

## **CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, annual planning, and continuous improvement, over the past five years the college has increased staff and community involvement in the planning process and improved internal and external communication. In the second year of its AQIP Action Project on Institutional Effectiveness, the college is implementing recommendations that will develop a fully-integrated effectiveness process that is 1) coordinated with annual and strategic planning, budgeting, and performance evaluation, 2) allows for measuring the effectiveness of collegewide initiatives, and 3) provides measurement results that are used for decision-making.

### **8C1: INSTITUTIONAL VISION**

First developed in 2000-01, Moraine Valley's Vision Statement was affirmed in 2007:

*We envision a world-class college that meets current and emerging community needs for education and training through excellent service and outstanding programs offered in stimulating learning environments.*

Within the next five years, the college will

- integrate all of its planning processes to provide for continuous improvement in its programs and services;
- infuse its core value of diversity in faculty, staff, and curriculum;
- improve retention and success in online learning and developmental education;
- provide increased access to state-of-the-art learning in new facilities for the sciences, instruction and job training, and a southwest education center.

### **8C2: SHORT AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIES ALIGNED WITH MISSION AND VISION**

The college's Strategic Priorities and Goals are generally long-term goals or strategies, while Objectives are short-term action plans developed annually by departments and areas of the college. The Strategic Priorities set the framework for the development of annual Objectives and ultimately determine how the college fulfills its Mission and pursues its Vision. All areas/departments/individuals are asked to consider the college's Mission and its Strategic Priorities and Goals as they develop their annual Objectives. See 8P1 for more information about objectives and the annual planning process.

Updating the most recent (2002-2007) Strategic Plan began in spring 2006 and continued through May 2007. Faculty, staff, students, and members of the community were asked to review and update the Strategic Priorities in line with the college's Mission and Vision. The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan was developed from contributions made by pre-retreat teams, a strategic planning retreat, community breakfasts, a Web survey, a community needs assessment survey, open college forums, and other activities.

### **MORAIN VALLEY'S 2007-2012 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS**

As a learning-centered college, we dedicate all programs, services and resources to student success with a commitment to continuously monitor, assess, and improve our performance. New and continuing initiatives and their impact on faculty and staff and college resources will be examined within this framework.

To foster continuous improvement, Moraine Valley will:

#### **A. EMPHASIZE AND PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS**

- Implement a procedure to improve access to educational programs and services by maximizing utilization of on- and off-campus facilities and effective scheduling of programs, services, and courses in response to student and community needs (AQIP Project)
- Examine factors that affect the progress and success of students enrolling in online and web-assisted courses and identify and implement components for successful delivery of online courses, certificates, and/or degrees (AQIP project)

- Implement a plan to identify, assess, place, and establish support mechanisms for students in developmental education (AQIP project)
- Focus on student success and retention within individual courses, across terms, and through graduation rates including how well students are meeting objectives, the quality of student experience, and how these factors measure up against established benchmarks
- Use the strategic process to identify and develop new curriculum
- Maintain and enhance high-quality, high-standard academic programs
- Support faculty and staff development in areas of creative learning strategies, technology, leadership, student learning styles, and global learning
- Maintain and enhance well-designed, coordinated, and proactive student support services
- Assess and improve technology support systems that advance student access to learning
- Continue to provide a safe, comfortable, and welcoming learning environment

## **B. ENHANCE COMMUNITY AWARENESS, CONNECTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- Develop and nurture relationships with P-12 faculty and staff, students, and their parents
- Support seamless and successful high school to college transitions
- Develop and implement programs for adults and senior citizens and strategies to recruit and retain them
- Assess and implement the college's comprehensive enrollment management and marketing plan
- Develop and foster a new brand identity for Moraine Valley to help support and communicate the college mission
- Develop, strengthen, and maintain community relationships and partnerships to maximize resources and identify opportunities to meet the needs of our educational partners, business partners, and community members
- Continue to provide support to help local governments attract and retain business
- Strengthen our role as an economic resource and a leader in our community, region, state, nation, and world
- Continue to serve as an educational resource and leader for P-12 programs
- Strengthen alumni relations
- Promote the college as a community resource and cultural center

## **C. EMBRACE DIVERSITY**

- Integrate diversity and inclusion into appropriate college practices and processes (AQIP project)
- Implement new faculty and staff recruitment and retention strategies (AQIP project)
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and classroom (AQIP project)
- Continue to integrate global and intercultural perspectives into programs and services
- Acknowledge the different needs of specific groups and individuals—traditional and non-traditional, native and international, younger and older, online and on-campus, minority and majority—and provide specific services to meet those needs
- Lessen barriers that exist, including those of access, financial means, and preparedness
- Foster programs and support services that make all students feel welcome, that provide positive and meaningful interactions with faculty and staff, and that are designed for students of a variety of backgrounds and experiences
- Cultivate a faculty and staff rich with cultural competencies—to respect the cultural, social, and academic needs of all learners – and to increase awareness of diversity and knowledge of inclusive practices

#### **D. PLAN, ACHIEVE, AND MANAGE GROWTH**

- Develop, communicate, and execute plans, processes, and procedures consistent with student and community needs and the college's mission
- Maintain a process to allocate and/or reallocate resources based on the college's Strategic Priorities
- Pursue alternative sources of revenue to support growth and keep tuition affordable
- Continue to look for opportunities to maximize resources and contain costs
- Hire and retain an appropriate mix of full-time and part-time faculty and staff
- Develop and implement a transition plan for the new campus facilities, including programs, staffing, and business plans
- Recommend and implement a new business system that will improve services to students and increase staff efficiency
- Continue to plan for sustainable growth and consider environmental issues in plans for new and remodeled facilities
- Investigate and evaluate the feasibility of adding to the number of off-campus sites to expand regional outreach efforts and improve accessibility

#### **E. BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

- Improve institutional effectiveness efforts by integrating the following major college processes at all levels of the organization – departmental and college-wide: assessment of student academic achievement, strategic and annual planning, budgeting, and performance evaluation (AQIP project)
- Use the college's continuous improvement model to review institutional processes, systems, and structures to ensure efficient operations, strategic thinking, and improved curricula, programs, and services
- Update and expand the current technological infrastructure and increase automation in all technology and operating systems
- Review procedures and processes to eliminate redundancy as well as tasks that do not support the mission or strategic plan of the college
- Make data-driven decisions with input from stakeholders across the organization
- Improve current internal communication mechanisms to achieve greater collaboration and efficiency
- Emphasize comprehensive professional development, including training employees to keep pace with technological advancements
- Promote innovation and risk-taking to strengthen organizational capability

#### **8P 1, 2, 3, 4: PLANNING PROCESS, SELECTING LONG AND SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES, DEVELOPING ACTIONS PLANS, AND ALIGNING PLANS ACROSS THE COLLEGE**

The college's Strategic Priorities and Goals 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 Calendar includes major due dates and also functions as a brief summary of the college's annual planning process.

College and community input into the annual planning process is continuous. This input may be formal or informal and includes information from student and community surveys, meetings with local business and community leaders, career program advisory groups, environmental analyses, and other sources. Strategic planning retreats are held every two to three years to provide opportunities for both external and internal input into annual and strategic planning, and starting in 2004, to identify AQIP Action Projects.

The annual planning process, explained in detail in the college's Planning Manual, is updated annually. The process begins with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning providing updated Planning Assumptions for all divisions and departments/areas of the college. These assumptions include enrollment statistics, along with demographic, economic, and technology forecasts, and their probable impact on the college. Using these planning assumptions, divisions and subdivisions of the college annually set broad goals based on the Strategic Priorities and Goals of the college. These division and subdivision goals provide focus for departments/areas of the college as they develop their annual plans.

This process maintains a clear link between annual planning and the budget, institutional effectiveness, and staff evaluation. These processes are connected through the “Objective Form” submitted by each department/area annually. This objective form includes:

1. a description of the “action plan” and how it will be evaluated,
2. a section to request funding for all objectives that require funds over the regular budget, and
3. a rationale explaining how the objective supports college Strategic Priorities and Goals.

The annual planning process is also integrated with staff evaluation. The recently updated evaluation form includes a section summarizing the prior year’s objectives, and both staff and supervisors review the completion or non-completion of each objective as part of the annual review process. The college conducts two training sessions each year to review these processes (annual and strategic planning, budget and the institutional effectiveness) and the connections between them.

Challenges and expectations of key stakeholder groups are identified through the strategic and annual planning process, which includes input from the community, faculty, and staff. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) uses input from these sources to address competing expectations among stakeholders and to make informed decisions approving annual department/area objectives and budgets.

### **8P5: SELECTING MEASURES AND SETTING PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS**

The college uses a variety of mechanisms for selecting measures and setting performance projections for institutional strategies and action plans. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning provides broad indicators of institutional performance, such as graduate employment rates and transfer studies. Common internal and external performance markers include program enrollments/participation, completion rates, academic achievement (grades), successful transition to employment and/or further education, employee performance evaluations, and demographic data analysis (for assessment of diversity goals.) External bodies sometimes provide measures of performance. Grant projects, for example, typically include goals, objectives and recommended measurements required by the external funder.

As part of the annual planning process, departments/areas of the college establish objectives (action plans), which require measures and, if applicable, projections. In the Evaluation Process faculty and staff work with their supervisors to determine individual performance markers. Each AQIP Action Project team must select appropriate measures for their projects. While the college produces many broad institutional measures, they are not always systematically analyzed with the intent to follow up with actions. For example, the college does not always select “institutional performance measures” for specific retention or graduation rate targets.

### **8P6: ACCOUNTING FOR RESOURCE NEEDS**

Strategic Priorities and action plans are initially developed without regard to available resources. Annual objectives written by each department/area of the college may include new staff, space, and equipment needed to implement the plan. The appropriate vice president reviews and prioritizes these objectives according to the Mission and Strategic Priorities of the college. Concurrently, the budget for the next fiscal year is developed.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) selects objectives for funding in light of available resources, long-term impact in fulfilling the college’s strategic priorities, and return on investment. The ELT also reviews grant resources as well as any emergency needs that have surfaced outside of the planning process. Upon approval of the annual budget by the Board of Trustees, each subdivision is allocated funds for equipment purchases and funding for new staff.

## **8P7: ENSURING FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The Center for Teaching and Learning schedules a variety of training opportunities based on the college's strategic priorities and information gathered by the Office of Institutional Planning and Research. The center's web page and a pamphlet distributed to staff describe the training sessions offered each semester. Faculty training is also given through one-to-one assistance from the instructional technologist, faculty in-service days, and the Moraine Valley Learning Academy classes. Administrative and professional staff participate in annual training sessions to improve knowledge of planning, budgeting, and institutional effectiveness processes and their relationship to the college's Strategic Plan. The Office of Human Resources conducts training and orientations on and off campus as needed.

The college provides continuing professional development for departments through certification, tuition waivers, and work-related training. An explanation of the process for professional development, including a calendar of deadlines and required forms, is available through subdivision offices. The Non-tenured Faculty Orientation Program provides ongoing training opportunities for new faculty members. Training sessions on the evaluation process are scheduled annually for new faculty and their evaluation teams. A consistent formal process for training administrators is not in place for all divisions.

## **8P8: MEASURING PLANNING EFFECTIVENESS**

Responding to suggestions made during annual training sessions and strategic planning retreats, over the past five years the college has made adjustments in the planning process. For example, the objective form itself was modified to more clearly connect the objective and the corresponding budget request. In addition, after extensive analysis of the college's planning processes, the team conducting the AQIP Action Project on Institutional Effectiveness has made several recommendations for improving these processes. While the college does not currently have a formal schedule for reviewing the effectiveness of all its systems for planning continuous improvement, specific planning systems are regularly reviewed and revised.

All departments/areas of the college are required annually to develop and/or revise Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (ASAA) plans and to summarize the accomplishments of the previous year. The Director of Resource Development and Institutional Effectiveness completed an audit of this system as reported in 7R1. The Director of Academic Assessment and the Dean of Academic Initiatives and Accountability periodically evaluate and revise internal processes used to implement the ASAA plan. The Administrative and Professional staff evaluation process was revised in 2005, and the tenured and non-tenured evaluation processes were revised within the last five years. All staff and faculty evaluations require a review of the accomplishments of prior goals and the setting of new goals for the next evaluation cycle. All college teams are required to use the DRIVE continuous improvement model (O1) when evaluating an existing process or developing a new process. As reported in 7R1, a recent survey measured the effectiveness of the DRIVE process itself.

## **8R1: RESULTS FOR ACCOMPLISHING INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS**

A five-year status report summarizing all accomplishments related to the college's 2002-2007 Strategic Plan was distributed to participants before the 2006 strategic planning retreat. Some examples of these results are:

- Analysis of success rates for online students and an online student survey
- Completed plan for staff development activities focused on student engagement, student success, and student development.
- Establishment of Moraine Valley Learning Academy
- Honors curriculum development for faculty teaching in the Honors Program
- Web-based information and online services for current students and consistent program information that is fully functional and updated daily.
- Enhancement of Web registration and elimination of touch-tone phone registration.

The college's Annual Report provides additional evidence of institutional strategies and action plans that have been accomplished. [http://www.morainevalley.edu/President/annual\\_report.htm](http://www.morainevalley.edu/President/annual_report.htm)

Teams for the college's three AQIP Action Projects have completed the process of identifying priority areas and strategic plans in the areas of institutional effectiveness, diversity, and student success. Each team sent the Executive Leadership Team a report outlining its progress and making specific recommendations for implementing action plans in the 2007-2008 academic year. [http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/action\\_projects.htm](http://www.morainevalley.edu/AQIP/action_projects.htm). As these plans are implemented, the college will measure their effectiveness and use these results for planning continuous improvement.

Assessment of Academic Achievement (ASAA) reports provide evidence that the college is fulfilling its strategic priority of promoting student success by completing academic action plans. Assessment results enable planning for continuous improvement of instruction and student learning. (See Category 1 for specific details.) The annual program review process and the Curriculum Development and Curriculum Review Teams provide evidence through review documents and implemented curriculum that the college is providing an up-to-date curriculum for students. The college's strong emphasis on departmental curriculum review can be seen in The Annual Summary of College Objectives which lists several examples of course/curriculum reviews planned for FY08. [http://www.morainevalley.edu/gen\\_info/objectives.html](http://www.morainevalley.edu/gen_info/objectives.html)

The mission of the Center for Teaching Learning (CTL) is to create a culture of learning by providing professional development opportunities in multiple modalities. The mission is realized through collaborative efforts to support faculty and provide professional development opportunities. The CTL demonstrates its successes through program participation and training course enrollments. Over 900 individuals have participated in 400 different courses since spring 2003. The CTL also continually seeks feedback on its efforts to ensure that CTL offerings actually meet the needs of the faculty and staff.

In response to the strategic priority of promoting student success by ensuring access to programs and services, the college successfully passed an \$89 million capital bond referendum to secure funding for implementing the Master Facilities Plan of 2001. The college has sold bonds to build a new science building, an instructional and job training center, a Southwest Education Center (off campus), to remodel the College Center and add a Student Union, and to upgrade technology and renovate existing campus buildings.

## **8R2: PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS FOR STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS**

The college's 2007-2012 Strategic Priorities and Goals, published in August 2007, set the framework for annual planning. Annual Objectives, based on the college's strategic priorities, describe expected results. The Objective statements are included in the *Summary of College Objectives* booklet distributed annually at in-service. Examples of these Objectives are:

- Participate in the National Community College Benchmark Project to be able to report outcome and effectiveness data and compare institutional benchmarks/performance indicators.
- Assist and support faculty in the use and integration of technology into classroom assignments, projects, and other educational initiatives.
- Maintain a competitive edge in curriculum by piloting new online and hybrid psychology courses.
- Research the requirements for and develop a plan to provide students with e-mail.
- Plan, coordinate, and conduct CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement).
- Use the DRIVE model for process improvement to assess on-campus recruitment services and employer events at the annual job fair.

In the fall 2007 Action Progress Reports for the college's three AQIP Action Projects, each team made several recommendations for actions plans to be implemented over the next 1-3 years. Some examples of performance targets for completing these action plans include:

- Institutional Effectiveness: Establish a cross divisional committee to design the format/content of the annual report and to be responsible for ensuring that recommended improvements are implemented and communicated collegewide.
- Student Learning, Development, and Success: Revise the intake process for limited English students to better track this population and appropriately refer students to services that can assist them prior to registration.
- Embracing Diversity: Form a team of those identified as leaders in diversifying classroom and curriculum and charge them with selecting and prioritizing emerging strategies for the project goals.

### **8R3: BENCHMARKING PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS**

As discussed in 7R2, benchmark data that Moraine Valley received in November 2007 from the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) is currently being analyzed.

The college uses data provided by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to benchmark against other Illinois Community Colleges in its response to the annual Performance Report. For example, in comparing graduate satisfaction, Moraine Valley is slightly below (less than one percent) the three-year state average percent of students "satisfied" and is the third highest out of seven in its peer group. While departments/areas of the college use some ICCB benchmarks in their annual planning, the college does not formally incorporate these benchmarks in the college-wide planning process.

In the 2005 CCSSE survey, Moraine Valley scored slightly lower than their peer group in two of the five "Benchmarks of Effective Practice," and slightly higher than their peer group in three of the five benchmarks. Other benchmark comparisons have been analyzed in two research reports comparing the 2005 survey results to the 2002 survey results and to other CCSSE colleges. The League for Innovation also provides the college with a process for obtaining benchmark information from other League institutions to help the college plan the development of new programs and services. For example, League colleges were asked to respond to questions about the use of student email that assisted Moraine Valley in developing its own plans for this service.

As part of the DRIVE continuous improvement model (O1), the review process asks each Action Project team and other teams chartered by the college to work on special projects to select appropriate benchmarks, including other institutions. The DRIVE model suggests looking externally for best practices, but it does not compare performance with other institutions. Through funding sources in the Center for Teaching and Learning and subdivision offices, faculty and staff attend conferences and share best practices and new ideas in course offerings and curriculum development. To obtain approval, faculty must agree to share information with other faculty at the annual Learning College Day or in their departments. Other than facilities, the college does not benchmark with organizations outside of the education community.

To create the Master Facilities Plan, the college benchmarked with educational and non- educational organizations and League for Innovation institutions to analyze program and student needs for future buildings and remodeling projects. Over the next 1-3 years the college will continue to benchmark with other institutions as it develops final construction plans for its new facilities.

### **8R4: EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEM FOR PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Strategic planning retreats have been held every two to three years at the college. Retreats and pre-retreat activities are the major input used to update the current strategic plan and to develop the new strategic plan. More than 150 faculty, staff, and community members participated in the 2006 planning retreat. A panel composed of school principals and superintendents in the Moraine Valley district shared their positive reactions regarding dual credit opportunities offered to their high school students, indicating an improvement in relationships with district high schools. Evaluations from the 2004 planning retreat were used to revise and improve the format for the 2006 retreat. Overall evaluations of the 2006 retreat were very positive.

Each year academic departments prepare an annual report that compares the current year's ASAA (Assessment of Student Academic Achievement) results to the previous year's plan to determine its effectiveness and the degree of improvement in student learning. The Director of Academic Assessment meets with department chairs to discuss their assessment plans annually. During the 2006-2007 year, 364 sections of 27 courses involving 6,083 students completed assessments at the course level. For administrative departments, annual Institutional Effectiveness reports demonstrate how measurement results are used for continuous program and/or instructional improvement.

Career program faculty regularly consult with an advisory committee composed of local employers with expertise in the career area. The advisory committees review the current curriculum and assist faculty and program coordinators with revisions to keep programs current. Between 400 and 500 individuals from community businesses and organizations as well as college faculty and staff participate annually in advisory committee meetings.

### **811: IMPROVEMENT OF SYSTEMS FOR PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Analyses of student, staff, and community surveys are used to improve planning processes for continuous improvement. Some examples are:

- Student surveys: Information from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), annual graduate surveys, and periodic special focus surveys are used by faculty and staff to improve the planning processes at all levels of the college.
- Staff evaluations: Reviews of IE/ASAA reports, planning and budget training session evaluations, and faculty and staff development day evaluations are used to help improve planning for subsequent retreats and workshops.
- Community Needs Assessment Surveys: Completed approximately every five years, information from these surveys is used in the development of strategic priorities and goals.
- The AQIP Action project on Institutional Effectiveness is directly related to improving systems for planning continuous improvement.

### **812: TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNICATING RESULTS AND PRIORITIES**

The college has developed both formal and informal continuous improvement processes as well as the ability to respond to emerging issues. The college has not developed specific, institution-wide targets such as high school participation rates or retention rates. However, many departments establish targets as part of setting improvement goals in their annual planning.

The ELT annually reviews the Strategic Priorities and Goals, prioritizes, and assigns projects to teams. Some team assignments include accomplishment of a specific task (e.g. offer one online program), but many have a more general goal of "increasing" or "improving" rather than a specific numerical target. For example, a current target is to increase the number of adult students and to improve services for nontraditional students, but no target numbers were set. The fall 2007 Action Progress Reports for the college's three AQIP Action Projects list specific recommendations for improving college processes and planning systems.

Reports on the accomplishments of strategic planning teams and AQIP teams are published college wide through a variety of publications, and these documents also include recommendations and suggestions for future activities. Internal communications include 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 IPTV, weekly online staff newsletter MV e-News, and the college Internet and intranet sites. External communications include the President's Perspective periodic newsletter to external constituents, the college's Annual Report and the college Website.