College does have some data that might serve as a model for other departments. Applying strategies that are currently in silos consistently across all functions might be one way to use existing skills and strategies to address this opportunity.

3R6, O. Comparative data from IPEDS reflect that LCC's graduation and retention rates of first-time students exceed the rates of its comparison group. Scores on the nationwide IDEA Database also reflect that LCC rates moderately higher than the overall IDEA course rankings. However, LCC provides limited, one-time results for the performance of its processes for *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs* compared with performance results of other higher education institutions. An opportunity exists to use available longitudinal data such as IPEDS and to expand or develop additional data and performance results in future cycles of assessment. These comparisons may aid in

identifying high performing institutions and best practices that would prove effective for LCC.

3I1, S. The Admissions and Recruiting departments employed quality improvement tools to identify gaps in building and maintaining relationships with students; as a result, the College revised and aligned its recruiting processes. The redesigned processes improved how LCC addresses various components of its overall outreach as well as student services communications and linkages with potential and current students. Such efforts can lead to improved retention and graduation goals. Other areas of improvement discussed include strategic marketing, the College Foundation's efforts with business and industry to align with the Colorado Career Clusters project, participating in CCSSE and NCCBP, and moving toward using IDEA course evaluations. These evidence a commitment to continually refine and improve systems.

3I2, S. LCC recognizes an opportunity to leverage its small size and reputation for strong personal service to identify its areas of highest quality by using more systematic processes and measuring their outcomes. The College's culture and structure position LCC to continue and improve collaboration with students and other stakeholders.

AQIP Category 4: Valuing People. This category explores the institution's commitment to the development of its employees since the efforts of all faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines the 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 4.

LCC initiated several improvements to Valuing People efforts including a restructured new employee orientation process that was designed to provide employees with the training needed to conduct the job duties and ensure that a systematic series of steps is followed for all employees. LCC used an Action Plan to develop a survey that will help determine professional development priorities as well as administering institutional communication surveys annually to provide feedback to improve human resources processes. Lamar Community College faculty appear to be highly satisfied with their jobs even with below average salaries compared to

benchmark sources.

4P1, S. LCC uses established, state-created guidelines as well as college-defined requirements to identify the skills and credentials required for faculty, staff and administrators. Human Resources collaborates with Academic Deans to ensure that full-time Career and Technical Education and Academic faculty meet HLC criteria, State of Colorado requirements, CCCS policies, and LCC criteria for credentialing in the searched positions. Adjunct faculty must meet the same criteria as full-time faculty, and requirements are printed in the faculty/staff handbook.

4P2, S. LCC has a thorough and clearly articulated hiring process. Guided by the job description, a selection committee, comprised of campus-wide representation, establishes criteria for selecting potential candidates to interview. Reference and background checks are completed, and a recommendation is given to the President. The President makes the final decision on any staff or faculty hired. This process is transparent, ensuring that the campus community understands the process and sees that, at every step, it follows policy and candidates are aware of expectations and college values.

4P3, S. LCC uses a wide array of traditional recruitment tools including the college website and CCCS as well as local and national publications. In addition, appropriate website and industry-specific publications are used for faculty and administrative positions. LCC offers a variety of non-compensatory benefits designed to retain employees.

4P4, S. LCC has an established orientation process for new employees. A calendar of activities for the first four weeks of employment provides a scheduled approach to full-time employee orientation. Adjunct faculty and all new hires receive an orientation and are required to sign off on policies and procedures. The new hire's supervisor facilitates the employee's pathway through the orientation process. Mission and values are published on the website and posted throughout campus.

4P5, S. The Strategic Growth Plan is the means by which LCC plans for changes in personnel. New program proposals must include information on staffing needs, and individual retirement and advancement possibilities are also tracked. Position responsibilities are impacted by the fact that most positions at LCC are filled by single individuals. In order to ensure that employee absences or open positions do not disrupt

services, the College cross-trains individuals so that they can perform other roles as necessary.

4P6, S. Each employee sets annual goals that help ensure job satisfaction and motivation. Since goals are developed in conjunction with the supervisor, productivity is enhanced. The President's Council serves as an oversight and communication link so that all processes are aligned with college goals and are understood and shared across the campus.

4P7, S. Ethical and moral practices of LCC's employees are governed and guided by the Colorado SBCCOE. Policies are published, accessible, and reviewed annually. The interview process for new employees incorporates questions designed to enable the interviewer to obtain a sense of the candidate's value system. Budgets are externally audited annually. Policies for scholarly and academic integrity for students and faculty are published in the catalog and student and faculty handbooks, respectively.

4P9, S. LCC appears to provide a robust array of professional development activities that are identified by the institution and individuals. Employees are also encouraged to participate in CCCS-sponsored opportunities. Employees are surveyed regularly to learn of new topics and to evaluate the effectiveness of training. The full loop lets the institution know what is working and what is lacking so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

4P10, S. Every full-time employee, including the President, has an annual review using a customized CCCS-based tool. The review includes setting goals for the next year that must tie to the mission and objectives of the institution. Faculty members also receive student evaluations and supervisor/peer feedback/observations. This multi-step evaluation process ensures that goals are aligned and employees are on track to achieve their stated goals.

4P11, S. The monetary compensation and benefit system is established by CCCS policy. LCC follows principles of high performance organizations in that it invests in knowledge and skill development training. The College annually recognizes an "employee of the year" from each of four categories of employees.

4P12, S. The Communication Survey has been used since 2004 and serves as the primary tool to assess employee motivational issues and other relevant concerns. Results are analyzed by college leadership, sent to the President's Council, and shared

with the entire campus. The restructuring of the President's Council is an example of institutional action taken as a result of this process.

4P13, O. Employee safety is ensured by a documented and publicized disaster plan. There are several ways in which employees' health is enhanced including a wellness center and annual health fair. It is unclear, however, how the items described in the Portfolio were created and what processes help identify what motivates or satisfies employees. Developing a system to identify these needs and then regularly assess efforts to meet those needs may promote increased stakeholder buy-in and satisfaction.

4R1, S.

4R2, O. Data reported are not easily analyzed as presented. The scale on the Communication Survey is not provided, and although the Portfolio states that most areas show a positive trend, the three years presented show a down/up pattern for most items. (This assumes that a higher number is better.) Also, one assumes the scale is 0-5, which would mean that scores reported are above average in almost every category. While the survey is useful, LCC might want to look more analytically at results for all of its surveys and use these data to improve processes, create targets for improvement, and better indicate how performance results given relate to *Valuing People*.

4R3-4, O. The information listed in this response references data from 1R2, 1R4 and 3R2 that provided data limited to either one-time examples or multi-year data from only CTE programs. The final reference is to the National Community College Benchmark Project in 3R1 that indicated tools utilized, not evidence of employee productivity and effectiveness. The College has the opportunity to expand its data collection and analyses to include longitudinal results that could provide trend data and ideally make improvements and comparisons easier to identify.

4I1, S. As a result of systematic data collection, several improvement activities have been initiated including a better orientation program, professional development survey, and improved communication process. One indicator of LCC's maturity is its ability to know where it can be more effective.

4I2, O. Although the College notes that its small size and culture enhance its human resource processes, the Portfolio describes what has been done, but not how it selects processes and sets targets for improved performance. Important next steps, as LCC continues its improvement journey, may be to establish a defined process for

performance indicators and target setting.

AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating. This category addresses how the institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide planning, decision-making, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction-setting, use of data, analysis of results, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 5.

Continuity in leadership during the past four years has enabled LCC to design and integrate strategic planning with the annual budgeting processes. This allowed the campus to learn a systematic way of planning, setting goals, and measuring outcomes which provides a sustainable approach to improving operations. Noted improvements include leadership empowerment of employees as well as employee involvement in college processes. The size and mission of the College may facilitate opportunities for effective and open communication throughout the organization.

5P1, S. The President's Council conducts an annual fall review of the College's mission and values. The Council includes a cross-representation of college leadership, faculty, students, and the LCC Advisory Council. Employees can provide input at Conversation Day ensuring that all campus voices are involved in the review and establishment of institutional priorities and decision-making.

5P2, S. The Colorado Community College System, governed by the SBCCOE, has responsibility for secondary and post-secondary career education as well as community college governance. This body establishes the global mission for all state community colleges. From this framework, LCC crafts its mission and vision in alignment with CCCS. The strategic and operational planning process cascades from the state to LCC and down through departments using the mission, vision and values to design strategic (operational) plans. Results then cascade up through the system to ensure alignment with the college mission and vision as well as budgetary resources to support the plans. This process is carried out annually and invites participation from all employees.

5P3, O. LCC states that its institutional goals are focused on sustained improvement in enrollment, retention, and graduation while strengthening the College's Foundation. It is not clear from LCC's response what systems and processes the leadership council employs to consider the needs and expectations of current and potential students as well as key stakeholder groups. Providing a description of how LCC leadership works within the constraints of the state system to set directions that account for all stakeholders' needs might provide more clarity for strategic planning and budgeting in alignment with the College's mission, vision, values, and commitment to high performance.

5P4, S. LCC uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to seek future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning. This approach provides a structured and systematic process that includes feedback points enabling the College to assess progress.

5P5, S. All constituents have the opportunity to provide input for annual goals during Conversation Day. Results are then prioritized and implemented by the three major areas within LCC's organizational structure: Academic Services, Student Services and Administrative Services. Workgroups within each area focus on specific institutional processes and link to CCCS and external stakeholders. Individual workgroups have decision-making responsibilities; however, the Executive Planning Team has ultimate responsibility for organizational-level decisions.

5P6, O. LCC relies primarily on data provided through the Banner® system and the CCCS institutional research department. Tools such as the Communication Survey, NCCBP, and employee input from Conversation Day provide qualitative and quantitative data to help guide decision-making. However, it is unclear whether data collection processes are systematic and how the institution uses feedback to assess the results of its decisions (closing the feedback loop).

5P7, O. LCC has typical communication technology such as email, voice mail and a website. It also has a documented and formalized process for communication from/to the EPT and President's Council. What is not evident is how communications and decision-making between workgroups, the respective vice-presidents, and EPT flows, how communication is initiated, or how lower-level, informal, or spontaneous communication is channeled. Developing a reporting hierarchy could demonstrate a two-way vertical as well as horizontal infrastructure for communications and decision-making processes.

Department, student organization, and other types of communication may add valuable input.

5P8, S. LCC's administrative leadership communicates a shared mission, vision, and values through multiple avenues including the college website, catalog, and internal message boards. These concepts are reinforced at college-wide meetings. The College acknowledges and recognizes individual achievements of goals that align with organizational goals.

5P9, S. Employees create annual performance plans that feed into department plans which link with the institution's plans. This process allows employees to signal their desire to grow within and beyond their current position. It also allows senior leaders to identify potential growth areas within the employee base.

5P10, S. LCC has a documented system in place including job descriptions that enables new leaders to quickly learn and understand college processes. Very senior leadership succession is governed by the state.

5R1, S.

5R2, O. Although LCC has three years of data from its Communication Survey, it has the opportunity to develop benchmarks and improvement targets for future performance assessment. This may help the institution determine the effectiveness of its actions and processes.

5R3, O. LCC presents comparison data for the 2012 CCCS Faculty Climate Survey. Data compares results from the 2012 National Employee Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Society of Human Resources to results from the CCCS Faculty Climate Survey. These comparisons raise questions and also offer opportunities. It is unclear from the title of the national survey if it includes employees within and outside of education. Since CCCS uses only those within education, a comparison may not be valid. Also, comparing LCC results against other CCCS schools on the Faculty Climate Survey may provide more meaningful analyses. Finally, the College may have an opportunity to facilitate improvements related to key areas including job, pay, benefits, job security, and communication from senior management.

5I1, S. LCC used feedback from the 2009 Systems Appraisal to prioritize strategic planning efforts and processes. Recently established processes have enabled more involvement, accountability, and data-informed decision-making throughout the campus.

LCC's improvements in *Leading and Communicating* have created an infrastructure that values the voice of all stakeholders.

5I2, S. LCC used AQIP's principles of high performing institutions, the annual Communication Survey, and Action Projects to create a scaffold approach to strategic (operational) planning and frame decision-making. These activities are evolving the institution's culture to one of active listening and change that benefits LCC.

AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations. This category addresses the variety of institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines the 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 6.

Framed by its vision of service excellence, LCC's support departments have begun to incorporate continual improvement practices and process analysis. As a very small institution, LCC developed structure to many processes which were intuitive and managed by a single person. Efforts are driven by the strategic goals of the College and are informed by a variety of data sources.

6P1, S. LCC has multiple, formalized processes and systems (described in categories 1, 3, and 6) that help identify the support service needs of students and other key stakeholder groups. The College describes institutional operations as those departments providing student and academic support, business and administrative operations, information technology, physical plant and facilities, grants, and marketing.

6P2, S. LCC has a number of avenues for identifying employees' support service needs. The development of strategic goals begins the process of needs identification. The Communication Survey and various committee and department meetings also help identify needs, while other needs are submitted during the annual budget development process. LCC has three key processes that identify support service as well as other needs: 1) The Facilities Master Plan, created from a campus- and community-wide needs assessment, provides the framework for future facilities and improvements. 2)

Documented performance evaluations give employees an opportunity to identify their needs. 3) State-mandated directives and program accreditation processes also identify support service needs.

6P3, S. LCC designed standard emergency processes such as the Emergency and Disaster Plan that provides emergency strategies and procedures. The Faculty Handbook is used to inform faculty of these procedures when in the classroom, and a version of the plan is posted in key locations campus-wide. The College employs a full-time security guard for weekends and evenings and has a Core Emergency Response Team (CERT) composed of trained employees who act as campus first-responders. The Connect-Ed communication system is utilized to alert students and employees to emergencies or closures.

6P4, O. Although the President's Council and institutional departments have responsibility for managing and addressing key institutional support processes, it is less clear how the President's Council manages the agenda to ensure that institutional processes are addressed. The College could clarify whether the agenda includes a systematic process or ad hoc model for stakeholder input concerning institutional operations. A systematic two-way process for reviewing and assessing decision-making can provide evaluative feedback to enhance effectiveness.

6P5, S.

6R1, S. LCC provides multiple measures of student, administrative, and institutional support services processes that are collected and analyzed regularly. The annual Communication Survey as well as the biannual CCCS Climate Survey provides metrics to assess institutional support service processes. Student Services evaluates orientation, retention, and registration processes and strategies. The College's controller monitors budget and financial arenas, while an Annual Security Report tracks safety metrics. LCC appears to have measures to assess performance of select support services.

6R2, O. LCC provides data for analyzing results of retention efforts, new group advising events for athletes, and orientations for new students. Each of these areas offers opportunities to assess long-term effects for each initiative. The Portfolio provides limited performance results for assessing other institutional operations. The College has an opportunity to evaluate the kinds of engagement and satisfaction data already available

to them through instruments currently used and to expand metrics for *Supporting Institutional Operations*. Such direct measures might help the institution better understand the specific needs of all stakeholder groups. A more comprehensive and systematic assessment of all support services (computer labs, library resources, etc.) could also enhance the institution's overall effectiveness in attracting and retaining students.

6R3, O. LCC provided limited performance results for administrative support services processes. Although the Portfolio indicates what data is tracked, it does not provide results. Actual results would provide reviewers with a better understanding of the institution, environment, and effectiveness of various support areas. Articulating data also enables the College to clarify its successes, identify improvement opportunities, and evaluate the impact of budgetary and safety processes on the community. The College has an opportunity to further develop its processes to collect and analyze performance results for all student and administrative support services in order to better identify areas needing improvement or change.

6R4, O. LCC indicates that it does not yet have a comprehensive process analysis encompassing its key student, administrative, and institutional support areas. Although Table 6.2 provides three examples from the Learning Support Services Survey, Communication Survey and the Energy Performance Audit, the narrative does not fully describe how these support areas use information and results to systematically improve their services. As the College matures in providing a system of regular assessment and setting targets for improvement, departments may more easily track and assess improvement efforts.

6R5, O. Although LCC's relationship with the CCCS and participation in the biannual Climate Survey provide limited comparative results with other organizations in the system, the College presently does not have a comprehensive system for collecting, analyzing, setting improvement targets, and comparing results for its processes in this category. LCC's participation in the CCCS as well as NCCBP could provide additional metrics for comparing institutional support service processes and document the College's improvement efforts.

6I1, S. LCC implemented several improvements that either directly or indirectly affect support operations. The creation of the President's Council improved support through more effective communication and interaction. Student Services redesigned its

communication plan for more meaningful and consistent contact with students. Facilities completed a major infrastructure upgrade, and the creation of the Default Prevention Team (DPT) aims to address student loan default challenges. The College also developed CERT for safety improvement and an improved Portal for students and employees.

6I2, S. The College has created an environment in which grassroots efforts at improvement are encouraged and respected. The development of short-term tactical plans through the strategic (operations) planning helped make these efforts systemic. Moving to a three-year cycle for departmental strategic plans would seem to contribute to accountability.

AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness*. This category examines how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data both at the institutional and departmental/unit levels. It considers 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. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 7.

LCC emphasized efforts on strategic planning integrated for all departments and linked to the CCCS's strategic plan. From this foundation, the College invested resources in personnel and technology to manage and assess data re: its institutional effectiveness. LCC also invested resources to build a unit within the College to manage institutional effectiveness and formed a partnership with another community college to enhance institutional research capabilities.

7P1, S. Data for the College is managed by the Vice-President of Administrative Services and Institutional Effectiveness. Departments also manage data and performance information in response to specific requests submitted through established communication channels. LCC's Strategic Plan and departmental operations plans serve as a guide. LCC's Institutional Dashboard, which contains five-year trend data, is available on the intranet. In addition, LCC entered into an agreement with Front Range Community College (FRCC). Resulting information is distributed appropriately at LCC.

The agreement with FRCC seems to have increased LCC's data-mining capacity, which should enhance the College's use of data.

7P2, S. LCC uses its strategic and operational plans to select, manage, and distribute data and performance information to support planning and improvement efforts. Data selection is influenced by external requirements and departmental goals. External requirements include enrollment, budget, and/or performance data for the CCCS, IPEDS, SURDS, and the NCES. The President's Council provides management and oversight of planning and improvement efforts.

7P3, S. LCC works with Banner® information systems to collect, store, and manage all student information. The College also uses the Institutional Research Department of CCCS to submit and access data. College data is stored and accessed through the Institutional Dashboard. Departments, working through the President's Council, can request that certain data be included on the Dashboard.

7P4, S.

7P5, S. LCC is taking a very proactive and robust approach to selecting sources of comparative data by participating in system-wide analyses established by the Colorado legislature and by participating in numerous national initiatives and surveys. The College determines its priorities by fulfilling requirements set by local, state, and national agencies as well as metrics established by the Colorado Legislature, SBCCOE and CCCS. In addition, the College fulfills a comprehensive schedule of LCC Institutional Research Work Reports and Projects. The agreement with FRCC enables departments to identify their specific data needs. The College also participates in several CCCS administered surveys as well as national data collection efforts such as IPEDS. Thirdly, state and federal agencies provide comparative data reports. Because of its limited campus resources for research, the College elected to use existing formal data sets to compare itself with other institutions.

7P6, S.

7P7, S. LCC's Information Technology Department is responsible for the timeliness, accuracy, and reliability of information systems. LCC and CCCS policies set expectations for employee integrity regarding information systems and data use. LCC maintains its own server to support the end-users of the college. All use of LCC-provided information technology resources is subject to monitoring and control by the College. In

addition, LCC is audited annually by CCCS's official external auditor. CCCS maintains the data system that houses all student and financial information.

7R1, O. LCC acknowledges that it does not have a formal process for analyzing its systems for information and knowledge management. LCC does list a set of "measures" that it analyzes on a regular schedule. LCC has an opportunity to identify measures of management performance and system effectiveness as well as stakeholders' satisfaction with services. Some data already collected may fit these definitions. Defining these measures may also develop best practices for other areas of the college.

7R2, O. LCC has an opportunity to identify and report evidence that measures of effectiveness identified, collected, and analyzed are appropriately aligned with the College's mission and goals. This process may involve an annual audit of the items included on the Institutional Dashboard to ensure that they are aligned directly with specific institutional goals. The IT Department also has monitoring software technologies that record the performance of information systems and generate alerts when results fall outside the optimum range. Redundancy and data recovery measures help reduce disruption of information technology services and/or data access. This availability is the first step in meeting needs and establishing a metric for reporting its effectiveness, and may serve as a foundation for measuring effectiveness in meeting needs.

7R3, O. LCC acknowledges that it presently does not compare its performance results for *Measuring Effectiveness* processes. Also, some of the examples given do not cross-reference to comparable data. Analysis of comparable data within CCCS and other sources could allow the institution to capitalize on strengths and more clearly define opportunities for improvement.

7I1, S. LCC provides evidence of significant recent improvements in *Measuring Effectiveness* that promote the development of comprehensive and systematic processes and performance results. Hiring a Vice-President for Administrative Services and Institutional Effectiveness, who also serves as a link to the Institutional Research Department at CCCS and has centralized responsibility for data collection and management, may allow the College to standardize and institutionalize processes and systems and promote a culture of improvement and effectiveness. The agreement with Front Range Community College provides efficient access to more data and the benefits of an experienced partner. In addition, the College organized a listing of all institutional research and special projects to aid tracking and accountability. The College also

created two Action Projects to improve *Measuring Effectiveness*. LCC strengthened its infrastructure for data and information management by creating the LCC Portal and Institutional Dashboard, upgrading Banner®, and implementing DegreeWorks and CourseSignals.

7I2, S. LCC has developed clearly articulated goals and an organizational structure that encourages collaboration. However, the College acknowledges that it does not consistently use data and information to analyze its results in *Measuring Effectiveness.* LCC also expresses its commitment to integrating measurement and benchmarking, investing resources in personnel and analytical tools, and learning and implementing best practices. Although there are gaps within the system, the self-awareness of those gaps and commitment to close them indicate that the institution is creating a culture that values measurement.

AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement. This category examines the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping to achieve the institution's mission and vision. It examines coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 8.

LCC emphasized efforts on strategic planning integrated for all departments and linked to CCCS's strategic plan. From this foundation, the College invested resources in personnel and technology to manage and assess data re: its institutional effectiveness. LCC also invested resources to build a unit within the College to manage institutional effectiveness and formed a partnership with another community college to enhance IR capabilities.

LCC crafted a strategic planning model enabling the College to integrate goals of the CCCS, the College and its departments. This model creates an opportunity to maintain alignment and communication upwards and downwards. Communication is further enhanced through the annual Conversation Day. These efforts promote planning continuous improvement processes and inherent steps that map, articulate, measure, and analyze results of improvement efforts.

8P1, S. LCC's key planning processes are the strategic and departmental operational plans that are aligned with the CCCS Strategic Plan. Evolving from LCC's mission,

vision, and value statements, departmental plans correlate with budget requests. The EPT reviews these plans to ensure that they are aligned with mission, vision, and value statements. CCCS and SBCCOE state-wide policies and procedures shape the College's key planning processes. Figure 8.1 reflects that planning processes included in this chart are two-way, systematic, and flow from institutional goals.

8P2, S. LCC developed two institutional strategic goals that are reviewed annually during the all-campus Conversation Day. All employees have an opportunity to participate in Conversation Day activities. Based upon these goals, departmental operational plans are used to select short- and long-term strategies.

8P3, S. LCC has two processes for the development of key action plans that support organizational strategies. One process flows from creating projects based upon departmental operational plans, and the second process uses the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report as a guide to select Action Projects.

8P4, O. While it is clear that the President's Council owns the process for coordinating and aligning planning processes, strategies, and action plans, it is not clear how this process is sustained in a systematic fashion. Beyond reliance upon members of the President's Council to communicate with all divisions and departments, it is unclear how all stakeholders receive information regarding alignment plans with LCC's mission. Also, although the College notes that departments develop plans predicated upon the strategic plan, LCC might expand upon other institutional planning initiatives noted throughout the Portfolio such as information technology and facilities planning to demonstrate systematic, all-encompassing processes.

8P5, O. The College indicates that the President's Council coordinates and aligns its planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across the institution's various levels and defines objectives, selects measures, and sets performance targets. However, LCC does not clearly describe processes for "how" it conducts these actions or "how" it determines if the measures selected provide adequate data. Providing clear details of these processes may promote stakeholder buy-in and transparency for those who are assigned the responsibility for implementing organizational strategies and action plans.

8P6, S. The comprehensive strategic planning process is integrated with the budget cycle through systematic efforts by departments that submit their operational plans with

annual budget and staffing requests. All department information is combined to create an overall institutional plan and budget. This ensures that planning is connected to the human and fiscal resource realities of the College. In particular, the required budget worksheets that support departmental budget requests promote a greater understanding of the institution's available resources. Leadership analyzes what percentage of the budget is directed to instruction and instructional support versus administrative and student support. LCC's budgeting process and fiscal responsibility have strengthened financial reserves.

8P7, O. The President's Council uses a variety of factors to assess risk when approving new ventures including start-up costs, projected revenues, projected enrollment, and longevity/sustainability. Although the College identifies these factors, it is not clear how the institution plans for technology, facility, safety, and potential liability risks. These factors can impact the fiscal integrity of an institution and limit the ability to develop new programs, staffing, and other needs. The College might benefit from identifying external risk factors as well as estimating the likelihood and impact of each individually and in total. Articulating various additional risk factors that the College assesses annually as well as strategies and/or feasibility studies may ensure that the College minimizes risks and related losses.

8P8, S. LCC provided ample evidence throughout the Portfolio that employees and other stakeholders are involved in the College's planning processes. This active involvement along with professional development opportunities helps promote employee capabilities in addressing changing requirements demanded by the institution's organizational strategies and action plans.

8R1, O. While LCC indicates that it has not yet developed a method for measuring planning processes, it has clearly identified a number of key process indicators as listed in Table 8.1. LCC's opportunity is to use these indicators and measures to develop a systematic method for assessing institutional planning processes.

8R2, O. LCC is in the early stages of developing formalized processes to measure and report performance results for accomplishing its organizational strategies and action plans. The College has opportunities to develop metrics to evaluate and improve planning processes and evaluate current strategies related to department and institutional objectives.

8R3, S. The Colorado Legislature has an agreement with the SBCCOE to establish performance goals with metrics in conjunction with the Department of Education's Pathway Criteria. Table 3.2 notes performance targets for increased attainment, improved student success, and reduced attainment gaps in relation to institutional goals.

8R4, O. LCC indicates that it does not compare its planning processes to other institutions and has an opportunity to develop formal processes for comparing performance results of its processes for *Planning Continuous Improvement*. Developing and implementing these processes may help identify best practices in other institutions and improve environmental scanning efforts.

8R5, O. LCC reports that it does not measure and evaluate its planning processes and activities and, therefore, does not have evidence that its system for *Planning Continuous Improvement* is effective. The College has an opportunity to further develop its system of decision-making and planning to create formal measures and an evaluation system for its planning processes and activities. LCC has an opportunity to use a blend of quantitative data from its strategic planning process and qualitative data from regular administration of the Communication Survey to develop measures that assess its planning processes. Once developed and implemented, such a system may further increase employee involvement and understanding of planning and assessment.

8I1, S.

8I2, S.

AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships. This category examines the institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution accomplishing its mission. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, and building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for **Lamar Community College** for Category 9.

LCC's foundation evolved from a locally funded junior college celebrating 75 years as an educational provider to its community, the rural southeastern Colorado region, and the state. This history has enabled relationship building and collaboration as the institution strives to

develop a systematic framework to assess continuous improvement in Building Collaborative
Relationships. LCC partnerships are known and aligned, and the College continues to work on a
systematic framework that will allow it to set targets and measure results.

9P1, S.

9P2, S. CCCS policies articulate how LCC works with four-year transfer institutions to facilitate processes for LCC. The SBCCOE also establishes multiple articulation agreements for transfer students. Moreover, LCC employs a transfer counselor who works with other schools on transfer issues and another position to work on the articulation relationship with the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs.

9P3, S.

9P4, S. College purchasing is regulated by the state purchasing system and locally monitored by the LCC Business Office and Vice President of Administrative Services. Working within that system, LCC utilizes standard business and purchasing processes along with sharing facilities with other entities whenever feasible. LCC appears to support local businesses whenever possible, which may aid with recruiting and student placement.

9P5, S. LCC is strategic in its approach to creating, prioritizing, and building relationships with community and area stakeholders. The relationship must be mutually beneficial in terms of: 1) enhanced services, 2) additional revenue, or 3) professional development. Table 9.3 describes these collaborative relationships by stakeholder group and type of relationship.

9P6, O. Although the relatively small, rural environment of the region fosters direct communication and interaction with area organizations, LCC recognizes the need to formally establish a process with respective evaluative criteria for process improvement. Incorporating quality improvement tools can also enhance partnerships and ensure valid, productive, and vibrant relationships. LCC might also consider a formal process for dissolution of partnerships.

9P7, S. LCC has a variety of processes that facilitate creating relationships between and among departments. These include: monthly all-campus meetings led by administration inviting all staff, other partners and students; AQIP processes; the annual Conversation Day; and President's Council with membership including a representative from each campus department. LCC's small size can serve as an advantage with respect to

internal communication and relationship-building.

9R1, O. LCC lists several measures of *Building Collaborative Relationships*, external and internal, that it collects and analyzes. However, the College has an opportunity to develop a comprehensive and formalized system of measures that are tracked and assessed regularly in order to fully understand the entire complement of collaborative relationships. With limited resources, building a formalized system with strong oversight that fully prioritizes the value and effectiveness of these relationships may be critical to budgeting and planning for the future.

9R2, S.

9R3, O. LCC recognizes the opportunity to compare its performance results for *Building Collaborative Relationships* with other higher education organizations. These comparisons over time will permit benchmarking, identify best practices and recurring problems, and help promote understanding of the effectiveness and value of the College's multiple collaborative relationships.

9I1, O. Although LCC documents many recent improvements in *Building Collaborative Relationships*, there is an opportunity to develop systematic and comprehensive processes with centralized oversight and evaluation to assist with the prioritization of these relationships. Including a method to end certain relationships, when an overall assessment and prioritization indicates they are no longer beneficial to all stakeholders, may be an important component.

9I2, O. It is unclear from the Portfolio how collaborations are selected or targeted for improvement. Creating a documented, transparent process for establishing and strengthening relationships, especially with external partners, might aid LCC in its ability to grow its support.

Accreditation Evidence Lamar Community College

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Systems Appraisal Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, or that it may face difficulty in meeting the Criteria and Core Components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies

as part of the Systems Appraisal process affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

No evidence issues noted by the team.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X		X		
Adequate but could be improved.		X			
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					

1P1 & 1P2. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

- The College provides an environment supportive of learners and learning with co-curricular, cultural and athletic events, and opportunities for participation. LCC is a member of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and follows the competencies of Commonly Described Courses and Guaranteed Transfer coursework as required by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). Program learning objectives are both a product of CCCS requirements and institutional decisions. In an effort to strengthen and enhance these state-driven requirements and mandates,

LCC established its own Institutional Learning Outcomes through a task force of faculty and staff. All degrees and certificates include these outcomes, which are also published in the college catalog.

- Learning Outcomes Assessment is managed through a standing faculty committee that considers best practices and current trends along with learning objectives to ensure that common learning objectives remain valid institutional goals for students. Course syllabi indicate which outcomes a course supports.

- The operations planning process stipulates that programs articulate learning objectives as part of their goals and are written to be measurable for ongoing assessment. The Academic Review Committee (ARC) involves a cross-functional program development team to review and evaluate all new programs to ensure that they have outcomes and an assessment process.

1P2 & 1P18. The evidence is adequate but could be improved for HLC Core Component 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

- LCC used an Action Project to develop an Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment cycle that brought visible improvements to the institution. Another project is focused on ways to implement benchmarking into instructional departments using the resources of the Colorado Community College System and other existing sources of data.

- The Academic Review Committee (ARC) involves a cross-functional program development team to evaluate all new programs and ensure that they have outcomes and an assessment process. The development of program learning objectives is faculty-led, and objectives are written to be measurable for ongoing assessment. The assessment of student learning uses competencies underlying the Institutional Learning Outcomes. As a part of the embedded sampling process, a team of faculty scores each sample according to a 5-point rubric built to match the competencies underlying each Institutional Learning Outcome. Regular faculty discussion of assessment data is an important component of the process that allows for continual improvement and stronger alignment.

   Suggestions for Improvements: There does not appear to be systematic processes for assessing student learning outcomes for individual programs. Expanding the existing process to individual programs by focusing on direct measures for each program could

enhance faculty insight related to student learning specific to individual program outcomes. Having specific learning objectives may help programs scaffold their curriculum and assure identification of when and how the outcomes are included in coursework. Developing formalized processes and systems to continually track, assess and trend achievement results may provide valuable data and information for continual program and institutional improvement.

1P4 & 1P10. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

- LCC's Institutional Learning Outcomes reflect its mission of *enriching lives through learning*, including the varied and dynamic society in which students live and work. The College embeds its philosophy regarding human diversity into its curriculum and services through its World Awareness Institutional Learning Outcome.

- Commitment to a diverse student body is evidenced by LCC's efforts with dual credit/concurrent enrollment, participation in the collaborative CCCS study of best practices for developmental programming and the development of specific competencies in the new developmental curriculum, and partnership with Microsoft Corp.

- LCC uses programs such as TRiO, the Educational Opportunity Center, ASCENT, High School Concurrent Enrollment, the Dropout Recovery Prevention program, Phi Theta Kappa, the Adult Student Open House, and various course delivery modalities to support students with disabilities, first-generation students, low income students, commuters, and high school students.

1P4 & 1P12. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

- LCC is a coeducational, comprehensive, two-year post-secondary institution of higher learning participating in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). LCC is governed by the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE), appointed by the Governor of Colorado, which establishes policies and procedures for all community colleges in the System. LCC has an environment supportive of learners and learning with co-curricular, cultural and athletic events, and opportunities for participation. The College also has an advisory council of local community members to help it stay connected to the surrounding region.

- LCC provides transfer programs qualifying students for admission to baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities and on-campus baccalaureate options through membership in a consortium with the University of Colorado. LCC offers occupational education qualifying students in technical and applied fields and preparing students to move directly into the workforce. Transfer programs are defined, reviewed and revised by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, contracted to the CCCS, and delivered by LCC as a member of the CCCS. LCC participates in the Statewide Guaranteed Transfer Articulation Agreement that guarantees all credits transfer enabling students to enroll with junior status if they complete all the requirements. Programming for terminal degrees is guided at all stages by program advisory committees. LCC faculty partner annually with colleagues from two-year and four-year institutions to discuss course and program content as well as exchanging ideas and best practices in the classroom. Statewide discipline groups propose new courses to the CCCS.

1P4 & 1P13. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

- Measurable program learning objectives are both a product of CCCS requirements and institutional decisions. Specific program objectives are reviewed for relevance by faculty with the help of respective advisory committees.

- New programs follow a process governed by the Academic Review Committee (ARC). LCC goes through a six-step exploration process for new programs that consults all stakeholders and creates a path of documentation. The College incorporates external inputs for both its transfer and terminal programs that balance and integrate learning goals, students' career needs, and the realities of the employment market.

- Transfer programs are defined, reviewed and revised by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, contracted to the CCCS, and delivered by LCC as a member of the CCCS. LCC's certificate and degree plans stipulate that all courses must be taken from the CCCS list of Commonly Described Courses. This ensures that students who complete requirements for graduation have earned their credits with courses that are approved by the CCCS and delivered according to the state-defined competencies and outcomes.

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are reviewed systematically on a three- and five-year cycle, and semi-annual meetings with program advisory committees

ensure program currency and relevance. Programming for terminal degrees is guided at all stages by program advisory committees. These groups are comprised of local industry leaders and employers who meet semi-annually to ensure that the College stays up-to-date on curriculum issues, industry trends and the needs of regional employers.

1P6. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

- Requirements and objectives are communicated to students through the college catalog, website, and individual interaction through program and department heads, faculty, academic advisors, and support staff. Admissions communications, student orientations that include faculty presentations, academic advising and career exploration, library resource presentations, and Financial Aid communications, seminars, and a Default Prevention Team all provide students with information about costs and requirements. LCC students have access to CCCS's degree-auditing system which integrates placement test results, transcripts, GPA, course information, and degree requirements.

- The College's accreditation status with the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission is published on its main web page. LCC courses are listed on the CCCS System's website with its standard competencies, course descriptions, prerequisites, and delivery methods. All course syllabi contain outcomes and competencies both for LCC's Institutional Learning Outcomes and the state's competencies.

1P7 & 1P15. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

- LCC's advising processes are designed to help undecided students find direction and set goals. Advising and registration sessions create a bridge between students and their academic and employment goals. Student Services assigns an advisor to students and continues to develop a relationship with students. Advisors use an Advising and Tracking Worksheet to help follow student advisees as they progresses and helps identify career and academic goals. Academic Advisors use degree plans to show students the entire framework of their program requirements; advisors in transfer

programs also inform students of the relationship between two-year and four-year Bachelor's degrees.

- The Career Counseling Center provides additional advising for uncertain students via a career option system. Students may be directed to a Career Coach or the TRIO Resource Counselor for more intense assistance and guidance. LCC is redesigning two courses that help students choose degree and career paths. The College hosts an annual Career Expo that introduces students to multiple career options.

- LCC uses survey data and usage rates to measure learning support areas including library services, academic tutoring, resource counseling and advising, and placement centers. A Library Task Force conducted a survey of students to identify improvement opportunities. Information from usage and surveys is used to establish the library's hours of operations, collections, subscriptions, and services. Student tutoring needs are identified through surveys, and the Learning Support Services team and an Early Alert process tracks student progress.

1P11. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.D The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

- The faculty job description, faculty handbook, and instructional strategic plans all reflect LCC as a teaching college and a learner-centered institution where high caliber education is the most important product. LCC has grounded its expectations of academic freedom for its faculty in accordance with the 1940 "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," formulated by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Universities (revised 1990).

- Expectations are communicated through new faculty orientation, adjunct faculty mentoring, faculty development workshops, faculty evaluations, and course observations, all of which are based on metrics of teaching effectiveness.

- LCC's standards of effective teaching and learning are incorporated in student course evaluations. The catalog publishes the faculty's Statement of Educational Intent and Institutional Learning Outcomes.

1P11. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.E.
The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- LCC's standards of effective teaching and learning are incorporated in student course evaluations. The catalog publishes the faculty's Statement of Educational Intent and Institutional Learning Outcomes. The Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment process strengthens the link between expectations and the faculty whose responsibility is to execute those expectations in the classroom.

- As a member college in the CCCS, courses, degrees, content criteria, and competencies must all align with state-established policies and mandates. Each course uses competencies created by system-level faculty to ensure that specific classes are congruent with their equivalents at other community colleges across the state.

- The College has a well-documented student academic honesty policy. The principles of this policy apply to faculty as well as to students. The College has a clear process for holding students accountable for academic honesty.

1P16. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 3.E.
The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

- LCC offers a breadth of opportunities that enrich its educational environment. These include academic offerings such as the bi-annual Living History Encampment as well as Lunch and Learn sessions on topics influenced by current events. The College also sponsors a number of clubs including the Rodeo Club, Business and Technology Club, and Phi Theta Kappa. In addition, the College is engaged with its service area community through events like the Regional Science Fair and various sporting events. LCC is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association and sponsors intercollegiate sports for men and women. Finally, the campus offers activities that encourage students to broaden their experiences. These include four-year school visits, bowling and movie nights, work study positions, and opportunities to serve in student governance and as student ambassadors.

3P1. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

- LCC's first institutional goal over the last four years has been, "Growth on a Solid Foundation." Faculty, Student Services staff, the Student Life Coordinator, Learning Support Service staff and others who have direct contact with students continually assess students' needs informally through direct interaction. LCC identifies the changing needs of students through processes including surveys, student services staff contact with students, student involvement in Student Government and the President's Council, and student participation in Action Projects.

- Further evidence of LCC's commitment to educational improvement includes the work of previous Action Projects: managing student orientation, advising, and graduate tracking processes; communicating with students; Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment cycle; and building benchmarking practices across the institution. The College has embarked upon several initiatives with the goal of improving retention, persistence, and completion. These include: developmental education redesign, communications planning, new student orientation, and creation of a Default Prevention Team.

- LCC uses processes in both Instruction and Learning Support Services to track and understand student learning. The Instructional Division works with indirect measures such as course pass rates, retention rates, and student course evaluations via the IDEA survey as well as direct measures through the Assessment of Institutional Learning Outcomes. The College has also implemented an Early Alert process to identify students in need of extra support.

3P3 & 3P5. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

- The College's mission is: "We enrich lives through learning." LCC strives to benefit all external and internal stakeholders including its students, communities within the service area, Colorado taxpayers, the CCCS, educational partners, and employers. To produce this benefit to stakeholders, LCC involves individuals from local businesses and government offices as representatives on college and program advisory committees and AQIP action teams. These participants help identify the changing needs among stakeholders in the community, workforce, and constituencies.

- Outreach efforts include representatives from LCC participating in local chamber of commerce and economic development meetings. The College also participates in extensive community events.

- LCC established a goal to increase enrollment of Hispanic students. In order to reach that goal, the College added club soccer as an athletic opportunity and shared a Hispanic recruiter position with UCCS in an effort to reach more underrepresented students. LCC also developed its online program in order to reach a greater student population outside of the service area and created a special tuition package to attract more long distance students.

4P2 & 4P10. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

- The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty, including e.g., oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; and involvement in assessment of student learning.

- All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortia programs. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

- Staff members who provide student support services such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

4P7. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.A The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

- Colorado's State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) Policy enforces moral and ethical behavior. The College has in place processes designed to reinforce integrity and ethical behavior among employees and students. Upper administration is required to comply with an additional ethics code due to the nature of their position. College budgets are examined in a yearly external audit.

- Due process at the System and Board level ensures that employees are compliant with ethical policies for employment. All employees are required to read and agree to formal policies and procedures that are written and published to ensure that employees are aware of the expectations that LCC has for them.

- LCC has policies for scholarly and academic integrity for students communicated in the catalog and student handbook. Faculty are held to the same standards of intellectual honesty through standards published in the faculty handbook.

4P7. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. The college portal contains links to all CCCS Policies and Procedures which apply to all System institutions. All college personnel are required to read and sign a policy and procedures statement that includes a conflict of interest policy.

- The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

5P1 & 5P2. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 1.A The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

- LCC states that its mission expresses its core belief: "we enrich lives through learning". Every fall the President's Council reviews and defines the College's mission and values with the annual Conversation Day providing an opportunity for all employees to reexamine the mission, vision, values, and goals of the college. Outcomes may lead to adjustments to the LCC Strategic Plan, which is then distributed to each department to review and apply to its strategic (operational) plan.

- Colorado's community college mission is defined by state statute, and articulates the responsibilities that member colleges, including LCC, hold in serving the public good in postsecondary education. CCCS policies and procedures guide and influence LCC's key planning processes.

5P2 & 5P6. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

- Colorado's community college mission is defined by state statute, and articulates the responsibilities that member colleges hold in serving the public good in postsecondary education. CCCS policies and procedures guide and influence LCC's key planning processes.

- All LCC employees participate in reviewing the Strategic Plan, and their feedback is funneled back to the plan for revisions. The Strategic Planning process is aligned with the College's mission, vision, values, and key goals. Departments use the mission, vision, and values in their strategic operational plans along with key data such as FTE performance, student satisfaction, assessment outcomes, and budget line items. The EPT reviews goals and metrics annually to assess goal outcomes and then sends feedback to the departments.

- Departmental goals are aligned with the LCC Strategic Plan and are submitted for approval through the yearly budget process. Action plans are created to implement departmental strategies. Action plans are assessed within the department to see if metrics are being met, and this information is analyzed by the President's Council and EPT. The College monitors and collects data through its administrative software system as well as through the CCCS Institutional Research Department. This department creates a range of reports that measure performance results for identified goals. These reports allow LCC to measure performance and also provide information for strategic planning and future decision-making.

5P2. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 2.C.
The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

- LCC is governed by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) which, in turn, is governed by a nine-member State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). This Board is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate for staggered, four-year terms. Colorado's community college mission is defined by State Statute and articulates the responsibilities its member colleges hold in serving the public good in postsecondary education.

- Colorado Community College System policies and procedures guide and influence LCC's key planning processes.

5P3 & 5P8. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

- LCC's mission, vision, and value statements are published on its website, throughout the campus, and in publications such as the catalog and schedules. Employees work with supervisors to construct goals that reflect the public mission of the college. These individual goals are connected to departmental goals which were derived from organizational goals.

- Institutional goals are focused on sustained improvement in enrollment, retention, and graduation while strengthening the College's foundation. LCC plans to increase all aspects of educational attainment for all students that are served.

- The President's Council functions as a link between all departments of the campus as well as internal and external stakeholders. The formation of the President's Council has ensured that all voices are included and integrated with the LCC strategic planning process.

5P5 & 5P9. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

- The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity. SBCCOE and CCCS policies and procedures establish oversight for all LCC practices. All of these are publicly available through the Colorado Community College System website. The SBCCOE approves every yearly budget and establishes all fiscal policies such as tuition, fees, and the funding formula for LCC and all System colleges. The CCCS operates within a contract with the Colorado State Legislature, which defines performance-funding goals. Colorado's community college mission is defined by State Statute and articulates the responsibilities that member colleges hold in serving the public good in postsecondary education. The Executive Planning Team (EPT) makes final decisions after considering contributions from the campus as well as factors from the CCCS, legislative actions, budget forecasts, and enrollment trends.

- The President's Council is designed to allow input from every department on campus to the leadership of the College. SBCCOE and CCCS representatives and students are also invited to participate in the President's Council regarding strategic planning and

operations. Employees are encouraged to participate in CCCS task force work, statewide meetings, and collaborative work with other institutions both within and external to the System. Work processes, decision-making, and planning are all structured to create opportunities for all employees as well as internal and external stakeholders to contribute ideas and concerns. Various college departments write strategic (operations) plans to direct their focus and move towards objectives.

- The governance of academic planning and decision-making functions through the Academic Review Committee, which is led by faculty and comprised of faculty, staff, and administration.

7P2 & 7P4. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

- The President's Council monitors planning and improvement efforts related to the vision and mission of LCC. In collaboration with college departments, the Council is primarily responsible for examining and disseminating data. Council members are responsible for providing this information to each of their departments. Departmental meetings are conducted and e-mail is used to ensure that information is communicated. All meeting minutes are posted on LCC's portal. The Council is comprised of college department heads and external stakeholders and monitors planning and improvement efforts. Departments work with each goal to develop the strategic (operations) plan each year. LCC's Strategic Plan evolves from the Colorado Community College System's strategic plan and bridges with departmental strategic (operations) plans.

- LCC continues to evolve its infrastructure for managing information systems and completes external reporting requirements for the CCCS, IPEDS, SURDS, and NCES. LCC also submits reports to other accrediting agencies on both the institutional and department levels, and to state and federal offices for grant compliance.

- Since 2009, LCC has developed and implemented a series of Action Projects based on the most important "Opportunity" areas identified in the Feedback Report including: managing student orientation, advising, and graduate tracking processes; strengthening professional development and new employee orientation; communicating with students; building benchmarking practices across the institution; and integrating strategic planning into department level budgeting process.

8P6. The evidence is strong, clear, and well-presented for HLC Core Component 5.A. The

institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered. LCC's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

- The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

Quality of Systems Portfolio For Lamar Community College

Because it stands as a reflection of the institution, the *Systems Portfolio* should be complete and coherent, and it should provide an open and honest self-analysis on the strengths and challenges facing the organization. In this section, the Systems Appraisal Team provides Lamar Community College with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the portfolio, along with suggestions for improvement of future portfolio submissions.

LCC should be proud of its efforts in writing a comprehensive, honest and self-reflective Portfolio that provided the Systems Appraisal team with evidence of a strong commitment to students and quality. From the report, it was clearly evident that LCC made many significant improvements since the last Feedback Report and makes effective use of Action Projects to drive change and a continuous quality environment. The following suggestions are provided for the next cycle of Portfolio writing and submission.

When writing future Portfolios, LCC may wish to provide some indication (with font, highlighting or other methods) of exactly where, within different Categories, its embedded accreditation evidence is placed. This provides a clear trail of evidence for reviewers to identify and also strengthens the understanding between institution and peer reviewer of what constitutes "strong, clear, and well-presented" evidence. The College provided many links to evidence sources that were very helpful; this technique could be expanded, if possible, to include documentation or examples of evidence for all the core components. It would also be helpful to tie references to charts, narrative, etc., to exact locations in the Portfolio. For example, when the writers wish to refer to information in another location without reiterating that information, it is

more helpful to give the exact response such as 5P3 rather than Category Five.

LCC provided detailed narrative responses to several process questions within Category One of its Systems Portfolio. In some cases, the responses may be aligned with other process questions or with similar processes. For example, in 1P3 the institution could clarify if the same processes are employed for both CTE and transfer courses and programs. In 1P16 LCC could develop a process for aligning co-curricular outcomes with curriculum outcomes that would be part of the activity approval process, thus automatically applying the same process of alignment to all activities. Prior to its next Portfolio, the College might consider how processes implemented in this Category and others (for example, in Category 6) might be replicated and applied across similar activities.

Throughout the Portfolio, the issue of describing processes (the how) comes up several times with the team asking the College to clarify "how" something is done. An example is the team's response to 8P5: "The College indicates that the President's Council coordinates and aligns its planning processes, organizational strategies, and action plans across the institution's various levels and defines objectives, selects measures, and sets performance targets. However, LCC does not clearly describe processes for "how" it conducts these actions or "how" it determines if the measures selected provide adequate data. Providing clear details of these processes may promote stakeholder buy-in and transparency for those who are assigned the responsibility for implementing organizational strategies and action plans." With this in mind, LCC may produce a more effective Portfolio and overall institutional understanding of the document if the College clearly describes *how* processes work.

As LCC continues to refine existing initiatives and develop new initiatives, there may be an opportunity to systematically collect direct measures of student learning so that trend data may be gathered, analyzed and evaluated. If space is limited for reporting additional data in the Portfolio, utilizing links to documents or placement on the website is not only acceptable, it promotes robust and transparent evidence. Additionally, the College appears to have access to data and performance results from the state, national surveys, and other sources that are not offered in the Portfolio. Developing a system to first analyze, distribute, and then add this evidence to a common repository that can be fully utilized when writing the *Results* questions in the next Portfolio might ensure that the institution's data and results are strengthened either in the document itself or embedded links.

LCC did a good job of describing Colorado's state system and what impact that has on the college's planning, programming, hiring practices, and numerous other processes. What is not

always clear to reviewers is the institution's own internal processes that are developed and implemented to supplement the state system and strengthen LCC. The College has unique needs, strengths, challenges, and stakeholders that its mission pledges to serve. Better understanding *how* LCC personalizes and refines college processes and systems to meet its individual needs, goals and challenges could provide a more transparent overview of both systems and how they align.

Finally, the advising process flowchart can serve as a model for mapping other processes within each Category. Such tools demonstrate an evaluative and systematic approach to process improvement and can augment descriptive narrative.

Using the Feedback Report

The AQIP Systems Appraisal process is intended to initiate action for institutional improvement. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution, the Commission expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of this report may include: 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.

The Commission's goal is to help an institution clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities in ways that will make a difference in institutional performance.