

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

January 2, 2010



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

Category One

LCC has effectively developed processes to address helping students learn and has many academic support systems in place to connect with and retain students including peer tutoring, counseling, career assistance, and developmental instruction. Additionally the Learning Resources Center offers assistance with ABE, ESL, GED, and WorkKeys computer aided instruction. The Educational Opportunity Center offers assistance with admissions, financial aid applications, and ACT preparation classes and a course is offered to help students identify and utilize strategies connected to their individual learning styles.

The College is in the beginning stages of collecting and analyzing data to drive improvement and decision making connected to helping students learn. Additionally, tracking student learning outcomes in comparison to learning outcomes from other institutions may provide benchmarks for designing best practices that are a good fit for LCC.

Category Two

LCC is in the beginning stages of developing processes and systems to select other distinctive objectives that are tied to the College's mission and values and fit within the strategic planning and budgeting processes. As LCC implements a system of tracking and measuring performance results in this area, continuous quality improvement will become more fully integrated in the College's culture.

Category Three

LCC is in the early stages of developing and implementing formal processes and systems to better understand students' and other stakeholders' needs. Changing the College culture to adopt a continuous quality improvement focus that regularly collects and examines performance results and supports a system that can target which relationships are most strategic and tied to the College's mission and goals will allow LCC to best utilize scarce resources.

Category Four

LCC is in the early stages of developing formal processes and systems for valuing people and providing a framework to collect and analyze performance results. Assessment of the performance results will allow the College to plan strategically, make data-based decisions that relate to the mission and goals of the organization, and to set targets for improvements.

Category Five

LCC has new leadership and has reorganized the leadership structure to move the college culture towards continual quality improvement. The College is in the early stages of developing formalized processes and systems to enhance leadership and communication. However, as the new leadership and AQIP become more imbedded at LCC, the opportunities to improve leadership and communication will only occur if formal processes with measurable outcomes are embraced.

Category Six

LCC is in the early stages of developing and implementing formalized processes and systems that support institutional operations and enhance a culture and infrastructure that facilitates continuous quality improvement. Although LCC is a small community college that allows more informal processes and systems to sustain forward momentum, a system of CQI will be strengthened when the institution can begin to formalize the regular assessment of processes and systems that support institutional operations. Such an approach would provide a more balanced vision of the entirety of support services and thus allow for quality improvements.

Category Seven

LCC is at the beginning of its quality journey and is in the early stages of developing and implementing processes and systems that measure institutional effectiveness. It clearly recognizes the need to measure effectiveness and is moving to formalize and systematize its data collection and management so that results can determine data-driven decision making and will clearly benefit from such systems. The College is making progress in promoting a continuous quality culture through the use of AQIP action teams to reach short- and long-term strategic goals. Additionally, the College will soon put in place an institutional research department led by a new Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement. The College must now focus on the use of quality data, and most importantly, the use of quality tools to effectively measure programs and procedures.

Category Eight

LCC is in the early stages of embracing an atmosphere of planning continuous improvement and measuring results with data. Gains appear to be made in rallying LCC staff and involving the community in this process. In order for the process to become a driving force in the creation of a long-term sustainable organization, the College must continue to be disciplined in their efforts to create clear action plans, systematically deploy action plans and monitor progress through the use of performance indicators, targets and goals.

Category Nine

LCC is in the early stages of formalizing processes and systems to continuously improve the building of collaborative relationships. These relationships are vital to fostering a continuous quality improvement culture and in maintaining the closeness and strong support from the community. As the College works on formalizing processes to continuously improve the building of collaborative relationships, it must identify measures for quality, analyze the subsequent results and continually reevaluate the processes.

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

ELEMENTS OF LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: 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 institution's systems and processes 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 Lamar Community College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criterion 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 Lamar 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 Lamar 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:

LCC has many informal processes and systems in place that have been supporting the important work of the College when serving students and the community. The College now has the opportunity to focus on the development and implementation of new formalized processes and systems that provide consistent high quality in both the day-to-day services and instruction, and also supports and enhances longer term goals. Doing so will move the College towards an environment of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

LCC participates in data reporting with the Colorado Community College System and therefore has access to a state-wide database for comparing performance results and benchmarking with other institutions. Building formal processes and systems and utilizing the new institutional research function to regularly analyze these data and use this information for data-based decision making and strategic planning will greatly strengthen the College. This will also allow the College to study best practices within the Colorado System and replicate those models that would best work for LCC.

With new leadership that focuses on collaborative planning and open communications, the College has the opportunity create and implement a formal and inclusive strategic planning process that regularly assesses, improves, and shares information about the processes and systems that support the short- and long-term goals of the institution. This shift will also support the College's decision to build a culture of continuous quality improvement.

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 important aspects of Lamar Community College, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Lamar Community College distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public?

Item Critical Characteristic

OV1a In spring 2009, the Lamar Community College (LCC) AQIP Assessment action team revised the general education goals into learning outcomes. Educational goals were translated into education outcomes and were intended to drive assessment outcomes beginning in the fall of 2009. Education outcomes were outlined as: communication, math, aesthetic responsiveness/craftsmanship, world awareness, scientific reasoning, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills.

OV1b Key credit and non-credit instructional programs, educational systems, services and technology that directly support student learning include the Youth Corps Program, Command Spanish, upgraded technology, remodeling of the library, and construction of new facilities.

- OV2 The Strategic Oversight Committee has identified three distinctive objectives: athletics, preserving regional culture, and economic development. LCC works with community leaders to improve and welcome a culturally sensitive climate on and off campus.
- OV3 LCC is a point of access for students who are seeking entrance into higher education. Within the region, LCC's primary competitors are Otero Junior College and Northwest Kansas Technical College. While distance learning options are emerging, the College currently remains the sole provider for higher education within the service area.
- OV4a LCC is supported by over 125 employees that serve to meet the instructional and support needs of the students. Over 50% of the employees are designated primarily for instruction. The State Board of Community College and Occupation Education is responsible for setting priorities and policies, but LCC's Executive Planning Team (EPT), Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC), and program advisory councils shape priorities to align with the mission and vision of the College.
- OV4b LCC recognizes the need to provide retention and support services for students and employees from underrepresented populations and strives to implement plans to achieve this goal.
- OV5a Several years of changing leadership has hindered the College in its strategic planning processes. College values of open communications, valuing people, respect, and integrity were developed at an all-campus meeting in fall 2009.
- OV5b The LCC strategic plan was created in 2008. As part of its strategic plan, LCC identified three goals for 2009: 1) strategic growth on a solid foundation, 2) integrated marketing and enrollment management, and 3) retention.
- OV6a LCC and other state colleges in Colorado are experiencing lower state appropriations due to the economic downturn. LCC is exploring alternative funding sources to help compensate for these budget reductions. The budgeting process is used to align support goals with the mission and values of the College.
- OV6b Major construction projects to update facilities and technology demonstrate the alignment of support goals with the College's mission and values. The College has improved technology to further support operations and is in the process of moving to a new course management system.

- OV7a The Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) is responsible for determining data needs of the College through selecting data based on LCC's action plans, mission, and strategic goals. External and internal requirements for data collection and reporting have resulted in some levels of sub optimization. To improve data and information for decision making, LCC upgraded its data management system in the fall of 2009. Additionally, a new position, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Continual Improvement, will oversee the development of new programs and processes at LCC.
- OV8 Even in the midst of the severe economic downturn that presents a challenge to both long- and short-term plans and strategies; LCC has aligned its key administrative goals with its mission and values. Proposed decisions to update, upgrade and build new facilities have demonstrated a commitment to support instructional effectiveness and continual improvement.
- OV9 LCC has many partners to help service the educational needs of students, of the region, and of the state. Some of the key collaborators are the Department of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, local k-12 school districts, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the Superintendent Advisory Committee, the Global Leadership Foundation, local Workforce agency, SEBREA, local health and medical facilities, regional institutions of higher education, the Gear Up Program for high school students and the state Community College System office.

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, and 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 Lamar 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

OV1a In spring 2009, the Lamar Community College (LCC) AQIP Assessment action team revised the general education goals into learning outcomes. Educational goals were translated into education outcomes and were intended to drive assessment outcomes beginning in the fall of 2009. Education outcomes were outlined as: communication, math, aesthetic responsiveness/craftsmanship, world awareness, scientific reasoning, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills.

OV1b Key credit and non-credit instructional programs, educational systems, services and technology that directly support student learning include the Youth Corps Program, Command Spanish, upgraded technology, remodeling of the library, and construction of new facilities.

OV3 LCC is a point of access for students who are seeking entrance into higher education. Within the region, LCC's primary competitors are Otero Junior College and Northwest Kansas Technical College. While distance learning options are emerging, the College currently remains the sole provider for higher education within the service area.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Lamar 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	S	Seven common learning objectives were reviewed for currency and relevancy by the AQIP Assessment team, the Vice President and Dean of Academic Services. A statement regarding these seven learning objectives was developed by LCC faculty and will be published in the catalog and on each syllabus. This statement will reflect the faculty's educational intent for each student.
1P1b	O	It is unclear what process was used for determining the common learning objectives. The College could be better able to monitor more formalized processes that can be continually assessed and improved.
1P2a	S	The Academic Review Committee (ARC) determines the new programs and learning objectives. Learning objectives for some programs are directed by entities outside the College that direct curriculum and learning outcomes for licensing purposes. LCC faculty members work closely with their counterparts across the state on program objectives and sharing best practices. Furthermore, LCC aligns with the CCCS to offer many courses within the community college system and utilizes the same numbering system to assure transferability and workforce readiness.
1P2b	O	It is unclear what process the ARC uses to determine whether programs and courses fit the College's goals and objectives. A clearly stated process could allow the College to monitor the currency of programs and courses.
1P3a	S	New programs are developed to meet the needs of the local and regional entities. Programs are regulated by enrollment and LCC runs cohort groups to maximize financial independence. Furthermore, these cohorts allow for block scheduling which helps students to complete the program without interfering with their work schedules.

- 1P3b O It is unclear what process the college-wide advisory council and program advisory committees use to determine new program needs. Monitoring successes in key industry growth may help dictate what could be offered. Working with local businesses will allow for new program development and formal processes in these areas may allow the College to monitor trends and student needs.
- 1P4a SS LCC supports its new program offerings by utilizing articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities. LCC faculty partner annually with colleagues from all two-year and four-year institutions state-wide to discuss courses and program content.
- 1P4b SS LCC implements common learning objectives and program learning objectives and actively involves employers, four-year institutions, program advisory committees, and academic advising to ensure the programs balance and integrate learning goals, students' career needs and the realities of the employment market.
- 1P5 S Course pre-requisites are determined by the ARC, Faculty Senate, and Dean of Academic Services and program requirements are set during the degree approval process and are aligned with discipline specific requirements such as program accreditation, licensing, and industry standards. Students are placed in courses and programs using the results of the ACT, SAT, or Accuplacer tests.
- 1P6a S LCC provides a variety of methods for to assist students' understanding of program requirements.
- 1P6b O The College has an opportunity to devise a system of mandatory orientation for all new students that effectively communicates what is required of a first year or transfer student and the expectations of specific academic programs. LCC may wish to research successful orientation platforms and customize their own orientation. Advising is critical for program completion and a course tracking software program may make the student experience more enjoyable as it takes the guesswork out of what they have completed. Reaching all students is challenging, however

- the connections formed via excellent orientation programs can have a direct impact on student retention.
- 1P7a S LCC provides a variety of methods to assist students to select an appropriate program of study. The College documents through Addendums D and E the process by which students are assisted in the selection of programs that match their needs, interests and abilities.
- 1P7b O LCC could further forge the path of student success by using the SIGI 3 test during the application process to help establish a more “career oriented” pathway for their learning journey. This career guidance will allow students to further explore their own interests and potentially be a motivator to help them with program completion.
- 1P8 SS Academically underprepared students are offered a plethora of support services through the Learning Resources Center including traditional tutoring, counseling, career assistance, and developmental instruction. Additionally the Center offers assistance with ABE, ESL, GED, and WorkKeys that are readily accessible. The Educational Opportunity Center offers assistance with admissions, financial aid applications, and ACT preparation classes.
- 1P9a S LCC detects and addresses differences in students’ learning styles through an Advanced Academic Achievement course which utilizes the LIMI test, classroom administration of a learning style assessment, and classroom instruction.
- 1P9b O LCC conducted a faculty survey to monitor and address the three types of learning styles in their individual classes. This survey was done in the spring of 2009; however it is not clear what the College’s next steps are after analyzing the survey results. This could be an opportunity for faculty training involving classroom engagement for a more focused and synchronous learning environment as the instructors would be able to utilize the data received from the training to provide this structure.
- 1P10 SS The College addresses the special needs of student subgroups through a variety of programs including Perkins Special Populations, TRIO SSS,

Adult Transition Services, Educational Opportunity Center, CLEP High School Spanish Language Initiative, Fifth Year, Dual Enrollment, and others.

- IP11a S LCC provides an excellent format for communication to flow across the campus that involves all staff which allows for effective teaching and learning for the student.
- 1P11b S LCC's Assessment AQIP action team is building an institutional assessment process that will update current learning outcomes, determine methods by which outcomes will be measured, and building a cycle through which all competencies will be assessed systematically. This process provides a system of an ongoing identification of strengths and planned improvements indicated by the assessment results.
- 1P11c SS On each syllabus, faculty state the philosophy guiding the course, the performance objectives and skill mastery for the course, and the stated competencies for the course.
- 1P12 S LCC builds an effective and efficient course delivery system that addresses both students' needs the organization's requirements by carefully considering which courses are best suited to online delivery and through expansion of the hybrid option that provides a combination of onsite/online delivery. LCC also offers some interactive video courses in partnership with Adams State University.
- 1P13a S LCC monitors the currency and effectiveness of its curriculum using a combination of data, faculty input, industry input and advisory groups that are program specific.
- IP13b O LCC has an opportunity to further develop their programs by tracking student success after graduation from their respective programs as this information can lead to future networking opportunities for the students, College, and community.
- 1P14 O Although ARC provides academic review of new and revised courses and programs, and the CTE programs undergo a five-year review cycle, it is

- unclear how LCC discontinues programs. LCC is now working to formalize a cyclical review of all programs to ensure relevancy.
- 1P15 O LCC uses a variety of tests to assure the student that they find success in the courses they enroll in. An opportunity exists for LCC to survey students in regards to their experience with the tutoring and advising services. Sometimes the perception of the actual user of the services is critical for the change management process.
- 1P16 O It is unclear if LCC has co-curricular programs such as sports or community service projects. Identified co-curricular activity examples were limited to course specific events. LCC has the opportunity to develop a formalized system to align co-curricular development goals with curricular learning objectives to enrich the teaching and learning environment and aid student goal attainment.
- 1P17, 1P18 O LCC is utilizing the Assessment AQIP action team to design and develop processes that determine if students have met programmatic learning and development expectations. This will provide a system to further assess student learning and learning outcomes and could provide a continuous quality improvement cycle and benchmarks for comparisons with other colleges.
- 1R1 - 1R3 OO Although LCC has an early alert and mid-term alert system to determine which students need remediation or another form of intervention; it appears that most measures of students' learning and development that are tracked are attendance, course grades, or overall GPA. LCC could benefit by developing other measures which could include among others retention rates, employer satisfaction, and/or student satisfaction. The institution-wide assessment plan that is currently in the early stage of development will, when fully formed, provide broader and more meaningful measures of students' learning and development along with students' performance against specific program learning objectives.
- 1R4 O LCC indicates that the most significant measure of successful accomplishment of program learning objectives is how well the LCC

graduate functions at the junior and senior level of a four-year program, but does not report this data. Limited data were provided on employment placement for CTE programs, two years of pass rates for students taking the Colorado State Licensure Cosmetology exam, and LPN and RN pass rates for the past nine years. Developing a system of measurements that provide a broader spectrum of student performance at transfer schools, placement upon goal attainment, employer satisfaction, and student satisfaction will help LCC regularly improve the teaching and learning experience for students and other stakeholders.

- 1R5 O Performance results for learning support processes are currently limited to 27 students taking Language Examination CLEP tests. LCC could benefit from the development of assessment processes for learning support services such as advising, library, computer labs, etc that would allow regular improvements to these services.
- 1R6 O LCC has an opportunity to develop a system to measure and then compare the performance results of their processes for helping students learn with other institutions. This comparison will help the College benchmark progress externally and assists with research into “Best Practices” utilized by other colleges and universities.
- 111 S LCC has identified and clarified the institution’s top three goals as a result of a dynamic Conversation Day and is using this process as a blueprint to create and refine student and academic support processes. LCC has implemented several recent improvements based on data analysis of current activities in helping students learn including tutoring services and interventions.
- 111,112 O LCC is able to list a number of recent improvements in services that support student learning. However without processes and systems that enable the collection and analysis of student learning and performance results and then promotes a process for improvements based on the analysis, it is hard to aptly identify what improvements are most needed.

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 Lamar 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

- OV2 The Strategic Oversight Committee has identified three distinctive objectives: athletics, preserving regional culture, and economic development. LCC works with community leaders to improve and welcome a culturally sensitive climate on and off campus.
- OV6b Major construction projects to update facilities and technology demonstrate the alignment of support goals with the College's mission and values. The College has improved technology to further support operations and is in the process of moving to a new course management system.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Lamar 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	LCC designed key non-instructional processes that are aligned with the College's mission and vision to serve both students and other stakeholders. Of particular focus currently are athletics, economic development, and preserving the regional culture.
2P1b	S	LCC depends on an open-line of communication with the community through annual employer surveys, program advisory committees and

entities such as the LCC Foundation Board. LCC also sponsors community events, houses the South Eastern Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction (SEBREA) program, and is the largest employer in the city.

- 2P2 S Information on other distinctive objectives is gathered through communications with the community, employer surveys, program advisory committees, and the LCC Foundation Board. The objectives are then set by the Strategic Oversight Committee that includes internal and external stakeholders.
- 2P3 S Communication of expectations is handled through all staff meetings, advisory committees, press releases, local media articles, external relationships, and the LCC website.
- 2P4 O LCC currently has informal methods to assess and review the appropriateness and value of other distinctive objectives and has the opportunity to formalize these processes allowing the Strategic Oversight Committee to use data to further strengthen and enhance the value on the culture the College brings to the region.
- 2P5, 2P6 O LCC has the opportunity to formalize the process of determining faculty and staff needs relative to these objectives and operations to increase stakeholder buy-in and to indicate to these stakeholders that the institution values people. Providing regular assessment of the process will assist with incorporating information on faculty and staff needs and then readjusting the objectives when needed.
- 2R1a S LCC uses information from retention rates, student success rates, transfer rates, participation rates, economic impact analysis, and workforce trainings to measure other distinctive objective achievement.
- 2R1b O LCC lists measures of accomplishing major non-instructional objectives and activities, however no information is provided about how these measures are regularly collected and analyzed. Formalizing these processes will allow the College to better understand and improve these processes.

- 2R2 O LCC uses performance rates as indicators of success; however, it has an opportunity to collect, analyze, and then utilize longitudinal performance results for accomplishing other distinctive objectives that allows for comparisons not only of year-to-year performance but between and among other institutions.
- 2R3 O LCC has an opportunity to develop processes and systems to measure and compare the results for accomplishing other distinctive objectives with those of other higher educational organizations. These comparisons allow for benchmarking performance and investigating best practices to continually improve internal efforts.
- 2R4, 2Ia O LCC provides information on how the College's athletics and agricultural programs along with involvement in economic development for the region have strengthened the overall organization and enhanced the institution's relationships with the communities and regions it serves. Formalizing the College's processes and systems of collecting, analyzing, assessing, and communicating the measures that track performance results would allow the organization to continually improve performance and further enhance those important relationships. The College could enhance the co-curricular efforts listed in 2I1 by working towards a systematic and comprehensive system that allows for tracking, measuring, and assessing performance results for accomplishing other distinctive objectives.
- 2I1b S LCC has invested in a full-time international coordinator to support its International Program, revised the Athletic Booster club to involve the community, and created an entrepreneurship program to assist local businesses.
- 2I2 O LCC is currently working on a process to connect other distinctive objectives to the budgeting and strategic planning process which should provide a system to select specific processes to improve and to set targets for improving performance results.

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 Lamar 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

- OV3 LCC is a point of access for students who are seeking entrance into higher education. Within the region, LCC's primary competitors are Otero Junior College and Northwest Kansas Technical College. While distance learning options are emerging, the College currently remains the sole provider for higher education within the service area.
- OV4a LCC is supported by over 125 employees that serve to meet the instructional and support needs of the students. Over 50% of the employees are designated primarily for instruction. The State Board of Community College and Occupation Education is responsible for setting priorities and policies, but LCC's Executive Planning Team (EPT), Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC), and program advisory councils shape priorities to align with the mission and vision of the College.
- OV4b LCC recognizes the need to provide retention and support services for students and employees from underrepresented populations and strives to implement plans to achieve this goal.
- OV9 LCC has many partners to help service the educational needs of students, of the region, and of the state. Some of the key collaborators are the Department of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, local k-12 school districts, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the Superintendent Advisory

Committee, the Global Leadership Foundation, local Workforce agency, SEBREA, local health and medical facilities, regional institutions of higher education, the Gear Up Program for high school students and the state Community College System office.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	O	Although LCC has several informal and survey options for identifying student needs, it will soon implement a national survey instrument. Use of a national instrument will provide concrete, comparable data which will provide evidence of the College's needs assessment.
3P2	S	Figure 3.2 provides the framework of activities that help build and maintain relationships with LCC students.
3P3	S	LCC's advisory committees involve members from local business and government offices. In addition, the College engages in outreach activities such as town meetings, the AQIP accreditation process, community group meetings, and college fairs.
3P4	S	A number of methods to analyze changing stakeholder needs and build relationships include: college and program advisory committees, economic development activities and participating in a wide variety of community events. These methods help to keep the College in the forefront of the community and build trust among various stakeholder groups. LCC builds and maintains its relationships with its key stakeholders through faculty and staff participation in various community activities, local parades, fairs, and other community events, and local chamber of commerce boards.
3P5	O	Although LCC lists what <i>information</i> is used to determine changes in offerings and service, it is not clear what <i>processes</i> are used to determine if the College should target new student and stakeholder groups with educational offerings and services. Building formalized processes and

systems that are then institutionalized allows a better understanding of which groups to target that best connects to both short- and long-term organizational planning and goals; thus providing processes to prioritize and compare or benchmark decisions.

- 3P6 O LCC recognizes the opportunity to develop and implement processes to analyze and assess complaint information from students and other stakeholders and then provide improvements and solutions that are also assessed regularly. Development and communication of such a process will provide data necessary to review current practices. A system such as this could be helpful in building relationships with students and increasing retention.
- 3R1-3R6 OO LCC is in the early stages of developing a recurring cycle of formalized processes and systems to determine, assess, and regularly improve satisfaction and relationships with students and other stakeholders. Building these processes and systems will allow the College to measure performance results that can be compared and benchmarked with other educational institutions, thus providing opportunities to investigate and select best practices that might be replicated at LCC.
- 3I1-2 S LCC recognizes the need to adopt a continuous improvement model in improving its understanding of student and stakeholder needs. Currently the EPT is working in concert with the SOC to enhance and set targets for improved performance results. The implementation of formal processes will enable the College to better serve its students and key stakeholders.
- 3I1- 3I2 O LCC has not recently made improvements in understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs and acknowledges the opportunity to develop processes and systems that will create a continuous improvement culture and infrastructure that assists with the selection and prioritization of targets to improve performance results.

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 Lamar 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

OV4a LCC is supported by over 125 employees that serve to meet the instructional and support needs of the students. Over 50% of the employees are designated primarily for instruction. The State Board of Community College and Occupation Education is responsible for setting priorities and policies, but LCC's Executive Planning Team (EPT), Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC), and program advisory councils shape priorities to align with the mission and vision of the College.

OV5a Several years of changing leadership has hindered the College in its strategic planning processes. College values of open communications, valuing people, respect, and integrity were developed at an all-campus meeting in fall 2009.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1-4P3	S	LCC utilizes standard processes to identify specific credentials and skills required for employees and in hiring new employees. The LCC Human Resource office works with the State of Colorado on certain aspects of their processes pertaining to classified staff. Effort is taken to ensure that

new employees are able to do the job, but perhaps more importantly, that they are a good fit within the College.

- 4P1 O The hiring committee offers a perspective on diversity; however, the opportunity exists to survey successfully hired employees to determine strengths and weaknesses of the process and implement these measures into the hiring practices.
- 4P4 S The College provides orientation training for all its employees on its history, mission, and values conducted by supervisors, the Human Resources Director, and the President.
- 4P5 O LCC is to be commended for currently developing a strategic growth plan for adding and improving existing programs. An opportunity exists to continue the recent improvements in identifying the future needed skills and requirements of a changing workforce, thus becoming more efficient in fulfilling needs as they arise.
- 4P6a S All employees receive annual performance review in which the process is aligned with College and departmental goals and the strategic plan.
- 4P6b O Employee evaluations can be good methods for assessing how an employee is performing his/her job; however they do not provide an approach for the design of work processes. Further, it is not clear how these processes contribute to process effectiveness or employee satisfaction or engagement.
- 4P7 O While the College has several policies in place for ethics, it is not clear how the College ensures these processes are followed and achieved on a daily basis. The creation of a method for employees to report potential violations and follow-up around these concerns may help the College to prevent possible ethical violations and create greater levels of trust between the students, workforce and community. This will also allow for professional development and an organizational commitment to the employees in this area.

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| 4P8 | S | LCC determines employee training needs through the evaluation and strategic planning processes. The College is in the early stages of aligning organizational training needs with strategic plans and objectives. Increased alignment between these two areas will help the College develop the workforce in areas that are of critical importance to the long-term success of the College. |
| 4P9 | O | All LCC employees are given the opportunity to receive training based on needs. LCC has an opportunity to formalize processes and systems for training and developing employees throughout their careers. Providing fully developed processes allows employees to add value to the institution and enhances a culture of continuous quality improvement. |
| 4P10 | O | LCC is part of a state system for the evaluation of classified employees, exempt employees, and faculty. The College recognizes an opportunity to formally align their evaluation and employee recognition system with strategic planning and college-wide objectives and goals. Creation of an alignment process could help LCC to better analyze individual local concerns that do not reveal themselves in standardization evaluation systems. |
| 4P11 | O | The College recognizes the need to develop and implement a formal process integrated in the strategic plan. Doing so can increase satisfaction. |
| 4P12 | S | The College conducts an employee communication satisfaction survey, and uses an Action Team to identify issues to improve campus-wide systems. |
| 4P13 | O | The existing employee satisfaction survey does not currently include the issue of health, safety, and well-being. |
| 4R1a | S | Results indicating the best and worst performing areas from the Employee Communication Satisfaction Survey demonstrate positive trends for most areas. Three of the five questions that appeared on the 2004 worst performing ranking were also on the 2008 ranking, meaning |

- that some issues within the College are being adequately addressed through process improvements.
- 4R1b O Although LCC regularly collects and analyzes data from the employee communications survey, the College recognizes the need to develop and implement other measurement tools to assess employee and stakeholder satisfaction.
- 4R2 O Table 4.1 presents results of the communication survey from 2004 through 2008. It is unclear how these results have been used. Taking lessons learned from the survey and developing them into processes to increase satisfaction with valuing people could benefit the College.
- 4R3/4 OO LCC acknowledges an opportunity exists to create a system and college culture that promotes valuing people and investing in the productivity and effectiveness of employees, and to compare performance results with other like institutions. This type of system and environment will help push continuous quality improvement throughout the College.
- 4I1-2 O Improvement of the College's core value of Valuing People is new and emerging. Further data collection and use of the data collected to make improvements will guide the organization in the development of a culture of greater institutional effectiveness. By adding comparisons and setting targets for the improvement of people, the College will add further clarity to where it is going and what resources will be required to achieve these strategic objectives.

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 Lamar 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

OV5a Several years of changing leadership has hindered the College in its strategic planning processes. College values of open communications, valuing people, respect, and integrity were developed at an all-campus meeting in fall 2009.

OV5b The LCC strategic plan was created in 2008. As part of its strategic plan, LCC identified three goals for 2009: 1) strategic growth on a solid foundation, 2) integrated marketing and enrollment management, and 3) retention.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Lamar 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	The Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) reviews the organization's mission and values annually. The SOC is made up of representatives from across the organization.
5P2	O	The Executive Planning Team (EPT) is responsible for determining goals in parallel to LCC's mission, vision, and values, while the SOC determines the needs of students and the community. However, it is unclear what process enables the SOC and EPT to make data-driven decisions regarding setting the direction that aligns with their mission, vision, values, and a commitment to high performance. A well-established process using data would ensure continuous quality improvement.
5P3a	SS	Student and community representatives on the SOC and EPT provide important insight for the direction of LCC.

- 5P3b O Although student and community insight is sought after for LCC strategic planning, this is not formally integrated in the process. Formal establishment of all constituents will guarantee that the process continues to include all voices.
- 5P4 O LCC acknowledges the opportunity to develop formal processes and systems to assist college leadership in guiding the organization in seeking future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning. These systems will enhance effective leadership and communication efforts in a continuous quality improvement environment.
- 5P5a S The College has a well defined, hierarchical approach to decision making that ultimately provides recommendations to the EPT for approval. Representative groups across the organization are employed to research, discuss, and recommend courses of action.
- 5P5b O Although the decision making process is well defined, the description falls short in responding to how these decisions are carried out. It is not clear how resources are provided, implementation plans are created and monitored, and how accountability for effectiveness occurs within the current process. Clarification of these processes would encourage a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle that could benefit the institution's quality journey.
- 5P6 O The use of data in decision making is not consistent across the campus. The leadership is working on a process where data reports will be consistently collected, analyzed and reported. Data-based decision making allows the organization to identify key leadership targets that promote continuous quality improvement college-wide. Embracing this fundamental aspect of continuous quality improvement will enable the College to consistently improve all of its outcomes.
- 5P7 S LCC communicates between and among the levels and units of the organization using discussion at meetings and committees, email, and through a voice messaging system.

- 5P8 S A variety of technology and routine meetings help communicate important information throughout the College and to all levels. The All Campus Conversation Day is held each fall and helps set direction for the coming semester. In the spring, an all faculty and staff in-service works to provide information to the workforce.
- 5P9 SS A number of processes for developing and strengthening the College are in place including, professional development, continuing education, job advancement, performance evaluation, and participation in CCCS committees and task force.
- 5P10 O The College is currently developing a process to systematically deploy leadership succession plans. This process should help the organization with future leadership transitions, as past leadership transitions seemed to slow the organization's ability to create and deploy action plans to achieve strategic objectives.
- 5R1 O Although the President receives a 360 evaluation annually, the College provides only anecdotal information regarding performance measures to assess leadership and communication at all leadership levels. Establishment and analysis of performance measures for leading and communicating would result in data by which success could be measured. The College understands the need for improvement in these areas.
- 5R2 O Results in leading and communicating are not reported because the process of measuring leadership and communication is not fully implemented. Developing procedures to measure effectiveness in these areas will help the College improve.
- 5R3 OO LCC has an excellent opportunity to compare its results with members of the CCCS. Benchmarking and comparing data with like institutions will greatly enhance the viability and reliability of the measures and outcomes in leadership and communication.
- 5I1 S The College reports three initiatives toward becoming more systematic in leading and communicating: departmental connections, reorganizing the

leadership structure, and increased participation and frequency of meetings.

- 512 O The College describes a few targeted efforts to develop its culture around continuous improvement theory; however, the processes for selecting these projects are not clearly described. Continued alignment between improvement efforts and strategic objectives may help the organization to place its precious and limited resources in targeted projects to impact critical opportunities for improvement. Establishing time lines would be a prudent step for the creation of practical benchmarks and assessment standards. LCC has realized that systems do need to be created. However, monitoring and evaluative devices also need to be formed in order to effectively assess these systems.

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 Lamar 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

- OV4a LCC is supported by over 125 employees that serve to meet the instructional and support needs of the students. Over 50% of the employees are designated primarily for instruction. The State Board of Community College and Occupation Education is responsible for setting priorities and policies, but LCC's Executive Planning Team (EPT), Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC), and program advisory councils shape priorities to align with the mission and vision of the College.

- OV4b LCC recognizes the need to provide retention and support services for students and employees from underrepresented populations and strives to implement plans to achieve this goal.
- OV6b Major construction projects to update facilities and technology demonstrate the alignment of support goals with the College's mission and values. The College has improved technology to further support operations and is in the process of moving to a new course management system.
- OV8 Even in the midst of the severe economic downturn that presents a challenge to both long- and short-term plans and strategies; LCC has aligned its key administrative goals with its mission and values. Proposed decisions to update, upgrade and build new facilities have demonstrated a commitment to support instructional effectiveness and continual improvement.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6P1	S	LCC provides a variety of programs to help with student needs such as TRIO programs for academic intervention, tutoring, testing, and counseling services. Furthermore, LCC has programs to service students with disabilities, first generation learners, foreign students, adult transition students, and other student needs. Each semester eligible TRIP students are sent a retention survey.
6P1	O	Although 1P10 clearly delineates programs to support special student needs, it does not address how these needs are initially identified. Examples of support services include but are not limited to: admissions, advising, career services, computing, food service, library, and tutoring. Developing a process by which needs are identified would allow the College to become proactive rather than reactive.
6P2	S	The identification of the needs of faculty, staff and administrators is linked to the strategic goals of the College and are determined by surveys and in

committee and departmental meetings. Master planning, performance evaluations, state-mandated directives, and program accreditation requirements are used in identifying needs of LCC's institutional operations.

- 6P2 O Although administrative service needs are aligned with strategic goals and included in the budgeting process, it is unclear how such needs are determined. Examples of administrative support services include but are not limited to accounting, business office, custodial services, facilities planning and management, maintenance, and risk management. Developing processes by which these needs are addressed and managed would allow the College to utilize data-driven decision making for long range planning and budgeting.
- 6P3 S LCC designs, maintains, and communicates the key support processes that contribute to employee and student physical safety and security through multiple methods including an Emergency and Disaster Plan, security guard coverage for weekends and evenings, and an alert messaging communications system.
- 6P4 O LCC has the opportunity to develop formalized processes and systems to manage key student, administrative, and organization support service processes for day-to-day management to ensure that the College is addressing the needs of key stakeholders. This development and implementation will move LCC towards a continuous quality improvement culture.
- 6P5 O Although committee meeting minutes are posted on the college web site, it is unclear how this method encourages knowledge sharing, innovation and empowerment. It is not clear what processes are in place to assess if this system of dissemination is effective. LCC describes how support service processes are determined, it is unclear how the procedures are documented, enforced, tracked for effectiveness, encourages knowledge sharing, and empowers staff to be innovative and utilize continuous

- improvement tools. Clear identification of support services and their processes would provide a basis on which action can be taken.
- 6R1-5 OO LCC has informal processes in place throughout the campus to evaluate support services. No results are evident to indicate that these processes provide data that help the College make quality decisions. The College recognizes there is a need for collecting and analyzing support services performance results. An opportunity exists to formalize process analysis so that LCC can make continuous quality improvement decisions.
- 6I1 S LCC has recently established a more formal feedback avenue to assist the College in improving measurable results for all stakeholders. Surveys and evaluations will be implemented in the fall of 2009.
- 6I2 O The collaborative nature of planning and evaluating orientation serves as an excellent example of how LCC can embed continuous quality improvement throughout the institution. Although small departments and few staff are available at LCC to select specific processes to improve and set targets for improved performance results in supporting organizational operations, a continuous quality improvement culture and infrastructure moves organization towards more formalized and structured processes and systems over time. Establishing time lines would be a prudent step for the creation of practical benchmarks and assessment standards. LCC has realized that systems do need to be created; however the establishments of monitoring and evaluative devices to effectively assess these systems also need to be formed.

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 Lamar 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

OV7a The Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) is responsible for determining data needs of the College through selecting data based on LCC's action plans, mission, and strategic goals. External and internal requirements for data collection and reporting have resulted in some levels of sub optimization. To improve data and information for decision making, LCC upgraded its data management system in the fall of 2009. Additionally, a new position, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Continual Improvement, will oversee the development of new programs and processes at LCC.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Lamar 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>
7P1-7P3	O	LCC recognizes the opportunity to develop and implement a centralized and formalized process for selection, management, and distribution of institutional-wide data. Beginning in January 2010, the new Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness will enhance these efforts by developing a centralized system of consistent data collection, analysis, and improvement decisions based on performance results. This centralized function will assist with determining data collection, storage, and accessibility for internal departments and organizational planning efforts which will further enhance a culture of continuous quality improvement.
7P4	S	The EPT and SOC collaborate in the identification, selection and analysis of overall performance data. It is shared through campus, departmental and advisory board meetings.

- 7P5-P6 OO LCC collects data for internal and external agencies as required; however has not established practices to determine other data needs, including comparative data sources. LCC acknowledges the opportunity to develop processes and systems that will ensure department analysis of data that aligns with organizational goals and that is disseminated to all stakeholders. Moving to formalized processes and systems that provide this structure will promote benchmarking and the selection of best practices from other organizations. Further, the use of data to drive decision making will develop an atmosphere of continuous quality improvement and ensure that goals are being met in measurable ways.
- 7P7a S LCC maintains its own server system as well as a CCCS maintained data system to ensure the timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of information systems and related processes. Information can be obtained only by personnel that have been cleared by security and supervisors approve verification of access to the data. LCC is audited on an annual basis by CCCS officials and has internal audits when deemed necessary.
- 7P7b O Although internal and external audits are used to determine timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of information systems and processes, the College could be confident that it has gathered verifiable and replicable data through the institution of a process to regularly update software, provide for regular review of the security of the informational systems, and regular maintenance of the informational systems.
- 7R1-R3 O LCC recognizes the need to create and implement processes that record data for analysis and more importantly, use the collected data for assessments and improvements for designated areas. The continuous improvement process needs to be monitored, measures need to be developed for monitoring the accomplishment of the College's mission and goals, and benchmarking practices need to be further utilized to help the institution's strategic planning. Finally, developing practices for comparing data with other higher education institutions outside of the CCCS will allow for best practices to be established. Without

measurement of outcome data, the College will find it difficult to determine whether improvements are being made.

- 711 OO The College has an opportunity to develop a formal strategy and to implement systematic changes in the ways it organizes, evaluates, and disseminates data for both internal and external purposes. LCC is making progress in efforts to create comprehensive processes and systems that will provide relevant performance results for measuring effectiveness. The newly created position of Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement shows that LCC is in the initial stages of making efforts to reverse the pattern of reactive data-gathering by placing an emphasis on data-gathering that contributes to informed decision making.
- 712 S LCC's commitment to AQIP reflects a culture that is dedicated to continuous quality improvement. The College is expanding its continuous improvement culture with the leadership of the SOC that has identified ten long-term goals. Two of these goals were selected as a focus for this current year and the institution is utilizing AQIP action teams to drive the projects aimed at the identified goal attainment.

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 Lamar 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

- OV5a Several years of changing leadership has hindered the College in its strategic planning processes. College values of open communications, valuing people, respect, and integrity were developed at an all-campus meeting in fall 2009.
- OV5b The LCC strategic plan was created in 2008. As part of its strategic plan, LCC identified three goals for 2009: 1) strategic growth on a solid foundation, 2) integrated marketing and enrollment management, and 3) retention.
- OV7a The Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) is responsible for determining data needs of the College through selecting data based on LCC's action plans, mission, and strategic goals. External and internal requirements for data collection and reporting have resulted in some levels of sub optimization. To improve data and information for decision making, LCC upgraded its data management system in the fall of 2009. Additionally, a new position, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Continual Improvement, will oversee the development of new programs and processes at LCC.
- OV8 Even in the midst of the severe economic downturn that presents a challenge to both long- and short-term plans and strategies, LCC has aligned its key administrative goals with its mission and values. Proposed decisions to update, upgrade and build new facilities have demonstrated a commitment to support instructional effectiveness and continual improvement.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Lamar 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>
8P1a	S	Planning at LCC is a bottom-up model that begins with staff and works up to either the EPT or SOC. While the SOC is primarily responsible for implementation, both the SOC and the EPT determine if plans are appropriate for mission, vision and goals. The CCS and the SBCCOE provide guidance in policy and state law in the campus planning process.
8P1b	O	LCC did not describe any key planning processes for continuous improvement other than providing a flow chart of committees in Addendum B and the informal methods of planning within departments.

The College has the opportunity to develop and implement formal key planning processes that will enhance transparency and a culture of continuous quality improvement.

- 8P2 O LCC does utilize the SOC for the process of planning continuous improvement. However there exists an opportunity to formalize a more systematic process that identifies and analyzes short- and long-term goals. This would allow LCC to create a more fluid and adaptable strategic plan as short- and long-term strategies are identified and implemented.
- 8P3 SS Current action plans were developed by the SOC and this committee's deliberations were informed by the results of Conversation Day, ensuring campus-wide involvement and input. Due to the increased number of college employees participating in the planning process there has been a decisive shift in recognizing the importance and benefit of systems processes and continuous improvement.
- 8P4-8P6 OO Currently, the process for aligning, defining and linking all aspects of the planning process is informal. The absence of a systematic and well-executed strategic planning process may jeopardize the College's current status in the region as a valuable provider of educational services. Efforts in this area will assist the College in developing longer-term organizational sustainability. The College recognizes that systematic processes need to be developed and implemented and is currently working toward this goal. Once the SOC defines objectives and selects measure and targets, the College will be able to be more prescriptive in improving outcomes.
- 8P7 S The EPT measures each proposed initiative against the mission, vision and values of the College. Given the current budget and projected budgets, the following factors are considered: start-up costs, projected revenues, projected enrollment, and sustainability.
- 8P8a S LCC employs a variety of means to develop faculty and staff capabilities in response to changing institutional strategies and plans. The first

- process developed is a revision of the professional development leave policy. The new leave policy has increased the focus on professional development and, thereby, supports the emerging culture of continuous improvement.
- 8P8b O LCC does recognize that professional development can enhance their processes and that an opportunity exists to actually manage a more systematic process to offer suggestions for development. Creating this process will allow LCC to effectively incorporate employee development into their strategic planning.
- 8R1-8R2 O LCC has an opportunity to develop and implement formal processes and systems for the collection and analyses of measuring effectiveness that provide regular evidence of performance results. This system will allow the College to track its efforts in planning continuous improvement college-wide.
- 8R3 O LCC has three action plans and two strategic plans, the goals of which are being planned and implemented. Other than timelines, it is unclear what targets for performance have been established. Without targets for performance, it will be difficult for the College to determine progress.
- 8R4 O The College has identified the need to develop comparisons and noted a few areas where it expects to be able to compare its performance against other like institutions. As the College matures with its quality improvement processes, comparing key measures with members of the CCCS will help in validating quality improvement.
- 8I1-8I2a S LCC is in the early stages of developing a process for assessing the effectiveness of the planning process. Greater levels of involvement across the board appear to be helping with the development and deployment of strategy. A follow-up survey and a disciplined application of continuous improvement philosophy throughout the College will help LCC in the identification of next steps for improving the planning process.
- 8I1-8I2b O LCC understands that developing and implementing formalized and comprehensive processes and systems which promote the planning of

continuous improvement will enhance systematic improvement throughout the institution. These efforts will also help promote a culture that values improvement, that regularly selects specific processes to improve, and that sets targets for improved performance results.

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 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 Lamar 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

OV9 LCC has many partners to help service the educational needs of students, of the region, and of the state. Some of the key collaborators are the Department of Social Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, local k-12 school districts, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the Superintendent Advisory Committee, the Global Leadership Foundation, local Workforce agency, SEBREA, local health and medical facilities, regional institutions of higher education, the Gear Up Program for high school students and the state Community College System office.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1	S	LCC has established an array of partnerships with a variety of stakeholders. These relationships help the College draw students from

the Department of Social Services, local K-12 schools, and Global Leadership Foundation.

- 9P1-9P6 O Although LCC has established collaborative relationships with numerous organizations, it recognizes the opportunity to create, prioritize, and build collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders. LCC also recognizes the opportunity to improve the processes and systems related to building collaborative relationships. Developing formalized processes and systems that provide for the regular assessment of results will allow LCC to utilize collaborative relationships to better serve faculty, staff, students, and their community.
- 9P7a S LCC holds departmental and monthly meetings to allow communication. All staff are invited and highly encouraged to attend and faculty and staff are given an opportunity to voice concerns or to provide information. Relationships among departments are created and fostered through this meeting structure, which provides opportunities for faculty and staff to share information for the interest of all stakeholders. College leadership is supporting this effort by formalizing these communications processes.
- 9P7b O The establishment of systematic data collection processes will enhance departmental and organizational communication and will help align LCC organizational goals. The all campus meetings are an important means to hear from all parties involved with the school. Formalizing the collection of data from these meetings will assist to ensure administration has a record of the concerns of the stakeholders.
- 9R1, 9R2 O Although LCC recognizes and utilizes data collection processes, an opportunity exists to formalize these practices to help align strategic objectives and identify areas that require improvement. Recently, the College has created an Integrated Marketing and Enrollment Management task force that will promote this development and provide a system of measurement systematically build and maintain collaborative relationships. With established measures, the College will be able to analyze outcomes and plan improvement strategies.

- 9R2 S LCC has developed a number of strong collaborative relationships that benefit the College and the community, due in part by the reenergizing of the LLC Foundation Board. The College may be able to build additional collaborative relationships by modeling other relationships in the same fashion.
- 9R3 OO LCC does not compare performance results for building collaborative relationship with other educational institutions. The College has an opportunity to learn from other colleges in the CCCS on how their collaborative relationships are successfully built and maintained.
- 9I1-2a S Under new leadership, LCC has implemented all-campus meetings to promote building internal collaborative relationships and has also implemented regularly scheduled meetings with external stakeholders. The revived culture of strategic planning, coupled with its small size and solid connection to its community, enhances the College's efforts to select specific processes that require improvement and to set targets for improved performance results in building collaborative relationships.
- 9I1-2b O LCC does host regularly scheduled meetings with all stakeholders. The reintroduction of a systematic strategic planning process will allow LCC to identify opportunities for improvement, develop collaborative relationships and solidify strategic focus.