

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

March 17, 2009



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

Category 1 Helping Students Learn

The development, implementation and assessment of General Learner Outcomes has provided the college with a strong foundation for helping students learn. However, the areas that have reflected the largest decline have not been adequately addressed. In addition, the college has the opportunity to improve the quality and utility of its student learning assessment activities by implementing its pre-requisites plan, gathering and using course-and program-level assessment data, and implementing technologies to keep institutional effectiveness data accessible to all users.

Category 2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Grand Rapids Community College follows a mature strategic planning process that relies on data, stakeholder input, regulatory and accreditation requirements, to develop and improve its support services. Since the college's strength is in the development and implementation of its social responsibility/community support programs, Category 2 could have focused on these.

Category 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

Grand Rapids Community College has clear and formal mechanisms in place to gather data regarding student and other stakeholder needs. Feedback is collected through multiple methods, and data is used to develop the comprehensive strategic plan and to monitor and improve service to current clients and to help expand offerings to new audiences. The college also has productive relationships with transfer institutions as evidenced by the number and scope of articulation agreements, 3+1 programs, and the ability to complete a four-year degree on campus. The college currently transfers records electronically and is engaged in a process to adopt an e-transcript process with all Michigan institutions. Innovative programs seem to be in place for many relationship-building and enhancing processes.

Category 4 Valuing People

Grand Rapids Community College has programs in place to ensure that its workforce possesses the skills and abilities needed to carry out the work of the institution, including a new employee orientation process and a proactive wellness program. The college has a commitment to improving workforce satisfaction and listening to employee needs. Senior leaders also support a culture where input into decision making occurs at all levels. The decision-dissemination process is appropriate and ensures that college-wide communication occurs. The institution has established both formal and informal methods to collect feedback from its external constituents.

Category 5 Leading and Communicating

The portfolio indicates, for all categories, that its dashboard is available on its website for viewing by various stakeholders. Grand Rapids Community College needs to ensure that there is a process in place to keep this material up-to-date.

Category 6 Supporting Institutional Operations

The college has demonstrated that it has a strong Information Technology infrastructure. They utilize end users in the development, testing, and training phases of technology projects. The institution staffs helpdesks for both students and faculty/staff which have been well received.

Category 7 Measuring Effectiveness

Grand Rapids Community College's strategic planning process includes identification of targets and evaluation criteria. The plan undergoes regular review and is adjusted as new data is gathered. Department staff members within the college develop action plans that feed into and help the college accomplish its strategic goals and college action projects.

Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement

The college uses the Process Based Management Model (PBM) to ensure that process owners design and manage processes effectively with all employees receiving training on this model. The college has also developed an extensive knowledge management process to collect and transfer the organizational and job knowledge needed to accomplish work, make improvements, and create

innovations. In addition, the five strategic challenges identified in the institutional overview could have been covered in Category 8.

Category 9 Building Collaborative Relationships

Partnership agreements have been developed. However, it would have been helpful if Grand Rapids Community College had provided more examples of the benefits gained from those partnerships. It is also unclear how Grand Rapids Community College evaluates its collaborative relationships, including those with their bargaining organizations.

Over Arching Concerns

The narrative that Grand Rapids Community College provided in the results section made it impossible to determine if all of the items were addressed. For example, both the narrative and the figures are difficult to follow, are inconsistent and sometimes did not directly respond to the questions. In addition, in the improvements section of the document Grand Rapids Community College did not specify its plan to address the weakest areas, what specific improvements were needed, or who was responsible for ensuring the improvements were made.

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

ELEMENTS OF GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary. Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

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

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

improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

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

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included

careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institutions under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Grand Rapids Community College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the Criteria will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

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

Overall, the results sections in the document were missing key elements which needed to be addressed in the portfolio. Throughout the Systems Portfolio, the results questions were combined. Consequently, only a fraction were addressed. Information in the results sections should be the foundation for assessing the effectiveness the College's processes and projects. By answering only a fraction of the results questions the college failed to provide the evidence expected. Although the college met the minimum requirements, it did not meet the quality

expectations of a mature AQIP institution. This could become an accreditation issue if not addressed.

The graphs lacked clarity, which made it difficult to interpret the data. The Dashboard was mentioned throughout the document to show its importance and to point out that all staff receive updates of this information. However, the Dashboard website was last updated on January 8, 2007.

In the improvements section, Grand Rapids Community College listed its improvements but did not adequately explain them within each of the Categories. Without in depth narrative it was difficult to understand the value of improvements made. Future Systems portfolios must be expanded and at a minimum provide an explanation as to how and why a project was implemented.

Grand Rapids Community College uses the same paragraph to respond to each of the I2 questions. The only difference was the listing of the various projects. There was no explanation as to how these projects were identified or prioritized. It would have been helpful to know how the decision was made to identify this project, how the project fits into the overall mission, where these projects fall within the priority list, and who would be spearheading the project and who would be responsible for this project to be realized.

Although the development, implementation and assessment of General Learner Outcomes measures the level of student ability, the categories reflecting the most significant declines are not addressed. This is a critical factor as Grand Rapids Community College considers its future endeavors. Areas that have declined in recent years are at a low level (such as diversity skills, which dropped over 20% from one year to the next and writing skills, which was the lowest-rated skill) that needs to be addressed.

The college identified six distinctive objectives, including the Delta Strategy, Woodruff Diversity Learning Center, Sustainability Initiative, Innovation Workspace, Learning Corners, and the Older Learner Center. However, the portfolio (Category 2) did not reflect the assessment of these primarily social programs. The college should consider evaluating each of these objectives to determine if they are meeting their intended needs.

The portfolio identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff. However, these items were minimally addressed in the portfolio.

In the narrative, Grand Rapids Community College indicated that they have developed partnership agreements with many of their key stakeholders (high schools, business, and other organizations). However, they do not provide any examples of the benefits gained or effectiveness from those partnerships. In addition, the portfolio does not include any discussion of Grand Rapids Community College's relationship with the bargaining organizations that represent four of the seven employee groups, including the faculty.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The *AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects

a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most significant aspects of Grand Rapids Community College. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Grand Rapids Community College unique. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.
- Ob The college is currently served by an interim president.

- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility.
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations.
- O1b Grand Rapids Community College has nine learning-centered processes.
- O2a Grand Rapids Community College has identified 6 areas of social responsibility/support programming for the institution and has developed community support, growth and educational programs to meet stakeholder needs within its service area. These areas of social responsibility/support programming include: Delta Strategy, Woodruff Diversity Learning Center (WDLC), Sustainability Initiative, Innovation Workspace, Learning Corners and Older Learner Center.
- O3a Grand Rapids Community College competition comes from local colleges (with five public institutions in close proximity), and a variety of private business and industry training providers. GRCC's competitive advantage includes an open door admission policy, low tuition, small class sizes and a ninety-year-old institution.
- O4a Grand Rapids Community College employs 652 fulltime employees, which includes 253 full-time faculty supplemented by 435 part-time adjunct faculty. The demographic makeup of employees matches the demographic makeup of the Grand Rapids MSA.
- O4b Bargaining organizations represent four of the seven employee groups, including faculty.
- O4c Grand Rapids Community College's organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President's Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.
- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the

- Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O5b Grand Rapids Community College has been involved with quality improvement processes for many years. The college was admitted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in 2000 and has participated in the Michigan Quality Leadership Award (MQLA) and Baldrige, which resulted in two MQLA site visits and designation as a MQLA recipient in 2007.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.
- O9a Partners, collaborators, and suppliers are important to Grand Rapids Community College as evidenced by their integration into Grand Rapids Community College key processes.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these “strengths and opportunities” sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.
- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations
- O1b Grand Rapids Community College has nine learning-centered processes

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1a	SS	General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) are defined for all programs and are part of the CARP process. These define the General Education outcomes for students across programs and are used to assess student learning /achievement. These were revised by a faculty-led General Education Assessment Team in summer of 2000.
1P2a	S	Specific learning objectives are determined by the faculty with appropriate stakeholder input. Additional data is gathered by the environmental scanning process.
1P2b	S	Grand Rapids Community College has identified how it uses community advisory boards in Workforce Development programs.
1P2c	O	It is not clear if such community advisory boards exist and are utilized for other academic programs; these academic programs could benefit from these boards.
1P3a	S	Grand Rapids Community College uses a well-defined, faculty-led process (CARP) to develop all new courses and revise existing ones. All courses are reviewed using this process every three years. A new program review process is being implemented this year.
1P3b	SS	Faculty who request to teach online courses must first complete the Online/Hybrid Certification program.
1P3c	O	Although the success of online/hybrid courses is assessed in several ways, assessing “student success rate” can be vague. Perhaps student assessments could target specific course competencies or general learning outcomes to ensure the student has gained the sufficient skills to advance academically.
1P4a	O	Grand Rapids Community College utilizes multiple processes for developing, reviewing, and revising courses and academic programs these include: CARP, New Course Approval Process,

- Academic Program Review and Planning Process, New Program Development Process, and Program Review of Occupational Education. These processes appear to have some overlapping goals and objectives, which may be causing unnecessary redundancy for GRCC.
- 1P4b SS The requirement of most occupational programs that students participate in fieldwork, clinical placements, or internships illustrates GRCC's commitment to balancing and integrating learning goals, career needs, and employment realities.
- 1P4c S Grand Rapids Community College surveys all graduates one year after graduation to assess employment status and the relevancy to their academic program. This is an excellent way to gather feedback on effectiveness of their academic programs.
- 1P4d O The alumni surveys appear to be quantitative in nature. Providing qualitative responses could provide even more valuable feedback.
- 1P4e O Alumni survey data collected for those entering the workforce show slightly lower ratings on preparation for jobs. These lower numbers are not explained, nor is it clear what steps are being taken to improve the percentages.
- 1P4f S The new process Grand Rapids Community College has utilized to align its credit and non-credit faculty and activities should provide streamlined services to employers while better utilizing resources.
- 1P5a S A comprehensive intake and assessment placement process has been developed and implemented: Prerequisite Enforcement, ACT Cut Score Changes, and Mandatory Placement. Full implementation of these processes should lead to increased student success. Grand Rapids Community College is encouraged to track the impact of these changes on student success.

- 1P6a S GRCC uses variety of print and electronic methods to communicate expectations to current and prospective students. For example, results of CCSSE and GRCC satisfaction surveys are shared across the college in an effort to assess and improve services to students.
- 1P7a S Grand Rapids Community College uses an IDEA model (imagine, develop, explore, achieve) in academic advising/career counseling. One day each semester faculty members are available all day to provide student advising.
- 1P8a SS The Academic Foundations Program Action Plan is in the third year of its five-year implementation cycle. This action project is intended to develop a variety of support programs for under-prepared students. Examples include, the summer two-week Math Bridge Program, Structured Learning Assistance and Career Advancement Programs.
- 1P8b O Data from the first three years of the AFP can be used to guide and develop these activities in the final years of this project.
- 1P9a S Developmental students use the LASSI inventory to identify their primary learning styles. Faculty participate in workshops that train them to design learning activities that appeal to various learning styles.
- 1P10a S GRCC has action projects to address the needs of unique student groups, specifically to assist under-prepared students, minority students, and displaced workers.
- 1P11a S GRCC has developed a strategic goal for learners with 5 strategic objectives (academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student effort, learner support and student-faculty interaction).
- 1P11b S GRCC uses a series of processes to ensure appropriate learning experiences for their students: faculty evaluation process, College Wide Learning Days, New Faculty Institute, Adjunct Faculty

		Institute, defined standards for distance delivery, and imbedded service learning activities.
1P11c	S	Several college wide research projects are linked to the Institute for Faculty Research on Teaching and Learning.
1P12a	S	Course schedules are developed within the department, planning is informed by external data, community needs, research on best practice, and GRCC data on student demands, student success, room and faculty availability. In the future course planning will be impacted by prerequisite enforcement, and the Academic Standing Policy.
1P13a	S	GRCC uses an annual program review and planning process to ensure curriculum and programs are up-to-date using a combination of internal (student learning) and external (advisory committee, etc.) data. Course review occurs every 3 years. Assessment of student learning also guides the curriculum and program review processes.
1P13b	O	GRCC discussed its various measures for course review, but provided no evidence or examples of how it utilized these measures in its decision-making process.
1P15a	S	Grand Rapids Community College uses a Library and Learning Commons concept, providing services such as tutoring, information literacy instruction. GRCC collaborates with students, faculty and tutors to meet their needs and keep programs current and timely. New academic support programs are being added to support student success.
1P15b	S	As a result of bench marking practices Grand Rapids Community College's academic support services has added new programs which have included course specific study programs, Summer Math Bridge Program, a pilot Structured Learning Assistance Program and a Student Athlete Support program.

- 1P16a S The Student Activities Office has been renamed Student Life, to reflect an expanded focus on educational and developmental experiences of students. The institution has developed a Curriculum Infusion Program, to develop collaborative events and activities to enhance student learning.
- 1P17a S General Learning Outcomes (GLO) assessment occurs every spring for students who have earned at least 45 credits. The institution also uses grades (credit courses) and competency-based assessments (non-credit courses) plus certification exams to track student learning. In addition, retention and graduation rates are monitored.
- 1P17b O The portfolios states “We rely on grades conferred by faculty and audits of courses successfully completed to determine if a student is eligible for a degree or certificate in our credit programs.” Although this is a traditional method of determining program completion, reliance on grades issued by faculty could be subject to the grade inflation that occurred in higher education. Course audits might be a method to randomly confirm that students have achieved competencies; however, no detail on course audits is offered in the portfolio. Perhaps program review could compliment reliance on grades and course audits to determine successful completion.
- 1P18a S Student learning outcomes and course assessments are based on Course Approval and Revision Process documents created when the course was initially developed.
- 1R1-1R6 SS Grand Rapids Community College provides data on student achievements in GLOs, retention, graduation rates, academic progression, performance on certification exams, transfer rates, academic success of transfer students, and job placement rates as measures of student learning and achievement. Comparative data is included and indicate that GRCC is performing well compared to benchmark measures.

- 1R1–1R6 O It is not clear how Grand Rapids Community College is using the data to improve its performance. There appears to be a lack of consistency in the reporting of the data. For example, most measures contain data through 2007 but others drop off in 2004.
- 1R1-1R6 O Grand Rapids Community College experienced a 27% increase in the number of graduates; however, reviewing the numbers of graduates does not provide an adequate comparison to other educational institutions unless these institutions are similar in the size to the number of students served by GRCC. It is perhaps more beneficial to track graduation rates for categories of students.
- 1R1-1R6 O On each dashboard graphic in this section, an arrow on the right of the graph points up and is labeled as Better. The meaning of this graphic is unclear and should be explained or it should be eliminated. In general the graphs were hard to read and contained too much information making interpretation difficult.
- 1R1-1R6 OO It is unclear if Grand Rapids Community College has identified benchmarks for the data provided for each of these initiatives. If so, these benchmarks should be incorporated into the narrative.
- 1R1-1R6 O Grand Rapids Community College transfer students do not perform as well as native students at 4-year institutions. It is not clear what action steps GRCC has taken to reverse this trend.
- 1I1 S The institution has mature systems in place to measure student learning and is in the process of implementing a series of new processes/policies relative to course placement, prerequisite enforcement, etc.
- 1I2 S As part of an annual planning process, departments identify internal processes that need improvement within their departments as well as others.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.
- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility.
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations.
- O2a Grand Rapids Community College has identified 6 areas of social responsibility/support programming for the institution and has developed community support, growth and educational programs to meet stakeholder needs within its service area. These areas of social responsibility/support programming include: Delta Strategy, Woodrick Diversity Learning Center (WDLC), Sustainability Initiative, Innovation Workspace, Learning Corners and Older Learner Center.

- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing, information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.
- O9a Partners, collaborators, and suppliers are important to Grand Rapids Community College as evidenced by their integration into GRCC key processes.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2P1a	S	Grand Rapids Community College uses the Process Based Management (PBM) model to evaluate both non-instructional and instructional processes. GRCC has established key measures for the student support services it provides and improvements have been recorded, as evidenced by data provided in the results section.
2P1b	O	It is unclear how the key processes identified in Figure 2.1 directly relate to the institution's other distinctive objectives. They appear to be more relevant to other categories (for example, Category 6 Supporting Organizational Operations), since they address institutional and business functions.

- 2P2a SS Grand Rapids Community College has identified its primary service area as the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District, serving primarily urban and commuter students. Grand Rapids Community College has identified 6 areas of social responsibility/support programming for the institution and has developed community support, growth and educational programs to meet stakeholder needs within its service area.
- 2P2b S New support services are identified during strategic planning processes that rely on data, college-wide stakeholder input, regulatory and accreditation requirements and measurements from existing services.
- 2P2c SS The success of the college’s community support programs is evidenced by the recognition the programs have received from external entities. For example, the Learning Corners concept serves as a model for other communities across Michigan and the Older Learning Center, which provides lifelong learning support to the senior adult population of Grand Rapids Community College’s service area, has produced a nationally distributed, award-winning television program called “Successful Aging” and was selected as a national role model program in 2007 by AARP.
- 2P2d OO Figure 2.2 identifies processes, measures and goals for the institution relative to its social responsibility/community support programs. Data related to those measure and goals are not included in the results section of Category 2.
- 2P3a OO Expectations regarding key non-instructional support processes are communicated through College Leadership Council and departmental leaders. It is not clear how (or if) these expectations, outcomes and successes relative to its social responsibility goals are communicated to community leaders and external stakeholders.

- 2P4a OO The support processes identified in Figure 2.1 relate more to business functions than the institution's other distinctive objectives. Since the narrative is somewhat limited, evaluation is difficult. It doesn't appear as though the response to this question is adequate or appropriate.
- 2P5-2P6a S Grand Rapids Community College uses the Voice of the Customer process to define the needs of all stakeholders and to gather both informal and formal feedback from faculty, students, staff and other stakeholders. Service processes are assessed using the Internal Customer Satisfaction survey.
- 2P5-2P6b O Detailed information on the VOC process and the Internal Customer Satisfaction survey (how and when these are used and what data is collected, who developed the survey, etc.) is not provided. While those processes are described in other sections of the document, it would have been helpful to have that information here.
- 2R1-2R4a S Grand Rapids Community College has data collection processes in place to track a wide variety of productivity and efficiency measures.
- 2R1-2R4b OO The data provided in this results section do not focus on measures of non-instructional objectives, as identified in Figure 2.2. Instead, the data track measurements of the entire institution. If the data could be disaggregated to focus on measures of non-instructional objectives, it would provide more meaningful feedback on the effectiveness of those objectives.
- 2R1-2R4c O Grand Rapids Community College could have used the results of measures identified in Figure 2.2 to assess the success of their other distinctive objectives.
- 2I1a S Process owners are responsible for ensuring consistent delivery of high quality, non-instructional services. They are also responsible for identifying project improvements to continually improve the institution's support services.

- 2I1b OO The narrative does not seem to fully address the improvements made within the six social responsibility/support program areas that are identified as the institution's other distinctive objectives.
- 2I2a S Annual departmental planning for non-instructional activities is uploaded into the institutional strategic planning process.
- 2I2b OO The narrative and improvements listed don't address the six social responsibility/support program areas that are identified as the institution's other distinctive objectives.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.

- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility.
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations.
- O2a Grand Rapids Community College has identified 6 areas of social responsibility/support programming for the institution and has developed community support, growth and educational programs to meet stakeholder needs within its service area. These areas of social responsibility/support programming include: Delta Strategy, Woodrick Diversity Learning Center (WDLC), Sustainability Initiative, Innovation Workspace, Learning Corners and Older Learner Center.
- O3a Grand Rapids Community College competition comes from local colleges (with five public institutions in close proximity), and a variety of private business and industry training providers. GRCC's competitive advantage includes an open door admission policy, low tuition, small class sizes and a ninety-year-old institution.
- O4a Grand Rapids Community College employs 652 fulltime employees, which includes 253 full-time faculty supplemented by 435 part-time adjunct faculty. The demographic makeup of employees, match the demographic makeup of the Grand Rapids MSA.
- O4b Bargaining organizations represent four of the seven employee groups, including the faculty.
- O4c Grand Rapids Community College's organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President's Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.
- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the

- Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.
- O9a Partners, collaborators, and suppliers are important to Grand Rapids Community College as evidenced by their integration into GRCC key processes.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1a	S	Grand Rapids Community College uses their Strategic Planning Process (SPP), Environmental Scan (ES), Voice of the Customer (VOC), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and the Grand Rapids Community College student satisfaction survey to identify, segment, analyze and support student needs. The ES assesses emerging student requirements, while the VOC provides detailed information on current student preferences and satisfaction.
3P1b	O	The segmentation process appears to focus on those populations with special (or accommodation) needs. It is unclear how other segments, such as transfer or occupational needs students are being met.

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| 3P2a | S | Process owners evaluate their service processes throughout the year and seek ways to improve services. The Process Based Management system guides this review process. |
| 3P2b | SS | Grand Rapids Community College has implemented several initiatives to strengthen its relationship with students and other stakeholders: personalized service, small class sizes and regular office hours, academic support programs, multiple outreach programs to build relationships with future students and feeder schools, transfer agreements, and business partnerships. |
| 3P2c | S | Student satisfaction data is gathered from the CCSSE and Grand Rapids Community College's own student satisfaction survey. A random sample of day and evening classes are selected to complete the surveys during class time. Survey results are distributed throughout the campus for review and action. |
| 3P2d | O | While Grand Rapids Community College surveys its classroom-based students, it is unclear whether they are collecting data from distance-learning students in its evaluation cycle. |
| 3P3a | S | Grand Rapids Community College works with the local Workforce Development Board, GVSU, and a variety of other community groups to ascertain their needs. In addition, the 30 advisory committees provide input to further improve programs to meet employer needs. GRCC's President serves as a member of the Greater Grand Rapids Manufacturers Council as its first non-manufacturing member. |
| 3P3b | O | Grand Rapids Community College formally surveys its advisory committees once every five years. For emerging fields this may be too long a period of time. |
| 3P4a | SS | A variety of partnerships are utilized to build relationships with student stakeholders including Workforce Development Boards, public and private high schools, Grand Rapids Community College Learning Corners, concurrent university enrollment agreements, |

Applied Technology Center, and three plus one (3+1) agreements with four universities.

- 3P5a SS Grand Rapids Community College uses a systematic process of identifying, tracking, and monitoring prospective students and market share in their service area. The use of this process to formulate marketing strategies is well identified and appears to be effective. For example, GRCC utilized its resources in market scanning to identify the underserved area in Ottawa County.
- 3P5b SS Enrollment data are tracked throughout the year via an Enrollment Scoreboard, which is updated weekly and reported to the Dean's Council and the College Leadership Council. This review process encourages mid-course corrections and tactical initiatives to target student segments that present growth opportunities or that need special attention.
- 3P6a SS Grand Rapids Community College has developed a variety of methods for students and other stakeholders to provide feedback, lodge complaints, obtain information and obtain services. For example, a cross-functional Complaint Management Team meets quarterly to review complaint data although faculty and staff are empowered to resolve complaints immediately.
- 3P6b SS Grand Rapids Community College has developed and institutionalized student service excellence guidelines for all faculty and staff to use with students and other stakeholders.
- 3R1a S Grand Rapids Community College's Voice of the Customer process is a robust system of gathering data using multiple methods to understand their constituents' satisfaction. Data is funneled through the strategic planning process to ensure changes are incorporated into the education and support services.
- 3R1b OO Grand Rapids Community College collects a wide variety of data from its constituents although it is unclear how this data is

- benchmarked and how the information gathered through this process is disseminated to the campus community.
- 3R2-6a S Grand Rapids Community College has put considerable effort into collecting and tracking stakeholder satisfaction data. Comparative data relative to student engagement is available through CCSSE reports. Student retention data shows Grand Rapids Community College outperforms colleges across the U.S. as measured by IPEDS, Michigan Peers and the CSRDE benchmark.
- 3R2-6b O While data is collected and shared, it is not clear if there are goals or targets established for each key requirement or satisfaction level, and if so, how those goals are established and who is held accountable for meeting those targets.
- 3R2-6c OO Despite the wide variety of data collected, the results presented appear to come from the internal surveys conducted in even-numbered years, the CCSSE surveys conducted in odd-numbered years, and the graduate surveys. The placement of all data in response to question 3R6 does not illustrate a clear understanding of the results. For example, Figures 3.5-3.8 might have been placed as a response to 3R2. The source of the data is not always entirely clear. For example, the narrative says the data in Figures 3.7 and 3.8 represent the internal surveys conducted; however, the figures include data from the odd-numbered years (when the CCSSE surveys were conducted). In addition, it would also be helpful if the number of student responses and standard deviations for the ratings, and a description of the scale used to collect the satisfaction data were provided. Without this information it is difficult to analyze the data presented.
- 3I1a S Process improvements have been implemented as a result of the analysis of the various data points and future targets established.
- 3I1b O Grand Rapids Community College provides a list of services that have recently been approved, but no information on the improvements made or the impetus for those improvements is

provided. For example, what specific changes were made in the textbook selection and ordering process and how was that change later reflected through student satisfaction with the bookstore or similar processes. It would have been helpful if GRCC had provided narrative that linked these recent improvements to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction data provided in the results section.

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| 3I2a | S | A cross-functional approach to process improvements allows input from department leaders and others who are impacted by poor processes in related departments. |
| 3I2b | O | While areas of improvement have been identified specific goals or targets should also be established. For example, increase participation in graduation ceremony by 20% over the next two years, or increase room utilization by 15% by optimizing room assignment process to better match class size with time of day and equipment needs. |

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O4a Grand Rapids Community College employs 652 fulltime employees, which includes 253 full-time faculty supplemented by 435 part-time adjunct faculty. The demographic makeup of employees matches the demographic makeup of the Grand Rapids MSA.
- O4b Bargaining organizations represent four of the seven employee groups, including the faculty.
- O4c Grand Rapids Community College's organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President's Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1a	S	Grand Rapids Community College has established general technology skills for all faculty and staff. Four employee groups, including faculty, are unionized and those labor agreements outline job requirements for each employee group.
4P1b	S	The annual performance review process used by Grand Rapids Community College includes a review of competencies and a follow up learning plan if developmental needs are identified.
4P2a	OO	While Grand Rapids Community College has established a methodical process to guide and record recruitment and hiring of faculty, it is unclear what criteria are documented in the Faculty Profile and the Selection Appointment Activity Record and how

- these documents ensure that quality candidates are recruited, employed, and retained.
- 4P2b O It is unclear how Grand Rapids Community College works with employees to continuously develop their skill sets to ensure they continue to meet the changing needs of a dynamic institution.
- 4P3a S The recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff includes broad representation on search and screening committees and is committed to recruiting a diverse faculty and staff, reflective of their community.
- 4P3b S Grand Rapids Community College's efforts to retain faculty and staff are focused on those areas determined to be key engagement and satisfaction factors: meaningful work, shared governance, a collaborative work environment and professional development opportunities. The institution offers a competitive compensation and benefits package.
- 4P4a SS Grand Rapids Community College provides new employee orientation days on a weekly basis and assigns a mentor to each new full-time employee. Additional orientations and training are provided for various faculty and staff depending on job duties. Adjunct faculty orientation is provided each semester.
- 4P4b S New, full-time faculty members participate in a year-long New Faculty Institute. Adjunct faculty are invited to attend the Adjunct Faculty Institute.
- 4P5a SS Grand Rapids Community College asks all employees to identify their retirement plans up to four years prior to retirement, with a monetary incentive provided to those who comply.
- 4P5b S Grand Rapids Community College employs a number of processes to ensure knowledge transfer from departing employees to new employees. These processes include documentation, mentoring of new hires by departing employees,

		exit interviews, and part-time continued employment of departing employees.
4P5c	S	Staffing levels are reviewed quarterly by the President's executive team.
4P6a	SS	Grand Rapids Community College utilizes a Plan-Do-Assess-Learn model for designing key work processes that directly link to identified core competencies. Regular surveys are conducted of employees regarding workforce satisfaction through two quality assessment instruments. Stakeholders, partners, collaborators, and the community are also invited to provide input in the planning phase of the PBM process.
4P6b	S	The Personal Assessment of the College Environment, Staff Opinion Survey, Learning Day Sessions, Organizational Development Forums, interviews, focus groups and other tools are used to measure performance.
4P6c	SS	Cross-functional teams, some utilizing students and other stakeholders, are subject to an annual chartering process, to ensure that they accomplish meaningful work.
4P7	SS	Grand Rapids Community College promotes ethical and responsible practices and conduct through its Ethics Monitoring System (EMS), which includes an ethics statement, a series of ethics policies and a process for reporting and responding to ethics violations. These policies are reviewed as part of the new employee orientation process.
4P8a	SS	Grand Rapids Community College has identified professional development as one of the key factors linked to job satisfaction. The Woodrick Diversity Learning Center provides diversity training and awareness. The Learning Academy provides training for faculty and staff on teaching, learning, leadership, technology, communications, management and procedural knowledge.

- 4P8b S The Learning Academy tracking system allows the institution to track participation through the Enterprise Learning Module in PeopleSoft.
- 4P8c SS The Learning Academy identifies training needs by meeting with deans and faculty teams, by analyzing survey data, and by attending college-wide events like Learning Days and departmental meetings. Programs like Faculty Salons, Subject Matter Expert Geeks (SMEEKS), and Formation Retreats are examples of specialized training opportunities to meet those identified needs.
- 4P8d O A centralized approach to professional development may be efficient; however, some professional development needs are very individual in nature. The Portfolio states that “every effort” is made to accommodate these needs, but it is unclear what percentage of funding is available for research, conferences, and sabbaticals.
- 4P9 S A comprehensive system to provide employee training that aligns short and long range organizational plans to strengthen instructional and non-instructional programs and services has been put in place. This system is directed by the Core Competencies and many of the College’s action projects. Grand Rapids Community College uses an employee-teaching-employee model and encourages ongoing learning experiences to help reinforce knowledge and skills.
- 4P10a SS The personnel evaluation and recognition system is designed to align the individuals work goals and professional development, to the Mission, Vision, Values, and Ends, to the college and department strategic plan. The narrative in 4P10 provides a detailed description of the annual evaluation processes used for non-union administrators, support staff, new and tenured faculty. Of note, the use of a Joint Evaluation Team enhances the objectivity of feedback in the Faculty Evaluation Process.

- 4P10b O Grand Rapids Community College tenured faculty are evaluated on a three year cycle. As a part of this cycle, student evaluations of instruction are performed. It is unclear if student evaluations of instruction are performed annually or if they are only completed during the year in which the faculty member's performance is being assessed. If the latter is the case, this does not seem to hold with GRCC's desire to regularly seek input from its stakeholders.
- 4P11 S Grand Rapids Community College has several recognition methods, including formal awards for faculty, staff, and student workers who model performance excellence. The Personal Enrichment Team also plans a variety of recognition and personal enrichment activities.
- 4P12a S Grand Rapids Community College regularly collects and analyzes data on workforce engagement through a variety of survey instruments, exit interviews, focus groups and informal interviews. For example, the annual Baldrige-based SOS survey is used by Human Resources to develop action plans relative to worker satisfaction.
- 4P12b S The PACE Survey results are analyzed relative to data collected from 45 community colleges across the nation.
- 4P13 S Grand Rapids Community College sponsors a Wellness Team that offers a variety of campus activities and events to enhance the wellness of its employees. Health safety training is part of the employee orientation program.
- 4R1-4R4a S Grand Rapids Community College has data collection processes in place to track a wide variety of institutional data on workforce engagement, satisfaction and development. Comparative data is available from other community colleges.
- 4R1-4R4b O Results for Grand Rapids Community College leadership and workforce development are difficult to gauge as to whether or not they are successful as Grand Rapids Community College has not

- developed internal goal numbers nor are benchmark data provided.
- 4R1-4R4c O Grand Rapids Community College indicates that the diversity of its student body has changed rather dramatically in the last two years. However, no detail was provided on how GRCC plans to address the need to further diversify its faculty and staff given this change in its student population.
- 4R1-4R4d OO Empowerment is at a very low level on Grand Rapids Community College's survey. Although the portfolio states that this is a "focus area for leadership" there is no identification as to what is occurring to address this issue.
- 4R1-4R4e OO The graphs provided in the results section are difficult to follow, with too much information provided in too small a space. In addition, it would be helpful if an explanatory narrative was placed directly before or after the graph, to aid the reader's understanding of the information presented. It would be helpful if acronyms were spelled out the first time they are used in a narrative section to aid the reader's understanding of the information presented.
- 4R1-4R4f O The narrative suggests that Grand Rapids Community College compensation levels are considerably higher than compensation at Michigan peer group colleges. However, Figure 4.12 is a graph comparing compensation (salary expenses) relative to overall expenses and doesn't necessarily show that compensation is higher (just that GRCC salaries account for a larger portion of the GRCC budget).
- 4I1 O Grand Rapids Community College indicates that it has a mature system in place to understand and respond to employee needs. However, the information provided is not sufficient to answer the question. For example, there is no mention of whether GRCC has addressed the empowerment issue identified through earlier processes.

- 4I2 OO During the annual departmental planning process, department leaders and staff identify the departmental processes that need to be improved. A list is provided of the processes identified for improvement during the most recent planning process. It is unclear why these processes were identified, what needs to be done and/or who is responsible for moving the initiatives forward.
- 4I1-4I2a O While recent improvements were reported for the faculty hiring process this process was also included in the needs improvement area. Without specific information on which aspects of the process need to be reviewed it is difficult to provide additional suggestions.
- 4I1-4I2b OO Neither improvement question was answered in depth, which is a requirement of the portfolio guidelines. In addition, the response to 4I2 is similar to the responses given for other improvement questions in other categories.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Ob The college is currently served by an interim president.

- O4a Grand Rapids Community College employs 652 fulltime employees, which includes 253 full-time faculty supplemented by 435 part-time adjunct faculty. The demographic makeup of employees, match the demographic makeup of the Grand Rapids MSA.

- O4b Bargaining organizations represent four of the seven employee groups, including the faculty.

- O4c Grand Rapids Community College’s organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President’s Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.

- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.

- O5b Grand Rapids Community College has been involved with quality improvement processes for many years. The college was admitted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in 2000 and has participated in the Michigan Quality Leadership Award (MQLA) and Baldrige, which resulted in two MQLA site visits and designation as a MQLA recipient in 2007.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5P1	S	Senior leaders and the Board of Trustees periodically review and refine the mission, vision and values as part of the strategic planning process. Grand Rapids Community College distributes their strategic plan to students, stakeholders, suppliers, collaborators, and partners.

- 5P2a S Senior leadership has developed a model (Figure 5.1) that provides a framework for performance excellence, with all college activities stemming from the mission, vision and values of the institution. These guiding principles are operationalized through five learning-centered focus areas and the strategies and action projects contained within them.
- 5P2b S In addition to the use of a Performance Excellence Model and the activities within the Learning-Centered Focused Areas, the college used Baldrige criteria and AQIP standards to identify improvements.
- 5P3 S Grand Rapids Community College has established community listening posts to identify and understand community needs and concerns. GRCC solicits public input through its Community Conversation processes and through membership on community boards and in volunteer organizations. This input is incorporated into the strategic planning process and is discussed at leadership team meetings.
- 5P4a S Senior leaders encourage faculty and staff to identify ways to create breakthrough change in education delivery and in support service processes.
- 5P4b SS Grand Rapids Community College has been designated as the nation's lead agent for the Innovation Curriculum project, a national effort to develop and implement curriculum, courses, processes and products to teach innovation to students, workers and employers.
- 5P5a S Grand Rapids Community College leadership includes its Board of Trustees; President's Executive Council; College Leadership Council and the Academic Governing Council. These leadership councils collaborate on a regular basis to ensure good communications and responsiveness to changing student and stakeholder needs.

- 5P5b S Grand Rapids Community College promotes delegation of authority and encourages decision making at the point of greatest impact. It is GRCC's desire to have teams and individuals empowered to identify and implement improvement ideas and resolve issues.
- 5P6a SS The decision dissemination process is comprehensive and allows for employees with direct impact to be notified first with subsequent college-wide announcement. This allows employees to understand how his or her contribution to the organization is impacted by a decision and shows value in reinforcing how individual responsibilities relate to organizational objectives.
- 5P6b S The strategic planning process is used to produce strategic goals, college action projects, measures, and targets to move the institution forward. Senior leaders oversee the implementation of the college action projects and review progress using the Dashboard measurement system.
- 5P7a S Grand Rapids Community College leaders use multiple methods to communicate (Figure 5.2) with its workforce and to encourage open, two-way communication through the organization.
- 5P7b O Grand Rapids Community College may benefit from evaluating the process of its monthly Board of Trustee meetings as it is unclear if these meetings are two way communications or if a typographical error was made in the table (Figure 5.2).
- 5P8a S Grand Rapids Community College has adopted the learning principles established by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges. These principles place learning, innovation and student success at the center of the institution's activities.
- 5P8b S "PBM" is deployed across the college and everyone is trained on how to use and apply the system to their role.
- 5P9a S Grand Rapids Community College uses leadership positions for specific projects or temporary assignments, interim appointments

- and special initiatives to help employees develop leadership and other job skills.
- 5P9b S The development of the Succession Management Plan uses the Enterprise Learning Software to monitor professional development activities. The President's Leadership Development Program, the Continuous Quality Improvement Network Team, and Leadership Grand Rapids are a few of the training options designed to train staff on leadership skills.
- 5P9c S Participants in learning opportunities are surveyed after six weeks to determine the effectiveness of training and to identify barriers to implementation of any skills/knowledge gained in the training.
- 5P9d O Grand Rapids Community College identifies individuals with potential to serve in other higher capacities and provides those individuals with training and development opportunities. It is unclear who identifies faculty and staff for leadership potential and/or if employees can self advocate as interested in leadership positions.
- 5P10 OO The narrative does not respond to the question and appears to be a duplication of narrative provided in 5P9. The narrative provided discusses succession plans for non-executive level employees but does not address stability of the institutional mission, vision, and values during leadership succession. This is a critical issue, given the institution's interim president.
- 5R1-5R3a S Grand Rapids Community College has begun to record measures for results of the leadership processes identified.
- 5R1-5R3b OO This series of questions asks the institution to discuss and provide results for performance measures linked to leading and communicating. However, the only response provided is Figure 5.4. No narrative to explain these results is provided.
- 5R1-5R3c OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates that it has numerous examples of innovative practices within its operation but failed to

take the opportunity to share descriptions of these practices in its narrative, nor did it discuss the specific results that led to the creation, refinement, or termination of any practices.

- 511 OO Grand Rapids Community College lists processes that have been improved recently but does not provide any explanation of how these processes have been improved or the impetus for the improvements. For example, GRCC gives no examples in this question of how data, information, and performance results have been used in its decision-making processes other than a generic description of its overall process.
- 512 OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates that two processes have been identified for improvement as part of the annual developmental planning process. However, Grand Rapids Community College does not provide any explanation as to why these processes were identified for improvement or who is responsible for implementing them.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.
- Ob The college is currently served by an interim president.
- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility.
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations.
- O4c Grand Rapids Community College's organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President's Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.
- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing, information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O5b Grand Rapids Community College has been involved with quality improvement processes for many years. The college was admitted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in 2000 and has participated in the Michigan Quality Leadership Award (MQLA) and Baldrige, which resulted in two MQLA site visits and designation as a MQLA recipient in 2007.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and

developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1a	SS	Grand Rapids Community College uses the Process Based Management Model (PBM) to ensure that process owners design, manage, and create new processes effectively. Faculty and staff receive instruction on the PBM during their orientation and process teams receive additional training to ensure effective use of the model.
6P1b	SS	Data collected through the Voice of the Customer process, plus input collected through other means, are used by design teams to develop and/or revise work processes and services.
6P1c	OO	While it is positive that Grand Rapids Community College utilizes a defined PBM model, this answer is an exact replica of the second half of 4P6, thus no new information was presented. The narrative could have used an example of how a service was identified, implemented, and managed using the processes above rather than a detailed description of the processes themselves.
6P2a	S	Cross-functional teams are used to establish and review institutional standards for administrative support services. For example, a Learning Environment and Space Planning Team determined standards for campus learning spaces and meets regularly to review classroom needs, identify changes, and respond to emergency requirements.
6P2b	O	Grand Rapids Community College has a research project currently underway to study the impact of classroom learning environment on teaching and learning. It is unclear if this should also include online and distance learning variables.

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| 6P2c | O | Cross-functional teams, the College-Wide Information System, and Blackboard leadership teams address the learning and technology aspect of the college but it is unclear how the college addresses other administrative support services. |
| 6P3a | SS | Grand Rapids Community College has a well-organized and comprehensive emergency response system in place for use in any campus crisis or emergency with debriefings and review after the fact. The system supports decision making and dissemination of decisions to the appropriate response personnel as well as iterative and redundant communication channels to pass information to faculty, staff, and students. |
| 6P3b | SS | Grand Rapids Community College has invested in an emergency phone alert system which allows the campus phone system to be used as a public address system for instant notification in an emergency, providing one-touch "Code 2" access to police, and emergency call boxes throughout campus. Purchase of video surveillance cameras and an outdoor public address system are also being considered. |
| 6P4 | S | Grand Rapids Community College has an information security policy in place that includes specific guidelines and procedures to protect institutional data and its data systems. This is an effective process to manage and protect electronic administrative and organizational support service processes. |
| 6P5a | SS | The institution has developed an extensive knowledge management process to collect and transfer the organizational and job knowledge needed to accomplish work, make improvements, and create innovations. |
| 6P5b | S | An action project has been initiated to review the multiple methods used to collect and transfer knowledge and develop a system that will serve as a central institutional repository for all information and data generated by its employees, students, and other stakeholders. |

- 6R1-6R5a S Grand Rapids Community College has numerous measures used to monitor services across the campus. Improvements such as updating of curriculum, class size, and tutoring effectiveness measures reflect the impact of changes implemented.
- 6R1-6R5b OO The results section in Category 6 is very limited, with narrative provided for only one results question. As a consequence, the narrative does not address the questions posed in this section. For example, Grand Rapids Community College indicates in the process narrative that the VOC process is utilized in the Plan step of its PBM model for support services. GRCC has not provided a result demonstrating that data from the VOC process was collected, reviewed through the PBM process, and then the resulting outcome measured. Further, the documentation indicates that process results are available for review on site; however, those results have not been documented in the portfolio.
- 6R1-6R5c OO A plethora of charts and data are included in the portfolio but unfortunately the readers are unable to match the individual results questions to the data. The use of percentages in nearly all graphs makes it difficult to accurately assess GRCC's progress in areas such as those presented in Figures 6.8 and 6.10. GRCC could improve the usability of these graphs by including sample sizes or additional information in the narrative, which helps to characterize these improvements more effectively.
- 6R1-6R5d O Although Grand Rapids Community College presents varied measures of performance the results section lacks meaningful comparison or context. For example, GRCC states that one of its strategic advantages is to maintain class size at 24 students, which it claims has been done consistently from 2003 to 2007. However no additional comparison information is provided such as enrollment figures for these years.
- 6R1-6R5e OO The individual questions could be addressed individually. If the data does not exist to answer them individually, perhaps different

sets of data need to be collected. By addressing the questions collectively, the reader becomes confused. For example, how does Cost per Student and Cost per Contact hour measure effectiveness? The graph in Figure 6.4 that illustrates cost per contact hour is incorrect.

- 6I1 OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates five processes have been improved recently but does not provide any explanation of how these processes have been improved or the impetus for the improvements.
- 6I2 OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates that five processes have been identified for improvement as part of the annual developmental planning process; however, Grand Rapids Community College does not provide any explanation of why these processes were identified for improvement or who is responsible for implementing the change.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O5b Grand Rapids Community College has been involved with quality improvement processes for many years. The college was admitted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in 2000 and has participated in the Michigan Quality Leadership Award (MQLA) and Baldrige, which resulted in two MQLA site visits and designation as a MQLA recipient in 2007.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.
- O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
7P1-P2a	S	Performance data points are established by the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) are measured daily via the Process Based Management (PBM) system and reported to the stakeholders via the Dashboard (DB) measurement system. Department heads are responsible to ensure process level measurement data is used to both monitor progress and make appropriate changes. Grand Rapids Community College also reports on required

		external data for the State of Michigan such as graduation and retention data.
7P1-7P2b	S	Quarterly dashboard reviews are conducted to determine if progress has occurred. Adjustments to the current projects are made based on these reviews.
7P1-7P2c	O	The dashboard's process will be enhanced when measurements are identified for all of the components (Figure 7.1).
7P3a	S	Team members and department heads can request training in the use of data collection, instrument development, and analysis to support their assessment of organizational processes and improvement efforts.
7P3b	O	Although the design process described in 7P1 – 2 relies on departmental level design of data collection procedures, the only support for developing quality measurements seems to be limited to providing training upon request. Based on the results sections, Grand Rapids Community College might consider offering additional levels of support through the institutional research and planning office.
7P3c	O	It is unclear what is meant in the narrative when Grand Rapids Community College states, "The measures themselves are also discussed during these [QDR] reviews and changes are made as needed." It is uncertain whether Grand Rapids Community College makes changes to the values of the measures based on feedback from the QDR or if the performance standards measured are changed as a result of this feedback. A description for how this occurs would help the reader better understand the process.
7P4a	SS	Grand Rapids Community College has implemented a formal progress-to-plan review at the College Leadership Council's weekly meetings and at a formal quarterly dashboard review. Two college action projects are reviewed at each CLC meeting, so that all action projects are reviewed twice per year. These progress reports take the form of Gant charts, trend charts or similar data

display tools and are published in report form for senior leaders, with comparison data. The reports are also available electronically so a wider audience can review progress.

- 7P4b O Grand Rapids Community College indicates that it involves only the leadership teams in a review of information pertaining to changes in the market area, community-related issues, and emerging student and stakeholder needs. Based on this description, it appears that faculty and other stakeholder groups are not involved in this process, which runs counter to what has been said elsewhere in the narrative.
- 7P4c OO Although numerous data measurements are described in the portfolio, and a comprehensive system of analysis (including a warning system) is described, none of this data is reported in the Results section. As of January, 2009, many of the measurements are missing from the DB that is published on the Grand Rapids Community College website. For example, the data available at <http://www.Grand Rapids Community College.edu/dashboard> is neither current nor aligned with the data provided in Figure 7.1.
- 7P5a S Comparative data is sought when the performance measure is key to institutional operations and/or linked to the strategic plan. This data is used to make comparisons to peer groups or competitors. Measures that are monitored via the dashboard are generally supported with comparative data from national survey instruments, from the Michigan Department of Education or from industry leaders.
- 7P5b S Grand Rapids Community College utilized CCSSE data to drive a change in its new student orientation to encourage students to set aside more hours for study time in their day.
- 7P5c OO Figure 7.2 is missing from the portfolio. Therefore, it is unclear if the college compares its information to the competition or peer group organizations.

- 7P5d OO While Grand Rapids Community College has identified several sources of comparative data and information, the portfolio does not indicate the criteria and methods for choosing these sources (aside from the importance of a measure and the availability of data). GRCC has obviously gathered benchmark data from an outstanding and wide-ranging group of organizations (Figure 7.3). However, it did not share the process used to select these benchmark activities.
- 7P6a S The Performance Excellence Model, Process Model and Dashboard are all aligned so process leaders can review performance, understand the impact on other measures, identify areas of improvement and link process performance to college outcomes. Information is shared across the campus through College Action Project Champions, leadership team members, website postings, key process owners of the process-based indices and linkage with the dashboard measures.
- 7P7a SS Grand Rapids Community College has a comprehensive, secure, campus-wide information system (CWIS) in place designed to provide access to faculty, staff and students. GRCC involves functional areas in the development, testing, and training of system upgrades and enhancements.
- 7P7b O Grand Rapids Community College indicates that it has secured a secondary data center that is several miles away from the main campus. Best practices in data continuity indicate that a secondary data center should be located in a separate geographic region in case of natural or man-made disaster that causes catastrophic loss to an entire localized geographic area.
- 7P7c O Grand Rapids Community College indicates that it has several off-site facilities where it offers classes. However, there is no discussion in the narrative about how access to hardware, software, and campus-wide information systems is provided, with the exception of the user access to the portal system.

- 71-7R3a OO In the results section Grand Rapids Community College refers to Figure 7.1, which does not provide evidence of results; it provides a framework for interpreting results.
- 71-7R3b OO Grand Rapids Community College states that no data is available. However, benchmarking organizations were identified in the process section. If using comparison data is new for GRCC, then an explanation of where it is in the process would be helpful.
- 7R1-7R3c OO While Grand Rapids Community College references many processes regarding measuring effectiveness, these results questions are not answered in the depth necessary to compliment the portfolio or to assess the appropriate results kept and shared with stakeholders. If the Dashboard was more complete, this would have been a positive addition to this section.
- 711a OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates two processes have been improved recently but does not provide any explanation of how these processes have been improved or the impetus for the improvements.
- 712a S The departmental planning sessions provide opportunities for improvement of processes. This can be an effective method of encouraging college-wide alignment with strategic goals.
- 712b OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates that two processes have been identified for improvement as part of the annual developmental planning process. However, GRCC does not provide any explanation of why these processes were identified for improvement or who is responsible for implementing the change.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b Grand Rapids Community College has nine learning-centered processes.
- O4c Grand Rapids Community College's organizational structure consists of the Board of Trustees (Board), President's Executive Council (PEC), College Leadership Council (CLC), and the Academic Governing Council (AGC) who collaborate with staff and faculty to ensure open communication.
- O5a Grand Rapids Community College uses the following performance activities to guide the college through process improvement: Performance Excellence Model (PEM), the Strategic Planning Process (SPP), the Dashboard (DB), and the Process-Based Management Model (PBM). Grand Rapids Community College uses process-based management tools for purchasing information management, financial management, human resources, facilities and safety.
- O5b Grand Rapids Community College has been involved with quality improvement processes for many years. The college was admitted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in 2000 and has participated in the Michigan Quality Leadership Award (MQLA) and Baldrige, which resulted in two MQLA site visits and designation as a MQLA recipient in 2007.
- O7a Grand Rapids Community College uses a dashboard system to maximize the institutional effectiveness data available online.

O8a Grand Rapids Community College identified five strategic challenges which include overcoming state funding reductions, balancing enrollment, managing community expectations and capacity, enhancing learning for minority and developmental students, managing operating costs, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1-8P2	S	Grand Rapids Community College uses a four-stage, five-part master strategic planning process that provides an overall vision supporting strategies to meet its aggressive short and long term goals.
8P1a	S	The Strategic Planning Process (SPP) is a comprehensive, year-long process that allows input from all major stakeholders via the Board, the College Leadership Council, selected college leaders, the Environmental Scan (ES) which provides an understanding of external factors, and an Organizational Assessment. The process aligns strategic planning goals with mission, vision, and values. The process includes strategic outcomes, learning-centered focus areas, strategic goals, college action projects, Dashboard measures and specific performance targets. The process is also aligned with Grand Rapids Community College's budgeting process.
8P1b	S	Grand Rapids Community College assigns "champions" to be responsible to ensure that necessary supporting plans are developed at the department level to execute College Action Projects and provide accountability for progress. Additional input from other employee groups is gathered during the annual college-wide "Learning Day". This input is used in the formation of the dashboard measures.

- 8P1c O Strategic Goals and College Action Projects have three-year time frames to remain responsive to changing higher education and market area changes. However, there could be some elements that require an extended outlook. For example, capital improvements (such as land acquisition and buildings) could require longer-range planning.
- 8P2a S Grand Rapids Community College has identified 6 over-arching strategic goals in its current strategic plan: developmental education, diversity, entrance and transfer, flexible learning, lifelong learning, and workforce development.
- 8P2b S Figure 8.1.2 adequately documents strategic goals, action projects, measures and main objectives for Grand Rapids Community College. This provides a framework for improvement strategies to be completed over several years.
- 8P2c OO The information provided in 8.1.2 provides long- and short-term action projects. While the institution provided comprehensive tables that identify the long- and short-term strategies, the institution did not provide its process for determining short- and long-term strategies.
- 8P3-8P7 S Grand Rapids Community College has clearly established planning phases to ensure campus wide involvement in the creation of their strategic plan, College Action Projects, resource support and appropriate dashboard measures.
- 8P3-8P4a SS As part of the deployment phase, champions discuss college action project expectations, etc. with department leaders prior to development of the department's own action plans. A planning template is used to document departmental plans and resource needs are fed into the budgeting process. In the budgeting process, priority consideration is given to requests tied to college action plans.

- 8P3-8P4b S Department heads have clear responsibility for developing action plans, measures to track their progress, resources necessary to accomplish the plans, and risks associated with the action plans.
- 8P3-8P4c S Additional mid-year funding of action projects can be accomplished if tuition revenue exceeds the forecasted budget amounts, thus preventing some needs from waiting for annual review and prioritization.
- 8P5d S The College Leadership Council establishes dashboard measures and targets aligned with the strategic goals and College Action Projects. The Learning Centered Focused Area Teams, a subset of CLC, are responsible for reviewing and refining existing dashboard measurements.
- 8P6-8P7a SS Phase four (evaluation) of the master strategic planning process is used to help determine risks associated with the planning process. Semi-annual Progress to Plan (PTP) and Quarterly Dashboard Review (QDR) provide several opportunities for mid-course corrections. This process also ensures that all College Action Projects are reviewed at least twice per year by the College Leadership Council.
- 8P8a S The Strategic Goals (SGs) are matched to College Action Projects (CAPs) and are measured by reviewing their impact on the workforce. The faculty and staff plans provide a detailed review of the training necessary to the college to enhance its workforce.
- 8P8b O Figure 8.1-3 briefly summarizes employee development opportunities, but an expanded narrative could have clarified how these opportunities address changing requirements demanded by organizational strategies and action plans.
- 8R1a SS Grand Rapids Community College uses a Dashboard to track progress on its strategic goals and College Action Projects. The Dashboard includes vice president-specific and department-specific Dashboards that are linked to the college-level

- Dashboard. Champions for the College Action Projects are responsible for aggregating departmental action plans and for developing an action project Dashboard.
- 8R1b O Grand Rapids Community College has provided several sets of results on site. It would have assisted the reader to summarize key measures and results in the portfolio.
- 8R2-8R4a S Grand Rapids Community College compares its strategic and departmental plans against past performance and relevant benchmarks when possible. Three-year performance projections are provided and are managed by department heads and champions. The overall goal of the strategic plan is to produce a level of performance so that GRCC sustains its position as a role model community college in Michigan, becomes a national role model, maintains its competitive position and exceeds stakeholder expectations.
- 8R2-8R4b S Grand Rapids Community College provides a summary of results for the 2007-2010 strategic plan, with 10 of its 33 College Action Projects completed in 2007. One action project was discontinued and the remaining 22 action projects were rolled forward into 2008.
- 8R1-8R4c OO The depiction of two tables using percentages is inadequate in presenting the results for this section. There is little narrative to discuss the results and specifics are not included. For example, the institution stated that one CAP was discontinued but did not discuss which one of the changes led to it being discontinued.
- 8R2-8R4a OO Figure 8.1-3 in this section (which is not numbered correctly) does give some performance results. However, the chart could be improved by illustrating the 2007 projected and actual results. This chart could be separated into three charts as responses to the three individual questions.
- 8R2-8R4b OO Figure 8.1-4 (Strategic Plan Accomplishment) is somewhat difficult to follow and appears to have had a column heading cut off. The

narrative describing this figure provides a non-specific explanation of how the strategic planning process is utilized to align strategic directions. The reader would have benefitted from having one or two specific examples.

- 8R2-8R4c OO Although the college provided a detailed plan for faculty and staff in figure 8.1-3, these items were never addressed in the chart displaying the college's Strategic Plan Accomplishments (figure 8.1-4). Therefore, it is unclear if measures were identified, results were reviewed or changes were implemented due to the implementation of these activities.
- 8R2-8R4d OO Grand Rapids Community College has a wealth of information on the measurement of various activities but it is unclear how this information is used. For example, GRCC shows completed projects and references one that was discontinued "due to changes which occurred during the year." It is unclear how changes are made or those changes communicated to those involved.
- 8I1a OO Grand Rapids Community College's continuous quality improvement processes have resulted in the re-design of the strategic planning process and dashboard reporting systems. However, GRCC does not provide any explanation of how these processes have been improved or the impetus for the improvements.
- 8I2a O The college provides the opportunity for people to be involved in the planning process but it is unclear to what extent people take advantage of this opportunity. Grand Rapids Community College recognizes the need for improved input into the SPP at the departmental level.
- 8I2b OO Grand Rapids Community College indicates that two processes have been identified for improvement as part of the annual developmental planning process. However, GRCC does not

provide any explanation of why these processes were identified for improvement or who is responsible for implementing the change.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Grand Rapids Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- Oa Founded in 1914, Grand Rapids Community College is a public, two-year comprehensive community college with three campus locations which serves the Grand Rapids Public School District and 20 districts within the Kent Intermediate School District serving primarily urban and commuter students.
- Ob The college is currently served by an interim president.
- Oc Instruction is offered at off-site facilities and high schools throughout the metropolitan area including an offsite vocational training facility.
- O1a During the academic year 2007-2008, the college enrolled nearly 22,000 students studying in more than 1,700 courses. Over 7000 clients were served in noncredit instruction. Student segments include developmental, minority, international, dual enrollment, apprentice and special populations.
- O3a Grand Rapids Community College competition comes from local colleges (with five public institutions in close proximity), and a variety of private business and

industry training providers. GRCC's competitive advantage includes an open door admission policy, low tuition, small class sizes and a ninety-year-old institution.

- O4b Bargaining organizations represent four of the seven employee groups, including the faculty.
- O9a Partners, collaborators, and suppliers are important to Grand Rapids Community College as evidenced by their integration into Grand Rapids Community College key processes.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1a	S	Grand Rapids Community College utilizes a variety of traditional and innovative programs to build relationships with the many school districts, educational organizations and businesses in their service area. For example, GRCC participates in the Michigan Transfer Network and is in conversations with the State of Michigan to provide an overall 'e-transcript' solution.
9P1b	S	Grand Rapids Community College has reached out to high school counselors through visits, newsletters, breakfasts, and a targeted website to inform the counselors of the college's programs and activities.
9P1c	O	The narrative about e-transcripts in 9P1 would more appropriately answer the question for 9P2.
9P2a	S	The college employs several methods to understand the needs of employers, such as the President holding the first non-manufacturing seat on the Greater Grand Rapids Manufacturer's Council, participating on the local Workforce Development Board, partnering with many of the health care providers in the region, and establishing 30 Advisory Councils that allow employers in

- career specialties to provide input into educational needs and requirements.
- 9P1-2b O The college has established relationships with feeder institutions and employers in the community. There is an opportunity to assess how the institution prioritizes these relationships in terms of resource allocation and staff time required to sustain the relationships over time.
- 9P3 S Grand Rapids Community College has outsourced several of its primary services to students. These organizations retained former GRCC employees in the outsourcing process and also employ student workers. To further integrate these organizations into GRCC culture, staff members from these organizations participate in regularly established meetings, and special GRCC events and processes such as the search for the new President. In addition, GRCC staff participated in a vendor-sponsored workshop to learn about sustainability.
- 9P4a S Grand Rapids Community College develops relationships with its suppliers through a series of outreach efforts and membership opportunities. Within purchasing, GRCC facilitates face-to-face supplier meetings.
- 9P4b O While information is collected from suppliers it is unclear if feedback is provided from suppliers to the college to improve the relationship.
- 9P5a S Numerous “listening posts” and the Community Conversations provide a method of building relationships with the general community and gathering input to influence future programmatic changes. Grand Rapids Community College also solicits input through leadership participation on community boards and in community volunteer organizations.
- 9P5b O Grand Rapids Community College’s response to this question focused solely on its interactions with the local community, which has been discussed previously in the narrative. It would have

been informative to the reader to understand how other relevant relationships to education associations, external agencies, and consortia partners are created, prioritized, and built as well as how feedback from these groups is collected and discussed.

- 9P6a S Grand Rapids Community College has identified its key partners and has entered into collaborative relationships with these organizations. Many of these partners are integrated into GRCC key processes including strategic planning, leadership and governance, support processes, learning teams, organizational improvement, and innovation efforts.
- 9P6b O Although Grand Rapids Community College listed a plethora of partners, collaborators, and key suppliers, there was little discussion as to how the college continuously assesses the quality and viability of these relationships to ensure these organizations are meeting the needs of all parties.
- 9P6c O The chart in Figure 9.1 specifies the characteristics of good relationships with all three groups, but the narrative only describes how Grand Rapids Community College works with one of these groups (key suppliers) to achieve these objectives.
- 9P7a S The most significant program used to develop and maintain inter-departmental relationships is GRCC's team-based culture, which includes standing cross-functional teams, CAP teams, PBM improvement teams, and innovation workspace groups. A series of institution-wide meetings enhances this aspect of the college. This culture is further enhanced by the philosophy of empowering decision making at the point of greatest impact and to use initiative to make decisions and recommendations about process improvements.
- 9P7b S GRCC utilizes a variety of college-wide events and communications as a means of building relationships within the institution. For example, the institution sponsors college-wide

meetings, uses email, Grand Rapids Community College Today, Inside Grand Rapids Community College and all-staff memos and videos from the president to keep its large staff informed. GRCC further seeks to build positive relationships within the institution through its emphasis on and use of the employees-teaching-employees model of organizational learning.

9R1-3a SS Grand Rapids Community College has reached commendable levels of compliance with regulatory and accreditation agencies.

9R1-3b OO Grand Rapids Community College states earlier in this category that there is a process to collect feedback from key external and internal constituents. These results should have been presented here. GRCC shows no comparison data to other organizations nor lists data collected and reviewed regularly. Measuring the key characteristic listed in Figure 9.1 could provide meaningful results on how GRCC builds relationships with partners, collaborators, and suppliers.

9I1-2 OO Grand Rapids Community College failed to demonstrate how their Planning model contributed to the identification and improvement of the items listed in 9I1; how it used its Planning model to identify and select those items listed in 9I2; and who is responsible for implementing the change.