

CATEGORY 7 – MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Moraine Valley uses a systematic approach to data collection, storage, and analysis. A centralized system collects and stores the majority of data. Reports generated by the offices of Institutional Research and Planning, and Information Technology (IT) provide data necessary to measure effectiveness. Results of recent surveys measuring the effectiveness of processes for Institutional Effectiveness and use of the DRIVE model for planning continuous improvement suggest some improvements to these processes. The AQIP Action Project on Institutional Effectiveness has made recommendations to integrate several institutional effectiveness processes and to create a central repository for storing data substantiating effectiveness reports.

7C1: COLLECTING, STORING, AND ACCESSING DATA

The college collects and stores information primarily through its centralized production systems, which include Student Information, Financial Aid, Finance, Payroll, Human Resources, Degree Audit, Bookstore and Fixed Assets, and others. The system owner controls access to these systems. For example, the Controller determines who can access the Finance system.

To produce required state reports, Institutional Research and Planning pulls data out of a number of system components and uses SAS software to create the reports. The IT department also produces special reports from the systems and report writers.

Numerous areas have their own systems to store data used within those departments. Examples are Workforce Development and Community Services, Fixed Assets Inventory, and the Library. While each of these systems supports a specific function within departments, access to these systems remains under the control of the system owners.

The Finance and Financial Aid offices maintain master files/copies of all financial transactions, which are retained for the length of time required by the federal or state government or grant agency. In cases where the agency does not specify a period of time for record maintenance, the college follows the records management procedure which is coordinated by the Finance division. Various departments use these records for audit purposes, invoices, subpoenas, and budget planning.

Where information is only available on paper, the college has begun large-scale scanning projects which will make this information available online. The two largest areas of the college currently involved in this initiative are Finance and Student Records.

7C2: MEASURES FOR TRACKING EFFECTIVENESS

Key institutional measures are tracked at both the institutional and department levels. Below is a sample of the data that is collected, analyzed, and disseminated to stakeholders. A number of these reports are published regularly, and others are compiled in response to specific needs/requests.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning annually publishes Facts and Figures: Past, Present and Future, commonly called the “Fact Book,” which contains over 100 tables and charts including census data and community demographics, local high school statistics, Moraine Valley student demographics and enrollments, program/course enrollments, and program/course costs.

Institutional Research and Planning regularly publishes and disseminates the following *Research Reports*:

- Census Day Report (enrollments and demographics)
- Program enrollment patterns – program headcounts – including off-campus sites and flexible scheduling (e.g., online students)
- Fall high school and community participation rates
- Number of degrees awarded by program
- Minority, male and female students and graduates
- Program Accountability Standards System (PASS) Data

Institutional Research and Planning has published and disseminated special Research Reports in response to specific needs/requests. Some examples are:

- Nonreturning student survey – fall 2001, spring 2002
- Campus Climate survey – fall 2002, fall 2005
- CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement)—spring 2002, spring 2005
- Economic Impact Analysis summary
- Enrollment comparisons with local colleges
- Time-to-degree analysis, graduation/retention rate report

The college also submits the following annual reports to the Illinois Community College Board:

ICCB Performance/Results Report – This annual report requires Illinois community colleges to document outcomes in a series of ongoing and evolving accountability and quality assurance initiatives spearheaded by the state.

ICCB Recognition Report – To be eligible for state funding, ICCB staff conduct recognition evaluations on a five-year cycle to assure that colleges are in compliance with instructional, administrative, financial, facility, and equipment standards as established by the Illinois Community College Board.

7P1, 2: SELECTING, MANAGING, AND USING DATA TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING; DETERMINING AND MEETING DEPARTMENT NEEDS

The Institutional Research staff assists individual departments/areas of the college in developing studies of populations or trends that will enable faculty and staff to provide improved instruction or service to students and other stakeholders in the community. The Research staff honors any requests for which they have data and are able to process. Examples include:

- Professors in the Enrichment Programs and Services Subdivision of Academic Affairs have used grade summary data to compare their grading with other sections of the same course.
- Customized data is provided to support the withdrawal of a certificate or degree program due to lack of enrollment (three-year decrease of 15 percent or more). One degree program and two certificate programs have been withdrawn in the last few years.

The college selects, manages, and uses information and data in a variety of formal and informal ways. Some examples include:

- *Research reports* – In addition to annual reports required by the college or outside agencies, customized data-gathering and research reports are generated regularly. As challenges or questions come to light throughout the year, the research department works in conjunction with IT to collect and format data. This data is then utilized for decision-making at all levels of the institution.
- *Institutional Effectiveness process* – Established in 2000, and updated in 2002, the Institutional Effectiveness process includes measurement of non-instructional programs/services/processes. Annually, departments develop plans specifying which programs or processes they will measure. At the end of each academic year, departments report on the IE measurement they conducted and how the results have been/will be used for continuous improvement.
- *Assessment of student learning* – The current college Assessment Plan was created in 1996 and reaffirmed in 2000. Designed to guide assessment activities, the plan describes the general purposes for student assessment and identifies responsibilities of stakeholders.

The plan's underlying principle is to use faculty-driven assessment practices and needs as the basis for a comprehensive program that reports assessment data directly back to faculty to improve instruction and student learning. The department of Academic Initiatives and Accountability and the Center for Teaching and Learning train faculty to develop measurable outcomes for student learning, curriculum development, and assessment methods.

The Director of Academic Assessment, department chairs, and deans also provide needed support in this area. The Director of Academic Assessment works with the faculty to facilitate the assessment of student learning. For example, the Psychology Department reviewed their current final exams to identify the validity of the questions and to determine if they met the desired learning outcomes. The Director of Assessment received the aggregate exam results for all course sections and provided the results and feedback to the department.

The college determines and meets department needs for data in a variety of ways. Some examples include:

- The Testing Center collects a variety of data. Specifically for COMPASS, testing results are sent to deans and department chairs. A variety of background information is also collected, including first language, high school experience, and household information. Since converting to the internet-based version of COMPASS, the center has been able to generate more reports tailored to specific needs. These reports are used to enhance student services and review the number of sections needed for various courses, especially for remedial courses.
- Data for the annual fiscal report is available in the Finance system and conforms to reporting requirements. Back-up information is kept in the safe. All data for financial transactions and reports regarding the data can be produced as needed.

The Finance Division provides all departments with the ability to view the budget against actual expenditures in order to monitor and determine variances. Department heads or designated individuals are able to view detailed information and run their own departmental reports. A review of the current year's expenditures is used to determine the resources needed for the following year.

Compliance issues related to laws (like Gramm Leach Bliley Act (GLB), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, etc.) sometimes dictate what information must be kept and how it must be protected. The college has an Information Security Plan that is being implemented now across the college. This plan provides the framework for determining who should have access to data, how it should be secured (whether paper or electronic), and how it should be disposed of. The plan also includes specific training requirements and an annual compliance review. When the GLB law became effective, the college conducted a risk survey in every department. The Information Technology department periodically runs checks against all IT systems to test security. When gaps are identified, they are quickly filled.

The state of Illinois mandates the length of time records must be kept. Administrative files can be kept as long as needed. Records can be kept in optical format as long as the entire record is kept. Currently, some reports in Finance, Enrollment Management, and Board reports are kept on disk or saved on an off-campus secured server for accountability and accessibility reasons. All departments are responsible for their own files.

7P3: NEEDS, PRIORITIES, AND METHODS FOR SELECTING COMPARATIVE DATA

The needs and priorities for comparative information and data have been determined in a number of ways. Two examples are:

- The work of the AQIP Action Project teams: Each team was charged with reviewing internal and external data to identify best practices. The results are archived in the Moraine Valley library's electronic reserve. The action project teams also developed plans and recommendations. These plans passed through the ELT (Executive Leadership Team), individuals were assigned responsibility, and a timeline was created. These plans can be accessed on a shared network drive accessible by all AQIP team members.
- The Strategic Planning Process: The chief information officer of the college is a member of the Gartner Executive Program (IT consulting firm). This organization provides access to industry research and experts, and a higher education group provides more focused research and periodic meetings for educators. At the 2006 strategic planning retreat, a senior member of the Gartner higher education group presented information on the implications of technology for fulfilling the college's mission. This organization has also provided helpful guidance when selecting software applications.

The college uses a variety of methods for selecting sources of comparative information and data within and outside the education community. Compliance with ICCB and IBHE policies ensures that Moraine Valley is aligned with other Illinois colleges, and comparative data from these agencies provides helpful information about enrollment trends, completion rates, and other important issues. The curriculum development and review process requires reviewing the curriculum of other colleges.

The college is also a member of the League for Innovation in the Community College. Although there are no formal comparisons of best practices, the League often conducts informal surveys at the request of member colleges. For example, Moraine Valley posted a question regarding college-provided e-mail for students. The results were forwarded to the team at Moraine Valley working on this project. Another posted question asked about the calculation of faculty stipends for those who do work for the college beyond their teaching responsibilities.

In general, as a trend or issue is identified, a multidisciplinary approach is taken. The college gathers data in a self-analysis over time and then compares statistics to other League for Innovation colleges and other community colleges within the state. Other nationally recognized reports like the CCSSE are selected as benchmarks.

7P4: ANALYZING AND SHARING OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The college routinely uses several annual reports and data-collection tools such as the Fact Book, enrollment analysis reports, CCSSE data, and other research reports for decision-making. These reports are discussed at several venues/forums in the organization, including but not limited to, Board of Trustees meetings, ELT meetings, AQIP teams, Administrative Council, subdivision and department meetings, and specialized retreats and professional development workshops planned throughout the year. The Marketing and Creative Services Department compiles the president's Annual Report, which provides a comprehensive listing of major goals and accomplishments of the college and its programs, services, and operations during the current year. The Annual Report is distributed to all staff during the fall in-service, to community leaders, legislators, and other colleges, and is available online.

7P5: ENSURING THE ALIGNMENT OF DATA ANALYSIS WITH INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

The college's Strategic Priorities and Goals, the first of which identifies initiatives related to student learning, set the framework for annual planning. The purpose of annual planning is to prepare for contingencies and future challenges, and to align budgets and institutional effectiveness plans with Strategic Priorities and Goals.

The annual planning process, explained fully in Category 8, begins with divisions and subdivisions setting broad goals based on the Strategic Priorities and Goals of the college. These division and subdivision goals provide focus for individual departments/areas of the college as they develop their annual plans. Annual department plans are submitted on the Objective Form, which includes an action plan, cost, and a rationale explaining how the objective supports the college's Strategic Priorities and Goals.

Each of the college's AQIP Action Projects was identified as a result of the college's strategic planning process. All of the action project teams collected internal and external data related to three of the college's Strategic Priorities:

- Emphasizing and Promoting Student Success
- Embracing Diversity
- Building Organizational Capability Through Continuous Improvement

The annual list of department/area objectives, organized according to the college's major Strategic Priorities, is distributed at the August In-service and is available online. The AQIP Action Projects, including how they align with the college's goals, have been presented at college in-services, divisional meetings, in publications, and on the AQIP Web site FAQ section: http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/faqs_and_answers.htm.

7P6: ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND RELATED PROCESSES

To ensure the effectiveness of its information systems, the college has a formal request process for users who have identified needs for system changes. All system changes must be directly related to the Strategic Priorities and Directions of the college. When acquiring a new system, a “user champion” leads the effort with IT to ensure that the specific need is met. This process was used for replacing the Finance/HR/Payroll and Financial Aid Systems in 2002 and again for the Bookstore system in 2006. IT periodically meets with users to determine what additional functionality will help them and to schedule projects to make the changes. For purchased applications, software upgrades are provided as they become available to improve the usefulness of the system. The new releases are tested and receive final approval from users before they are put in production.

The college upgrades hardware and software regularly. An automated process applies fixes to all servers and desktops as the fixes are released by Microsoft to make sure known vulnerabilities will not harm the college. Maintenance agreements are in place for all critical hardware, and redundancy is provided in key areas such as networking, internet, and financial systems.

To ensure system integrity, system owners review the access to their systems on an annual basis and shut off access when people leave or change jobs. The IT operations team keeps statistics of uptime and does annual customer surveys to assess service levels. The Director of Network Operations analyzes survey results to make necessary adjustments in service levels.

To ensure confidentiality and security, the coordinator for Gramm Leach Bliley compliance is the manager of Information Security in IT. In 2004 risk assessments were conducted in all departments of the college. Each department/area’s compliance is reviewed on an annual basis. Secure passwords are now required along with a password change every six months. All machines on campus have up-to-date antivirus software, and the outsourced service from Postini blocks out spam. In FY07 newly acquired software verifies Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance and the security of college credit card transactions. In addition, for the last two years, financial auditors have looked at key computer systems to make sure they are reliable.

7P7: MEASURING AND ANALYZING OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEMS FOR MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Moraine Valley’s IT Department participates in the annual Educause Core Data Service (CDS) survey that collects data about information technology environments and practices on member campuses. Participating colleges have access to information about IT infrastructure, funding, and management practices of schools similar to themselves. Campuses that complete and submit the survey can log on to the interactive database to access data contributed by peer institutions to help benchmark, plan, and make decisions about IT on campus. Analysis of the results also allows for identification of trends within specifically defined peer groups or other categories.

Since the current Institutional Effectiveness process has been in place for five years, the director of Resource Development and Institutional Effectiveness identified a need to review the current process. In fall 2007, interviews were conducted with department heads and deans responsible for writing departmental Institutional Effectiveness plans and reports. In addition, a survey was conducted with staff and faculty who participated in DRIVE Continuous Improvement Training to determine their use of the DRIVE tool. Results of these measurements are reported in 7R1.

Institutional Research conducts measurement of their services in a variety of ways:

- Formal surveys are conducted every four years asking users to rate the usefulness of research reports. The results are used to adjust the report topics and contents to more closely fit stakeholder’s needs.
- When the annual Fact Book is distributed across campus, users are asked to indicate what information is not necessary and what additional information should be included in the next Fact Book.

- The Institutional Research and Planning Office tracks how quickly they respond to requests. For routine requests, they generally respond within two days. For special requests that require additional development and writing time, the response takes longer. They also track the requests received and review this list annually. Based on this annual review, they may eliminate or add reports to the annual Fact Book or to their list of routine reports provided to the campus.

7R1: RESULTS FOR SYSTEM FOR MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS IN ACCOMPLISHING MISSION AND GOALS

The college's IT department reviews metrics for system up time on a regular basis. This review process recently identified times when the Student System was not available for users because of human error. As a result, IT initiated a process that automatically checks to see if the system is up, and if not, automatically starts it up. Since this process was automated, the Student System has always been up on time. In fall 2007, respondents to a user survey conducted by IT Central Computing Services indicated that they were satisfied with the IT services they are receiving.

Other important IT concerns have been notification when systems are unavailable and the length of time to bring them back up. In the past problems were usually discovered only when a user called the help desk. This delay was unacceptable in key areas like support for the Blackboard Course Management System. To improve performance in this area, IT implemented a Network Monitoring System from Nimsoft in 2007. This software allows the college to know in near real time if there are network or system issues, and it can automatically repair problems or notify the appropriate staff to take corrective action immediately.

The results of the fall 2007 interviews with department heads and deans responsible for writing departmental Institutional Effectiveness plans and reports are as follows.

TABLE 7.1: FEEDBACK ON EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS—INTERVIEWS WITH DIRECTORS AND DEANS

1. How well does the current Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process work?

- We need to define key indicators to determine whether we've met our effectiveness goals
- Some departments are more involved than others. Some aren't comfortable with it, so they avoid it.
- We need to make better connections between the annual objectives written by each department and the institutional effectiveness plans and reports.
- A stronger correlation of assessment of student academic achievement and institutional effectiveness would be helpful for areas like the Library.
- We need to be able to capture those activities that come up midyear and aren't reflected in annual objectives and/or institutional effectiveness plans and reports.
- Eliminate the duplication in some of the report questions.
- We should establish formal connections between departments when setting annual objectives and reporting on institutional effectiveness.
- We haven't yet figured out exactly how to document multiyear projects.
- Since we're always responding to complaints and inquiries, we never seem to have the time to measure the effectiveness of our processes.
- Knowing in advance exactly when the report will be due is helpful.

2. How could the current IE process be improved?

- We should publish a multi-year calendar of these activities in advance.
- More examples of measurement and evaluation methods/tools would be good.
- Provide more IE assistance similar to that provided for assessment of student learning.
- Provide updates communicated to all staff.
- Establish an Intranet site that is useful and applicable.

3. What motivates you to make improvements to your department's processes?

- Numbers are key. We're always trying to meet the metrics/goals we've set.
- Maintaining a culture of quality with high standards
- Hiring the right people is very helpful.

The results of the fall 2007 survey conducted with staff and faculty who participated in DRIVE Continuous Improvement Training to determine their use of the DRIVE tool are as follows.

TABLE 7.2: RESULTS OF SURVEY WITH DRIVE TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

DRIVE USE SURVEY QUESTION	RESPONSE
Have you used the DRIVE tool since you completed the training?	78.1% Yes 21.9% No
The DRIVE tool was used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a new process • Enhancing an existing process 	New – 42.1% Existing – 94.7%
I have not had an opportunity to use the DRIVE tool because:	
I do not remember enough about the DRIVE tool to be able to apply it to my work.	14.3%
I do not have the opportunity in my daily activities to implement the DRIVE tool.	28.6%
I simply haven't thought about using it.	28.6%
The team/committee I was on has completed its work.	14.3%
My supervisor does not require that I use the DRIVE tool.	0%
Other	28.6%
What would influence you to use the DRIVE tool in your work?	
Refresher training would remind me of the DRIVE tool and its use.	30.8%
My supervisor should encourage/require me to use the DRIVE tool.	19.2%
Reports that I'm required to write should include questions on how the DRIVE tool was used to complete my work.	26.9%
Learning how others have used the DRIVE tool to make improvements would be helpful.	57.7%
Other	17.6%

7R2: COMPARING RESULTS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Moraine Valley has joined the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP). Colleges participating in this project share comparative data on students' retention, developmental education, and various other benchmarks. This benchmarking data, which first became available to the college in November 2007, is now being analyzed to compare Moraine Valley's results with other educational institutions.

In the 2005 CCSSE Moraine Valley's score was 2.67 vs. the 2.58 average (on a 4-point scale with 1=Very little and 4=Very much) for the question, "How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following area? Using computing and information technology." Regarding Computer labs, Moraine Valley's score was 2.46 vs. the 2.50 average.

When reviewing the results of the most recent Educause Core Data Service IT survey, the college's IT organization, staffing, and planning practices are at or above the level of those at comparable institutions. Help desk availability was also substantially higher than the average from the study.

Periodically, IT conducts an informal survey of the number of open PCs available for student use at surrounding area institutions. In the last review the ratio of students per open PC ranged from 56 to 130. The ratio at Moraine Valley of 62 students per open PC was third best of the nine schools surveyed.

7I1: IMPROVING CURRENT PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS FOR MEASURING IMPROVEMENT

The college identified the need to improve its institutional effectiveness efforts by integrating the following major college processes: assessment of student academic achievement, strategic and annual planning, budgeting and performance evaluation. An AQIP Action Project Team has recently made specific recommendations:

- Establish an ad-hoc committee to review the current annual planning and institutional effectiveness processes and recommend the contents, timeline, and implementation of a new annual reporting system.
- This new "Annual Report System" will replace the current annual planning, budgeting and institutional effectiveness reports. The new reports will include annual plans (divisional goals, departmental objectives, action plans for the upcoming year, and measurements to be conducted), and an annual report on accomplishments (results obtained, and how results were used for improvements).
- Create a central repository (Internet/intranet) of college data for reporting purposes to further substantiate institutional effectiveness reports.

ELT has reviewed the team's recommendations, which now will be implemented by a team of designated stakeholders.

7I2: SETTING TARGETS FOR IMPROVING MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS AND COMMUNICATING RESULTS

The Institutional Planning and Research Office meets regularly to evaluate current processes and services and to discuss improvements. Based on stakeholder feedback, the research department has identified the need to put the annual Fact Book onto the college's intranet site. The department also plans to re-vamp the process that responds to requests for special, or as-needed, reports as the college moves to a new business system.

In reviewing the current capabilities of the Student System, Information Technology identified a weakness in the underlying technology that limits the time this system can be kept available for use. A major improvement targeted in the Student System replacement project currently underway is to have the system up 24 X 7 for student and staff access.

Results and improvement priorities are communicated to stakeholders in a variety of ways including presentations at President's Advisory Council, Administrative Council, in-service/staff development days, and new employee orientations; print publications such as the bi-weekly staff newsletter Valley View, President's Memoranda; and electronically through all-staff e-mails on IT system upgrade, weekly online staff newsletter MV e-News, and the college Internet and intranet Web sites.