

AQIP EXAMINER FEEDBACK REPORT

for

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 21, 2006



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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To Heartland Community College's faculty, staff, and administrators:

Thank you for participating in *AQIP Examiner*. The time you took to complete this survey is evidence of the seriousness of your interest in helping your institution find ways to become even more effective than it already is.

This *AQIP Examiner Feedback Report* supplies you with good information for diagnosing and improving Heartland Community College's quality systems. It provides you with an orientation to process thinking, helps you understand how your fellow employees evaluate processes, and identifies where your own faculty, staff, and administrators see areas for improvement. The report includes results for questions keyed to the AQIP criteria, as well as all comments written by respondents. The numeric results for all questions are compared with those of other institutions that have completed the survey. To help guide discussion, this report provides a brief context for understanding each Criterion and a short paragraph interpreting the significance of each question.

The *AQIP Examiner Feedback Report* should serve as a stimulus for conversation and quality planning. But using the report effectively requires focused attention. To make the most of it, you need to discuss your institution's *AQIP Examiner* results in the framework of process thinking and the AQIP criteria. You also need to realize the benefits that can be derived from interpreting *your* results in light of your colleagues' comments and in the context provided by comparative data from other institutions. Take time to study carefully the results in this report and discuss with your colleagues their implications. The hours, days, or weeks you invest in having such discussions will be rewarded in increased understanding of your institution and the ways you can help make it even better. This report won't tell you what to do next to make an already-good college or university even better, but studying it will stimulate the conversations and ideas that invariably lead to tangible improvements, both in operations and in organizational culture.

Because yours is one of the institutions pioneering the development of *AQIP Examiner*, we don't yet have enough comparative data to complete your report. As soon as 15 institutions have participated, we will regenerate this report for you, with the comparative data included. Thank you for your patience.

If you don't already have a copy, downloading the AQIP criteria from our website (go to www.AQIP.org, and follow the "documents download" link) will be helpful. From that same website page, you can also download many other pieces of information that will help you better understand the role continuous improvement can play in a higher education organization — as well as how colleges and universities are using AQIP in their quality improvement initiatives. After you have studied the report and discussed the results for your institution, please send us (at AQIP@hlcommission.org) your ideas and suggestions for improving *AQIP Examiner* and making it more valuable for colleges and universities.

The Higher Learning Commission and the Academic Quality Improvement Program are both devoted to helping Heartland Community College reach its full potential by maximizing its performance in all its endeavors. If we can be of additional help in this effort in any way, don't hesitate to ask us for support.

Stephen D. Spangehl, Director
Academic Quality Improvement Program
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Who took AQIP Examiner at Heartland Community College?

Demographics (4 questions) ask respondents for their job category, status (full or part time), number of years worked at the organization, and gender. *AQIP Examiner*'s demographics were kept minimal to ensure that respondents could trust that their answers to survey questions will not allow their identities to be discovered.

Using the demographic data below and their own knowledge of the total number of their employees in each category, organizations can compute the survey response rates of various campus groups.

Characteristics of AQIP Examiner respondents		Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
		number	percent	number	percent
	Total respondents	253	100%	6319	100%
Gender	Male	82	32.4%	1823	28.8%
	Female	170	67.2%	3269	51.7%
Job Type	Administrator	33	13%	501	7.9%
	Faculty Member	116	45.8%	1864	29.5%
	Professional Staff	51	20.2%	1089	17.2%
	Support Staff	41	16.2%	1489	23.6%
	Other	11	4.3%	157	2.5%
Longevity	3 or fewer	90	35.6%	1558	24.7%
	4 - 6 years	64	25.3%	1021	16.2%
	7 - 9 years	41	16.2%	484	7.7%
	10 or more	57	22.5%	2034	32.2%
Status	Full-time	158	62.5%	4003	63.3%
	Part-time	93	36.8%	1094	17.3%
	Volunteer (unpaid)	1	0.4%	3	0%

How well do our staff, faculty, and administrators understand “the big picture”?

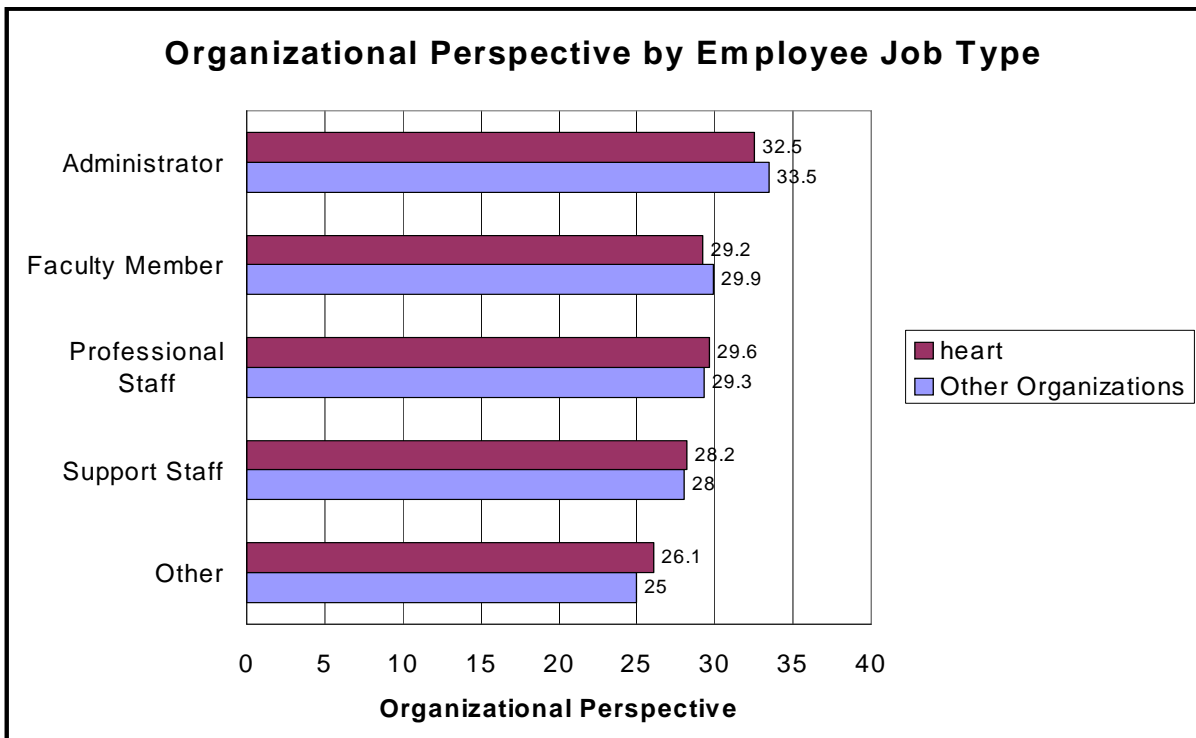
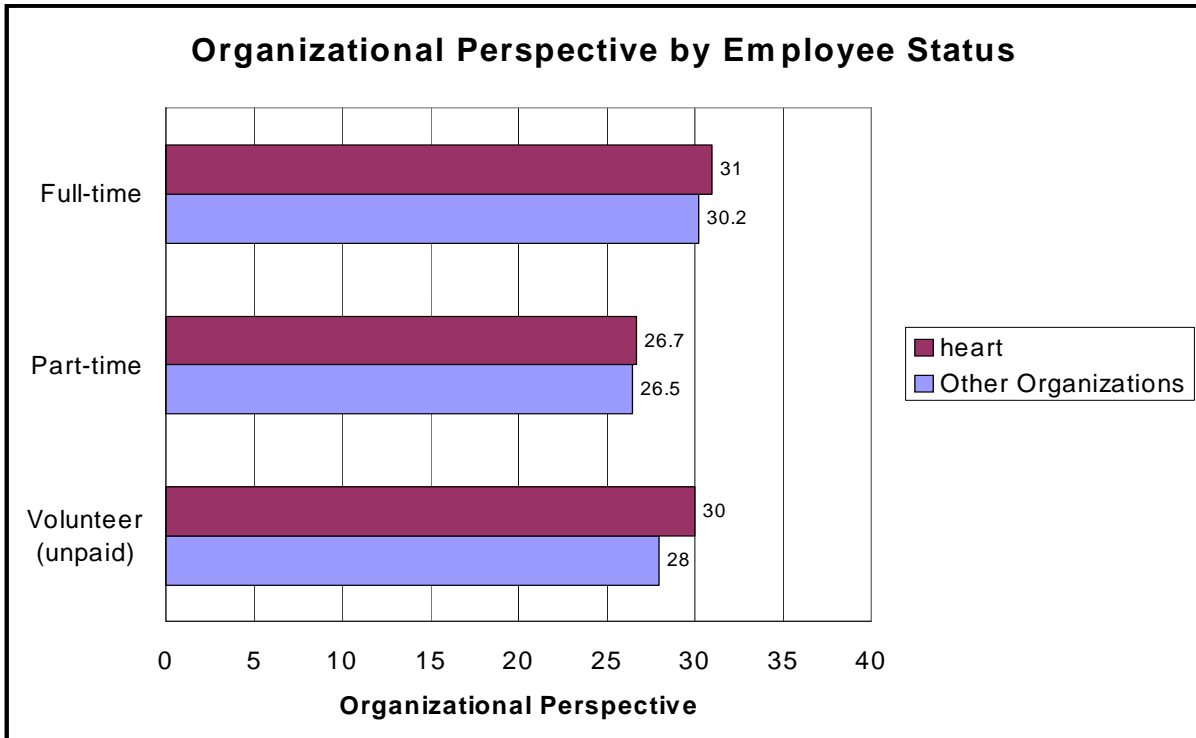
Colleges and universities that communicate their purpose and strategies clearly to everyone create a healthy climate for participation and performance. *AQIP Examiner* assesses how well each group on your campus knows your mission and vision, competitive environment, organization and goals.

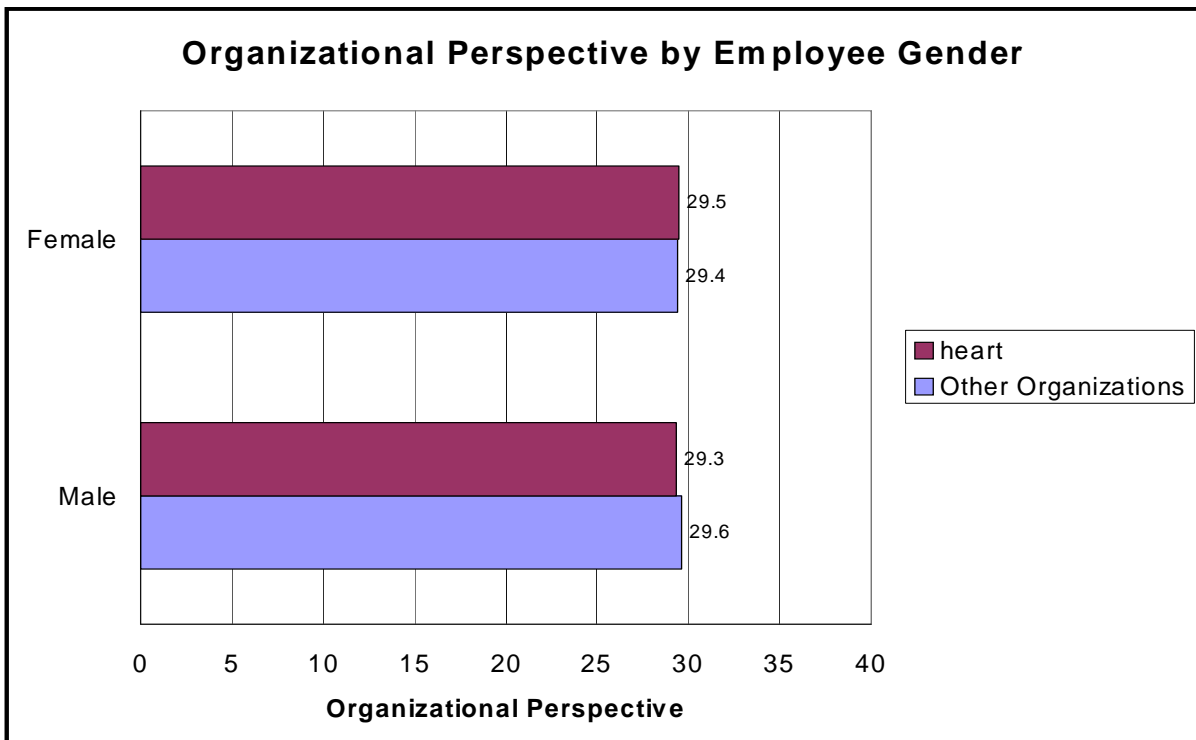
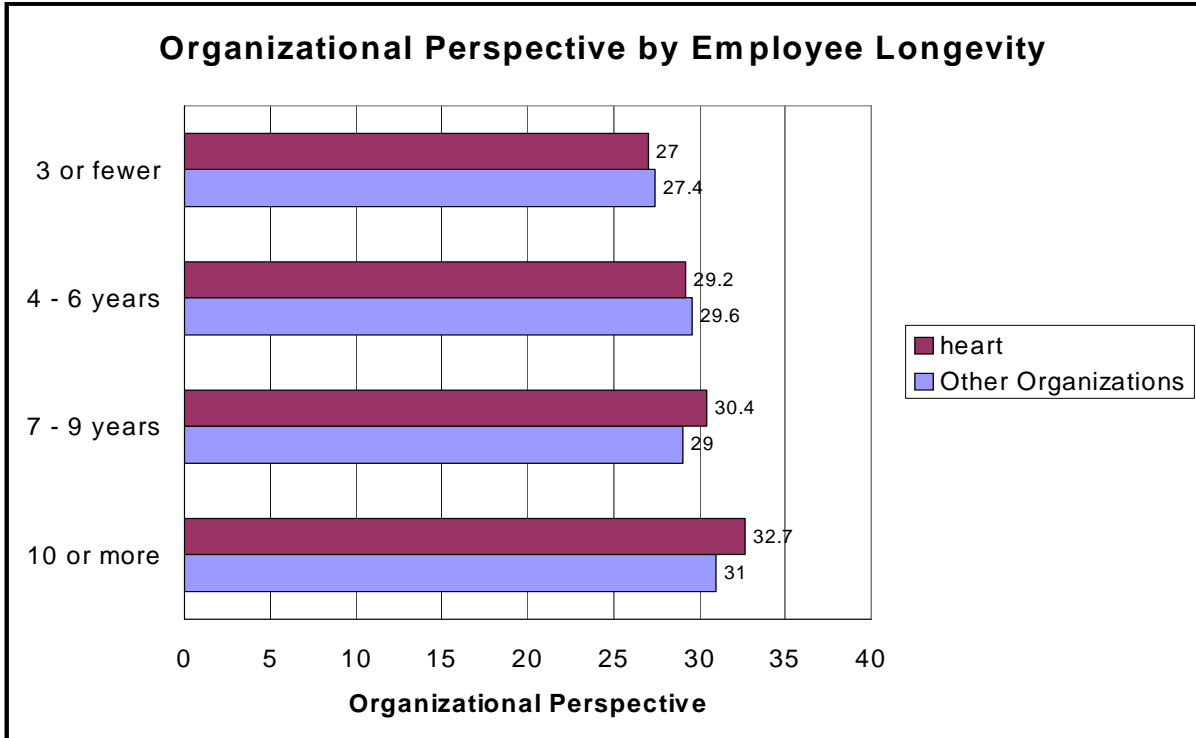
Organizational Perspective (or **OP**) is a calculated index of how confident an employee is about knowing fundamental facts about the organization — its programs, enrollment, staffing, competitors, etc. **OP** thereby captures an employee’s perspective on the organization, whether an employee sees and knows “the big picture” or only those more narrow aspects of the organization directly connected with his or her job. **OP** is calculated by adding together the responses on the eight organizational knowledge questions in the survey (whose individual results are presented below), assigning 5 for *Very certain* to 1 for *Very uncertain* (and 0 for *no response*). The maximum possible value for **OP** is 40, the minimum 0. The **OP** index is then used in breaking down the responses to other questions, and can help the organization discover whether and where it needs to target employee development educational programs.

High **OP** scores across groups indicate that respondents are engaged in the life of the institution. They are more likely to collaborate on campus, to understand change, and to be good representatives of the institution in the community. Analysis of differences of perception between and among groups will help with your communication planning. It’s important to understand why communication gaps exist, to surface and discuss assumptions about hierarchy and organizational culture.

It is critical for the success of your organization that individuals develop a broad organizational perspective. Employees who don’t understand how their job fits into the “big picture” of the institution tend to make decisions and take actions that “suboptimize” results — they make the employee’s unit or department “look good” at the expense of broader organizational goals. This is most likely to happen when lots of employees don’t really know very much about the organization’s bigger goals, competitors, operations, and characteristics. Low **OP** scores occur when the organization fails to invest in orienting and training its employees to the “big picture.”

The charts on the next two pages compare Heartland Community College’s Organizational Perspective with that of other organizations that have used *AQIP Examiner*.





Here are the means and standard deviations on individual Organizational Perspective items for Heartland Community College’s employee categories, and comparisons with other organizations that have used *AQIP Examiner*. Study these closely for significant differences between the means of two groups. And look for single groups where the S.D. (standard deviation, or average difference from the mean) is high, indicating that there are large differences in Organizational Perspective among the members of that group. This may help you identify where you need to direct your employee development energies — which employees need to be educated about the “big picture.”

Mean OP* of AQIP Examiner respondents		Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
	All respondents	29.49	6	29.56	5.9
Gender	Male	29.26	6.9	29.58	6.5
	Female	29.6	5.6	29.36	6.4
Job Type	Administrator	32.52	7.4	33.48	5.2
	Faculty Member	29.21	6.3	29.89	5.9
	Professional Staff	29.6	4.9	29.35	6.5
	Support Staff	28.17	5.4	28.03	6.5
	Other	27.4	--	25.11	7.2
Longevity	3 or fewer	27.13	5.1	27.43	6.5
	4 - 6 years	29.17	5.5	29.61	6
	7 - 9 years	30.41	5.9	29.01	6.7
	10 or more	32.72	6.5	31	6
Status	Full-time	30.98	5.5	30.22	6.2
	Part-time	26.84	6	26.49	6.4
	Volunteer (unpaid)	30	--	28	5

Again, remember that OP, or Organizational Perspective, is a rough, calculated measure of how confident a respondent is that he or she knows “the big picture” for your organization. OP was calculated by adding together the responses on the eight organizational knowledge questions in the survey (whose specific results are presented in the table below), assigning 5 for *Very certain* to 1 for *Very uncertain* (and 0 for *No response*). The maximum possible value for OP is 40, the minimum 0. By itself, the OP score doesn’t

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tell you in what specific areas employees are knowledgeable or ignorant, but this table may give you clues as to where those areas lie. In the table below, the number in each cell is the average response (from 5 to 1) for this item, with standard deviations in parentheses.

Organizational Perspective by various employee subgroups	All Employees	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Volunteer (unpaid)	Administrators	Faculty Members	Professional Staff	Support Staff	Other	Males	Females
Program scope	3.53 (0.96)	3.68 (0.89)	3.27 (1.05)	3 (--)	3.82 (1.08)	3.52 (0.99)	3.48 (0.92)	3.44 (0.88)	3.27 (0.87)	3.49 (1.07)	3.54 (0.95)
Area served	4.23 (0.96)	4.41 (0.86)	3.92 (1.04)	4 (--)	4.52 (1)	4.18 (0.89)	4.28 (0.92)	4.27 (0.93)	3.64 (0.87)	4.21 (0.94)	4.25 (0.92)
Students served	3.7 (1.07)	3.93 (0.94)	3.3 (1.15)	4 (--)	3.91 (1.11)	3.63 (1.09)	3.86 (1)	3.66 (0.89)	3.27 (1.22)	3.52 (1.16)	3.79 (1)
Employees	3.14 (1.16)	3.39 (1.11)	2.69 (1.16)	3 (--)	3.73 (1.18)	3.18 (1.18)	3.02 (1.01)	2.73 (1.13)	3 (0.95)	3.23 (1.27)	3.09 (1.12)
Mission and vision	4.08 (0.98)	4.25 (0.9)	3.78 (1.04)	4 (--)	4.45 (1.04)	4.05 (1)	4.24 (0.81)	3.83 (0.93)	3.4 (0.92)	4 (0.99)	4.12 (0.96)
Organization	4.11 (0.97)	4.34 (0.91)	3.7 (0.99)	4 (--)	4.52 (1)	4.08 (0.92)	4.18 (0.99)	3.95 (0.97)	3.4 (0.8)	4.06 (1.08)	4.13 (0.94)
Chief competitors	3.55 (1.15)	3.75 (1.04)	3.19 (1.26)	4 (--)	3.97 (1.03)	3.57 (1.19)	3.52 (1.08)	3.32 (1.13)	3 (1.18)	3.57 (1.15)	3.54 (1.16)
Short-range goals	3.09 (1.13)	3.22 (1.06)	2.85 (1.2)	4 (--)	3.61 (1.19)	3.01 (1.21)	3.02 (0.81)	2.98 (1.06)	3.1 (1.04)	3.17 (1.19)	3.05 (1.1)

What defines a process-focused organization?

Process-focused thinking requires looking at all institutional activities and outcomes as dynamic and interconnected. It balances seeing operations only in terms of persons, departments, and functions. Those who view their work as process have an approach and a vocabulary for improving rather than for assigning blame.

A **process** is an organized group of related activities that together create a result of value to those it serves —its customers.” Processes are what create the results that your students and other stakeholders seek from your organization. The three parts of this definition warrant repeating:

- ◆ A process is a *group* of activities, not just one.
- ◆ A process consists of *related, organized* activities, not just a random collection of actions.
- ◆ The pieces of a process work together *towards a common goal*.

Traditional organizations are structured around departments, and often fail to appreciate the importance of focusing on process. People in one department don't know what their peers in other departments are doing. No one knows or cares that those in other departments are doing related work. People are focused on their own particular set of tasks and responsibilities. In many organizations, no one focuses on seeing or bringing together all the separate activities that produce a particular result. Often, there is no one responsible for managing a key process — for making sure it works, for identifying causes when it fails, and for finding ways to improve it over time.

In higher education, key processes can be extremely complex, and require the cooperation and efforts of many people and departments. *Teaching writing, training employees, or planning and budgeting* are all good examples of complicated processes to which a variety of people and offices contribute. The key processes in most colleges and universities are not operated by any single person, office, or department alone.

For example, a key higher education process is the one in which a college or university helps its students select the academic programs that fits their needs, abilities, aspirations, and time and financial constraints. In most institutions, lots of people in different departments contribute to this process — academic advisors, secretaries and clerks, faculty members, recruiters, the people who create and send out catalogues and recruiting materials, the website managers, and many others are part of this process. Yet it is rare to find an institution where any one person or group has been identified to manage and coordinate this key process, to make sure that all those who contribute to it have similar goals and understanding of what students need and how the institution can meet those needs.

How do externally- and internally-directed processes differ?

There are two types of key processes important in any organization. The first type includes processes that directly benefit the people your college or university was created to serve — your students and the other external “stakeholders” who depend on you to provide services that meet their needs. These other external stakeholders might include businesses for which you train employees or perform research, the families of your students, your community, your state or local governments, and the public or private agencies that fund your organization. How effectively you satisfy the requirements of these external “customers” determines how they perceive your organization, whether they judge it to be a success or a failure in meeting their needs.

Processes that address students and external stakeholders directly are the things your employees do to deliver services to these groups: teaching, advising, counseling, testing, providing community events (like concerts, art shows, lectures), doing research for specific clients (i.e., sponsored research), and others. If the person who benefits directly from a process, such as *teaching writing* or *producing transcripts*, is an “outsider,” then the process falls within this first type.

The second type of processes includes the things your faculty, staff, and administrators do to serve each other. These processes exist to make it possible for your institution to serve its students and other external stakeholders, but they don’t serve outsiders directly. *Producing paychecks, training employees, purchasing and distributing supplies, making tenure decisions, preparing courses, planning and budgeting, lighting classrooms*, and many others are processes that illustrate this second group. Employees are the direct “internal customers” of these processes.

At effective organizations, *all* of the processes in which employees engage fall into one of these two types. If a process doesn’t serve students or other external constituents directly and isn’t necessary internally in order to support the processes that directly serve students or other external constituents, it is a process that could be abandoned without impairing the organization’s ability to do what it exists to do.

Successful organizations have discovered the wisdom of spending time identifying and discussing their key processes. Your faculty, staff, and administrators can ask:

- ◆ Has our organization (institution, college or school, department) documented its key processes in ways that allow others to understand their purpose and operation? Does your documentation answer critical questions such as *What is the purpose or goal of each process? Who is served directly by the process? Who is responsible for tasks within the process? What materials and resources do they require to perform the process effectively? How will the operation and output of the process be measured?*
- ◆ Is there an individual or group clearly and publicly recognized as responsible for managing each of our organization’s key processes? Does everyone know who is responsible for a key process, and who plays a contributing role in its success?
- ◆ How well do people in our organization understand and appreciate the purpose and effectiveness of processes in which they are not directly involved?

What characteristics do we believe are important for effective processes?

Fourteen items in AQIP Examiner asked respondents to explore their understanding of processes. There are no “wrong” answers to the questions in this section, but there are levels of sophistication in the way administrators, faculty, and staff think about the processes by which Heartland Community College accomplishes its work. Differences in responses across groups may indicate different perspectives or assumptions, values shaped by education and work experience. Different views of efficiency or performance excellence may surface as you discuss the responses to the items in this section. The importance of this part of AQIP Examiner lies not in a particular score, but in the opportunity to examine assumptions about process design, efficiency, robustness, capability, training, and results. The pattern of responses to these questions can show an organization that seeks to focus on processes and performance where its opportunities for employee development may lie.

Characteristics of effective processes 5 = Extremely important, 1 = Not very important	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
is well understood by those involved in it	4.56	0.58	4.56	0.69
is designed to achieve its goals with no unnecessary steps	4	0.81	4.08	0.87
never or rarely fails to accomplish its intended purpose	3.64	0.85	3.74	0.89
has been in use for a long time	2.4	1.12	2.69	1.15
specifies who does what, and when they do it	4.09	0.91	4.15	0.91
is designed to eliminate bottlenecks and delays	4.34	0.69	4.37	0.7
is designed to recover rapidly when breakdowns occur	4.35	0.67	4.35	0.7
costs less than alternative processes would cost	2.98	1.06	3.34	1.08
is predictable, producing desired results consistently for those served	3.94	0.97	4.01	0.87
is used widely throughout an organization	3.68	1.1	3.84	1.04
is capable of handling the volume of work that must be done	4.47	0.65	4.45	0.67
can handle increases in the volume of work	4.3	0.71	4.25	0.75
results in the kinds and levels of performance that the organization wants	4.38	0.71	4.36	0.72
is one an organization can maintain with available resources	4.15	0.84	4.23	0.86

Organizations that are not conscious of their own key processes often lack a common vision and common terminology. As a result, they can become clumsy and sluggish: their employees and internal departments miscommunicate with each other; mistakes that require rework occur frequently; handoffs between departments generate delays and errors; and no one is in a position to adapt overall process to the needs of students and other external stakeholders.

The next table shows how different employee categories at the organization rated characteristics of effective processes.

Characteristics of effective processes by employee categories											
5 = Extremely important, 1 = Not very important											
Means and (Standard Deviations)											
	All Employees	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Volunteer (unpaid)	Administrators	Faculty Members	Professional Staff	Support Staff	Other	Males	Females
is well understood by those involved in it	4.56 (0.58)	4.62 (0.61)	4.43 (0.66)	4 (--)	4.55 (0.45)	4.6 (0.56)	4.6 (0.57)	4.53 (0.67)	3.86 (0.62)	4.49 (0.59)	4.59 (0.61)
is designed to achieve its goals with no unnecessary steps	4 (0.81)	4.01 (0.85)	3.98 (0.74)	4 (--)	4.09 (0.72)	4 (0.89)	3.88 (0.84)	4.05 (0.77)	4 (0.53)	3.91 (0.99)	4.04 (0.72)
never or rarely fails to accomplish its intended purpose	3.64 (0.85)	3.61 (0.85)	3.69 (0.86)	4 (--)	3.73 (0.69)	3.55 (0.94)	3.6 (0.82)	3.8 (0.84)	3.86 (0.62)	3.67 (0.92)	3.62 (0.84)
has been in use for a long time	2.4 (1.12)	2.31 (1.09)	2.58 (1.12)	3 (--)	2.21 (1.2)	2.41 (1.12)	2.14 (0.96)	2.75 (1.13)	3 (0.93)	2.49 (1.16)	2.36 (1.09)
specifies who does what, and when they do it	4.09 (0.91)	4.12 (0.89)	4.04 (0.92)	4 (--)	4.15 (1.02)	4.11 (0.9)	4.06 (0.88)	4.05 (0.84)	4 (0.76)	3.97 (0.98)	4.15 (0.86)
is designed to eliminate bottlenecks and delays	4.34 (0.69)	4.34 (0.67)	4.34 (0.75)	4 (--)	4.24 (0.9)	4.38 (0.67)	4.26 (0.63)	4.49 (0.62)	3.86 (0.62)	4.28 (0.73)	4.36 (0.72)
is designed to recover rapidly when breakdowns occur	4.35 (0.67)	4.36 (0.67)	4.33 (0.7)	4 (--)	4.42 (0.63)	4.34 (0.75)	4.3 (0.67)	4.44 (0.6)	3.86 (0.62)	4.37 (0.65)	4.33 (0.74)
costs less than alternative processes would cost	2.98 (1.06)	2.92 (1.04)	3.09 (1.07)	4 (--)	2.94 (1.01)	2.9 (1.03)	3 (1.06)	3.18 (1.1)	3.29 (0.68)	3.08 (1.12)	2.94 (0.99)
is predictable, producing desired results consistently for those served	3.94 (0.97)	3.93 (1.01)	3.95 (0.93)	4 (--)	4 (0.98)	3.9 (0.97)	3.96 (1)	4.03 (0.96)	3.57 (0.74)	3.97 (0.97)	3.92 (0.99)
is used widely throughout an	3.68	3.62	3.8	4	3.09	3.83	3.66	3.85	3.29	3.65	3.69

Characteristics of effective processes by employee categories											
5 = Extremely important, 1 = Not very important											
Means and (Standard Deviations)											
organization	(1.1)	(1.16)	(0.92)	(--)	(1.11)	(1.01)	(1.24)	(1.01)	(0.68)	(1.15)	(1.08)
is capable of handling the volume of work that must be done	4.47 (0.65)	4.48 (0.66)	4.46 (0.6)	4 (--)	4.52 (0.62)	4.5 (0.62)	4.48 (0.61)	4.46 (0.65)	3.86 (0.62)	4.47 (0.72)	4.47 (0.61)
can handle increases in the volume of work	4.3 (0.71)	4.32 (0.7)	4.27 (0.7)	4 (--)	4.21 (0.7)	4.28 (0.74)	4.32 (0.65)	4.49 (0.62)	3.86 (0.62)	4.23 (0.79)	4.33 (0.69)
results in the kinds and levels of performance that the organization wants	4.38 (0.71)	4.41 (0.71)	4.33 (0.66)	4 (--)	4.52 (0.83)	4.35 (0.67)	4.44 (0.61)	4.38 (0.66)	3.86 (0.62)	4.28 (0.83)	4.43 (0.63)
is one an organization can maintain with available resources	4.15 (0.84)	4.16 (0.9)	4.13 (0.73)	4 (--)	4.3 (0.95)	4.12 (0.82)	4.08 (0.91)	4.23 (0.8)	3.86 (0.62)	4.03 (0.96)	4.21 (0.76)

How do the AQIP criteria group related processes together?

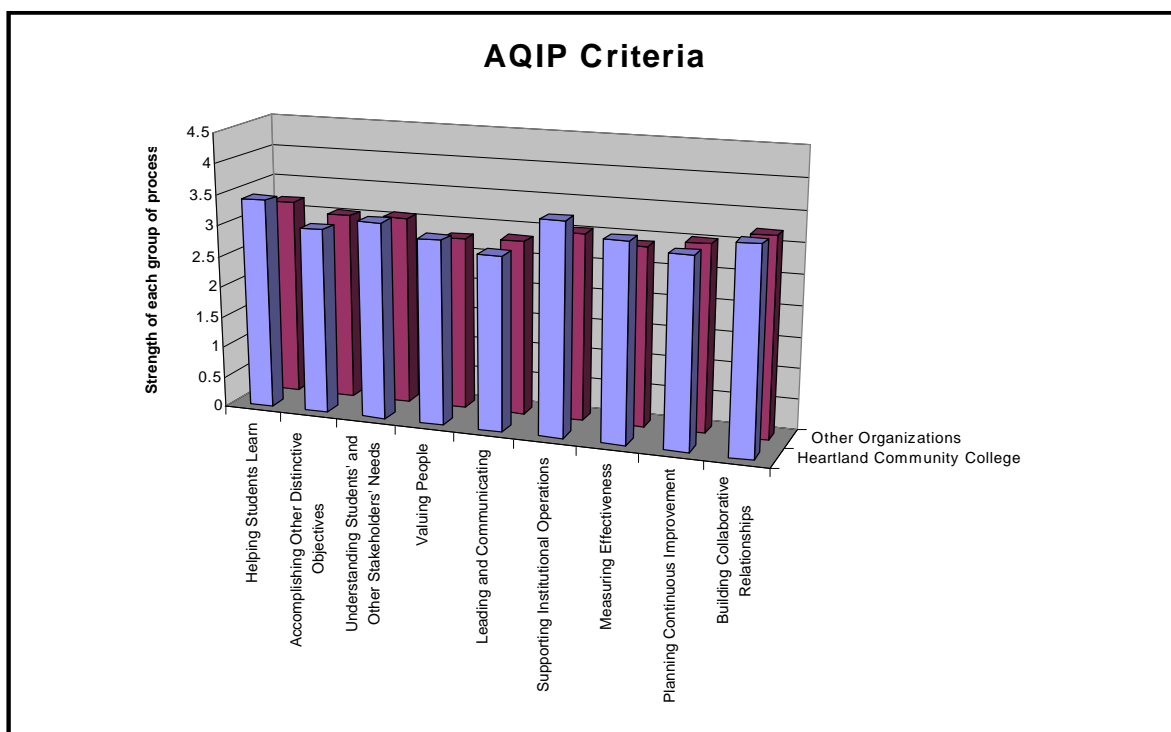
AQIP Examiner employs the Academic Quality Improvement Program’s nine Criteria. Each Criterion consists of a group of questions asking about a group of related processes, such as “Helping Students Learn” (Criterion 1), which examines the processes by which an institution creates academic programs and delivers them to students. These Criteria provide a framework for defining and measuring high performance. Viewed together, Criteria scores offer a systems profile of your institution.

The AQIP criteria’s process questions are represented in *AQIP Examiner* by 50 items, each specifying an organizational process that must be ranked from 5 = *Very effective*, to 1 = *Very ineffective*. Each item relates to one of the nine AQIP criteria, and the nine indices constructed from these responses allow an organization to see where its employees think its strengths and opportunities for improvement lie in relation to the major progress groups named in the AQIP criteria.

Together, the nine AQIP criteria provide “buckets” in which all of an institution’s key processes can be sorted for scrutiny. Other quality-improvement-focused schemes for analyzing organizational processes include the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria and the International Standards Organization’s ISO 9000 program.

In which process areas are we now effective and where could we improve?

This chart graphically shows how Heartland Community College’s employees evaluated each group of processes and displays the comparable evaluation done by the employees of all other organizations that have used *AQIP Examiner*.



Here are the specific numbers represented in the graph above, as well as the standard deviations for each Criterion. (A high standard deviation indicates little agreement among those responding to the items in a given Criterion.)

The AQIP Criteria 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Helping Students Learn	3.41	1.11	3.19	1.14
Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	3.01	1.09	3.04	1.1
Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	3.19	1.08	3.07	1.13
Valuing People	2.99	1.29	2.79	1.28
Leading and Communicating	2.82	1.18	2.84	1.23
Supporting Institutional Operations	3.44	1.04	3.04	1.13
Measuring Effectiveness	3.2	1.14	2.91	1.14
Planning Continuous Improvement	3.06	1.1	3.03	1.15

The AQIP Criteria 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Building Collaborative Relationships	3.31	1.13	3.23

Most institutions find differences among responses by groups. From this table, you should explore difference between groups to find gaps that limit communication as well as performance. In addition, the comments by respondents will enrich your interpretation of numeric scores and assist in framing dialogue and focusing improvement initiatives.

Here are the mean employee rankings on the AQIP criteria for different employee categories.

The AQIP Criteria broken down by employee category 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process (Mean and standard deviations)											
Heartland Community College	All Employees	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Volunteer (unpaid)	Administrators	Faculty Members	Professional Staff	Support Staff	Other	Males	Females
Helping Students Learn	3.41 (1.11)	3.38 (1.08)	3.48 (1.15)	3.63 (0.45)	3.47 (1.06)	3.38 (1.18)	3.31 (0.99)	3.5 (1.04)	3.78 (0.82)	3.3 (1.14)	3.47 (1.08)
Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	3.01 (1.09)	2.95 (1.08)	3.13 (1.15)	3.8 (0.4)	3.22 (0.97)	2.89 (1.2)	2.83 (1)	3.31 (0.95)	3.28 (0.92)	2.93 (1.09)	3.05 (1.1)
Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	3.19 (1.08)	3.2 (1.08)	3.15 (1.12)	3.25 (0.43)	3.23 (1.02)	3.19 (1.17)	3.01 (1.05)	3.39 (0.95)	3.19 (0.93)	3.14 (1.09)	3.21 (1.09)
Valuing People	2.99 (1.29)	3 (1.28)	2.92 (1.37)	3.83 (0.41)	3.32 (1.18)	2.87 (1.38)	2.88 (1.25)	3.16 (1.22)	2.77 (0.93)	2.94 (1.34)	3.01 (1.27)
Leading and Communicating	2.82 (1.18)	2.81 (1.14)	2.85 (1.24)	3.83 (0.41)	3.13 (1.07)	2.77 (1.27)	2.77 (1.08)	2.69 (1.1)	3.09 (0.8)	2.83 (1.17)	2.82 (1.18)
Supporting Institutional Operations	3.44 (1.04)	3.36 (1.04)	3.61 (1.1)	4.25 (0.43)	3.35 (1.05)	3.56 (1.02)	3.21 (1.09)	3.37 (1.08)	3.87 (1.01)	3.46 (1.04)	3.42 (1.08)

The AQIP Criteria broken down by employee category											
5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process											
(Mean and standard deviations)											
Measuring Effectiveness	3.2 (1.14)	3.16 (1.14)	3.29 (1.17)	3.8 (0.4)	3.54 (1.13)	3.08 (1.13)	2.99 (1.14)	3.32 (1.06)	3.44 (0.96)	3.24 (1.05)	3.18 (1.18)
Planning Continuous Improvement	3.06 (1.1)	3.02 (1.05)	3.18 (1.12)	4 (--)	3.24 (1.12)	3.06 (1.15)	2.96 (1)	2.91 (0.97)	3.52 (1.02)	3.02 (1.09)	3.08 (1.1)
Building Collaborative Relationships	3.31 (1.13)	3.3 (1.16)	3.31 (1.13)	3.6 (0.49)	3.56 (1.12)	3.24 (1.22)	3.06 (1.11)	3.4 (1)	3.77 (0.96)	3.3 (1.16)	3.31 (1.14)

People who have worked longest in an organization often have the most experience with its processes, but new employees often see things more freshly than those with a long institutional history. Here are employee rankings for each of the AQIP criteria, broken down by the number of years an employee has served the organization.

The AQIP Criteria broken down by employee length of service* 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	3 or fewer years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 or more years
Helping Students Learn	3.65	3.22	3.3	3.46
Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	3.32	2.78	2.81	3.12
Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	3.38	2.94	3.16	3.28
Valuing People	3.5	2.65	2.7	3.02
Leading and Communicating	3.26	2.54	2.69	2.82
Supporting Institutional Operations	3.6	3.23	3.29	3.57
Measuring Effectiveness	3.52	2.97	2.95	3.29
Planning Continuous Improvement	3.23	2.86	2.92	3.24
Building Collaborative Relationships	3.52	3.11	3.02	3.53

Finally, here are employee rankings for each of the AQIP criteria, broken down by the employees' Organizational Perspective — whether they see the “big picture” or are focused on the details surrounding their job. Those with the broadest perspective (i.e., an OP score of more than 20, or “OP>20”) may be best positioned to distinguish the areas in greatest need of institutional attention.

The AQIP Criteria broken down by Organizational Perspective* 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	OP>20	OP<=20	OP>20	OP<=20
Helping Students Learn	3.46	3.14	3.21	2.75
Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	2.97	2.74	3.05	2.45
Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	3.19	3.19	3.1	2.53
Valuing People	3.03	2.67	2.84	2.4
Leading and Communicating	2.87	2.5	2.9	2.36
Supporting Institutional Operations	3.43	3.59	3.06	2.55
Measuring Effectiveness	3.2	3.13	2.93	2.55
Planning Continuous Improvement	3.05	2.65	3.04	2.42
Building Collaborative Relationships	3.25	3.36	3.23	2.65

How effective are our key processes in each of these areas?

In the sections that follow, you can examine the specific results for each Criterion. The tables below compare Heartland Community College’s employee ratings of key processes with the mean response to each item from all other organizations that have used *AQIP Examiner*.

Following each table are comments about the items it contains. These brief statements on each question are intended to stimulate — not to limit — further discussion at Heartland Community College concerning the implications of this data. Where processes are widely known and perceived as effective, the institution may have realized success upon which to build. As you search for opportunities for improvement, don’t neglect recognizing and appreciating your institution’s achievements and strengths. Work consciously to preserve these strengths as you work to improve the less effective process areas.

Key processes involved in *Helping Students Learn*, AQIP criterion 1

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Criterion 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,

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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 improvement efforts.

<p style="text-align: center;">The AQIP Criterion 1: Helping Students Learn 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process</p>	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
ensuring that our learning objectives for students are aligned with our institution's mission, vision, and philosophy.	3.62	0.94	3.43	1.09
reaching agreement on our common student learning objectives.	3.39	1.06	3.22	1.09
designing new academic programs.	3.44	1.12	3.23	1.17
placing students in courses for which they are appropriately prepared.	3.5	1.16	3.16	1.2
keeping our students aware of our learning and performance objectives.	3.38	1.02	3.29	1.05
defining good teaching.	3.05	1.17	2.92	1.18
ensuring that our faculty members have the skills and resources they need to teach well.	3.54	1.12	3.15	1.14
collecting and analyzing regularly a set of measures of students' learning -- to assess what our students have actually learned.	3.35	1.09	3.1	1.16

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *ensuring that our learning objectives for students are aligned with our institution's mission, vision, and philosophy*

Every institution's mission, vision, values, and philosophy, as communicated through its words and actions, should make clear what it is trying to do for its students - intellectually, morally, spiritually, socially, economically, or in whatever other ways the institution tries to influence their minds and lives. It is critical to make certain that the learning objectives for specific academic programs and courses embody and support that institutional perspective.

- ◆ *reaching agreement on our common student learning objectives.*

Decision-making is an important process. How an institution agrees on common learning objectives offers insight into how critical and sometimes-difficult decisions about the learning needs of all students are made. Since these decisions involve dialogue among disciplines, they raise questions

about student-focus and collaborative relationships. Discussion of this question may surface issues related to the purposes of common learning as well as how the institution reaches other decisions that require crossing divisional or departmental lines. Without a process to make these decisions, assessing student learning is impossible.

◆ *designing new academic programs.*

Processes for designing new academic programs determine how an institution responds to the changing needs of existing students or to new student groups. Because these processes are closely related to the integrity of institutional mission, strategic objectives, resources, and academic priorities, they should be explicit, effective, and understood across the campus. Addressing program design may raise questions about competitive environment, resource priorities, student needs, the evolution of disciplines, and academic standards.

◆ *placing students in courses for which they are appropriately prepared.*

How well students are placed in courses helps determine their success. Effective placement requires processes for understanding students' abilities and preparation, course and program approaches and expectations, as well as scheduling. Perceptions of placement of students may raise questions about whether the institution has designed effective systems for assessing student academic needs or for insuring that students are able to enroll in the courses they need. Processes related to selecting and training advisors may be involved as well.

◆ *keeping our students aware of our learning and performance objectives*

Students who know what is expected of them are more engaged in learning. Ongoing communication helps students understand expectations and strengthens the institution's identity as a community of learners. Failure to provide this communication is sometimes interpreted as "erosion of standards." Discussion may surface issues of how well learning and performance objectives have been designed and formulated for communication. Explore the variety of means that can be used to communicate these objectives to students.

◆ *defining good teaching*

High performing institutions know how to define good teaching. They continually measure and trend performance, open dialog on best practices, and provide recognition for excellence. Key questions are whether processes for defining good teaching are explicit, well developed, and have the active support of faculty, administration, staff, and students.

◆ *ensuring that our faculty members have the skills and resources they need to teach well.*

Effective academic planning ensures that faculty members are prepared with the skills and resources to help students learn. Implications may include institutional budgeting priorities, systems for assessing faculty needs, training and development programs, as well as awareness of evolving disciplines, techniques and technologies.

◆ *collecting and analyzing regularly a set of measures of students' learning -- to assess what our students have actually learned.*

Assessing student learning provides the institution, its students, and other stakeholders with assurance that its academic mission is being fulfilled. Without such measures, improvement is difficult to define. A key question is not whether measures exist, but if they are meaningful in assessing what students have actually learned. How analysis is conducted, results analyzed and communicated, and targets for improvement set may also arise.

Key processes involved in Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives, AQIP criterion 2

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 improvement efforts.

Do not *assume* that *everyone* shares an appreciation of the importance that *you* attribute to such activities as research, community involvement, professional activity, and similar work. To have a productive discussion of this Criterion, you need to make sure everyone has the *same* key “distinctive objectives” of your institution in mind.

The AQIP Criterion 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
aligning our distinctive strategic initiatives with our institutional mission, vision, and philosophy.	3.25	1.04	3.25	1.09
ensuring that our distinctive strategic initiatives complement our student learning goals.	3.17	1.07	3.13	1.06
determining what distinctive strategic initiatives to pursue.	2.99	1.09	3.02	1.11
communicating the goals of our distinctive strategic initiatives to our internal and external constituencies.	2.78	1.15	2.92	1.15
agreeing on and regularly analyzing a set of measures of our other strategic initiatives.	2.82	1.1	2.84	1.12

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *aligning our distinctive strategic initiatives with our institutional mission, vision, and philosophy.*

An institution’s distinctive strategic objectives, beyond helping students learn, should be explicitly aligned with mission, vision, and philosophy. Failure to align (or to communicate alignment) may lead to perceptions that actions are “out of sync” with mission, or that the institution’s identity is at risk through failure to resolve competing priorities, interests or values. Questions of how mission and vision guide institutional life in all areas may arise.

- ◆ *ensuring that our distinctive strategic initiatives complement our student learning goals.*

The relationship of learning to other strategic objectives raises issues of purpose, coherence, image, identity, and integrity. It stimulates questions about how broadly or narrowly an institution of higher learning identifies its stakeholders, defines its mission, articulates its history and traditions, and develops systems for response to new opportunities. Other activities can support learning, or pull attention and resources away from it.

◆ *determining what distinctive strategic initiatives to pursue.*

The processes by which an institution decides to pursue distinctive strategic initiatives reflect how mission, competence, talent, resources, and stakeholder needs are integrated. Explicit knowledge and positive evaluation of these decision-making processes is a mark of a high performing institution. Widely divergent or negative perceptions of planning may signal poor communication of processes or disagreement with past decisions. Questions about assigning priorities to competing stakeholder needs in deciding on distinctive strategic initiatives may arise.

◆ *communicating the goals of our distinctive strategic initiatives to our internal and external constituencies*

Since together they contribute significantly to institutional identity, goals for distinctive strategic initiatives ought to be effectively communicated internally and externally. Communicating goals, especially their relationship to mission objectives, affects stakeholders' motivation to contribute to achieving them. Different perceptions of communication across groups may indicate that some constituencies may be left out of communications planning. Questions about standards for the overall effectiveness of communication systems may arise.

◆ *agreeing on and regularly analyzing a set of measures of our other strategic initiatives*

Processes for agreeing upon and analyzing measures for performance on strategic initiatives underlie the institution's ability to evaluate strategies, measure success, implement improvements or change direction. In analyzing evaluation of these processes, issues may arise about whether effective tools and techniques for making decisions and establishing measures are employed, as well as how results are trended over time and improvement targets or performance standards are set. Without measures, real progress can't be perceived.

Key processes involved in Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs, AQIP criterion 3

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 improvement efforts.

The AQIP Criterion 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
identifying which groups to serve.	3.41	1	3.33	1.07

The AQIP Criterion 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
listening to the specific needs and requirements of those groups we serve.	3.24	1.11	3.13	1.12
identifying and responding to the changing needs of those groups we serve.	3.17	1.09	3.08	1.1
systematically collecting and analyzing the complaints we receive in order to improve.	2.99	1.16	2.79	1.2
measuring the satisfaction of those we serve.	3.08	1.06	2.98	1.14

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

◆ *identifying which groups to serve*

Identifying which groups to serve is an important element of defining an institution's mission objectives. Processes for matching needs of those served to institutional capabilities are critical to effectiveness and integrity. Critical issues and assumptions about explicit awareness of students and other stakeholders in developing strategic focus may be raised by discussion of this process.

◆ *listening to the specific needs/requirements of those groups we serve.*

High performing institutions know they can't be all things to all people, and so they systematically use tools and techniques to hear the needs and requirements of the groups they serve. Without these, institutions may substitute guesswork for what they should know to design and deliver programs and services, as well as to measure satisfaction. Reflection on how the institution listens and uses what it hears may raise key questions about the effectiveness of processes underlying student and stakeholder focus.

◆ *identifying and responding to the changing needs of those groups we serve.*

Listening to groups served is an ongoing process: as times change, so do people's needs. Institutions that track changing needs and requirements and respond effectively gain strategic advantage. Responses to this issue may surface assumptions about change, institutional adaptability, and constancy of purpose.

◆ *systematically collecting and analyzing the complaints we receive in order to improve.*

Complaints enable high performing institutions to make positive changes in services and programs. Where complaints are feared or ignored, important information for improvement is lost. A well-developed, objective system for collecting and analyzing complaints — and acting upon them — contributes to a culture of service. A key question is how the institution facilitates rather than buries complaints, as well as how it focuses on process improvement rather than blaming employees for making mistakes.

◆ *measuring the satisfaction of those we serve.*

Measures of satisfaction allow an institution to know how well it is succeeding in quality objectives: meeting the needs and requirements of those it serves. Satisfaction measurement is a key indicator of a developing quality system. Questions that may arise include whether satisfaction is measured for all groups served, whether instruments and techniques are well developed, and how frequently feedback is collected and analyzed for planning and setting improvement targets.

Key processes involved in Valuing People, AQIP criterion 4

Valuing People explores your institution’s commitment to the development of your faculty, staff, and administrators since the efforts of all 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, safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

<p align="center">The AQIP Criterion 4: Valuing People 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process</p>	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
hiring people who share our mission, vision and philosophy.	3.6	1.24	3.2	1.21
providing our people with the training and development opportunities they need to be successful in their jobs.	3.35	1.21	3.19	1.26
aligning individual performance assessment and feedback with institutional objectives.	3.11	1.19	2.83	1.21
motivating faculty, staff and administrators to improve their own performance.	2.66	1.26	2.62	1.25
addressing faculty, staff and administrator job satisfaction and morale.	2.46	1.24	2.39	1.23
gathering and analyzing regularly a set of measures of our success in recruiting, hiring, orienting, developing, and retaining good employees.	2.65	1.23	2.49	1.22

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *hiring people who share our mission, vision and philosophy.*

The mission, vision, and philosophy of an institution are lived by its employees — in what they believe about their jobs, how they relate to one another, in how they serve. High performing institutions develop systems to hire people with both necessary skills and values that are good “fits”

with the organization's needs. Perceptions of performance in this area may differ, depending upon how individuals recall their own hiring process, level of satisfaction with new hires, or level of understanding of mission-based expectations. Key issues are how mission, vision and philosophy are understood, and how they are translated into processes for hiring.

- ◆ *providing our people with the training and development opportunities they need to be successful in their jobs.*

Providing training and development for job success across the institution enhances both performance and morale. The opportunity to learn new things on the job is an important priority for most faculty and many staff. Areas for consideration include which groups may perceive their training and development opportunities as limited, how training and development needs are determined, and whether an effective system for delivery of training is in place. Issues of technology as a driver of and solution to training needs may also arise.

- ◆ *aligning individual performance assessment and feedback with institutional objectives.*

Aligning performance feedback with institutional objectives allows individuals to understand how they contribute to organizational success. How well this alignment is accomplished across the institution depends upon whether objectives are meaningfully communicated and practically translated for every unit, function, and level.

- ◆ *motivating faculty, staff and administrators to improve their own performance.*

A quality culture depends upon individuals who evaluate and improve their own performance in light of systems and service requirements. High performing institutions create a climate and an environment that encourage and support members' intrinsic motivations to improve. Assessment of performance in this area may raise questions about how groups define performance excellence, and how measures and motivations may differ or converge.

- ◆ *addressing faculty, staff and administrator job satisfaction and morale.*

High performing institutions create working conditions that enhance job satisfaction and instill a spirit of service. Addressing job satisfaction and morale requires feedback and response systems based upon accurate knowledge of factors that influence the quality of work life for each group. Wide variation in responses across groups may signal that a more systemic approach is needed. Issues that may arise in analyzing responses on the effectiveness of these processes include how the institution knows what affects the morale of each group, how it monitors satisfaction, and how it responds to specific problems.

- ◆ *gathering and analyzing regularly a set of measures of our success in recruiting, hiring, orienting, developing, and retaining good employees.*

In valuing people, gaps between espoused values and actual organizational performance can erode morale. High performance requires establishing a valid set of measures for key human resources processes, trending results, and establishing targets for improvement. Questions that may arise in addressing measurement may include how key measures are established, what tools and techniques are employed in data collection, and how results and improvement targets are communicated to stakeholders.

Key processes involved in *Leading and Communicating*, AQIP criterion 5

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 improvement efforts.

The AQIP Criterion 5: Leading and Communicating 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
creating opportunities for faculty and staff to learn and practice leadership skills.	2.98	1.12	3.03	1.19
making certain that leaders communicate a consistent set of values and expectations for ethics, social responsibility, and service.	2.94	1.16	2.93	1.23
making sure that everyone understands and values the mission, goals, and direction of the institution.	3.16	1.1	3.13	1.22
ensuring that leaders weigh relevant information and performance results in making decisions.	2.85	1.15	2.73	1.19
making sure that leaders communicate decisions, strategies, and performance objectives throughout the organization.	2.67	1.16	2.72	1.22
measuring how well our systems for leading and communicating are working.	2.26	1.11	2.43	1.13

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *creating opportunities for faculty and staff to learn and practice leadership skills.*

Leadership is distributed throughout collaborative institutions. It is not confined to those at the top. Faculty and staff need to be supported in learning and exercising leadership skills. Assessing opportunities for learning and practicing leadership raises questions of how leadership and empowerment are defined on campus, as well as how training and development resources are appropriately allocated for involvement.

- ◆ *ensuring leaders communicate a consistent set of values and expectations for ethics, social responsibility, and service.*

Leadership for high performance sets a “tone at the top” for service, ethical conduct, and awareness of responsibility to the larger community. Leadership provides assurance to students and stakeholders, internal and external, that the institution adheres to a consistent set of values.

Assessment of this process may raise issues of how standards are set, how involvement of board and senior leaders is ensured, as well as issues about the means, frequency, consistency, and effectiveness of communication.

- ◆ *ensuring everyone understands and values the mission, goals, and direction of the institution.*

For high performance, mission, goals and direction have to be communicated and understood in such a way as to motivate everyone to actively participate in their attainment. Exploration of how understanding is assured may raise questions about what communication channels are employed, how these are credibly linked to performance standards, and whether they are appropriately gauged to institutional culture.

- ◆ *ensuring that leaders weigh relevant information and performance results in making decisions.*

Ensuring that leaders weigh relevant information should be addressed at a systems level. Leadership decisions based on agreed-upon, reliable sources of information, including performance results, are sounder and more easily communicated than those based upon “impressions” or fragmented data. In evaluating decision making, questions of how strategic priorities are weighed and alternative interpretations of data are explored, as well as how the logic of decisions is communicated may arise.

- ◆ *ensuring that leaders communicate decisions, strategies, and performance objectives throughout the organization.*

Quality-based institutions meet the need of persons at every level to know the decisions, directions, and performance standards of the organization. Reflection on leaders’ communication may lead to questions of whether coherent communication planning takes place, what channels are employed, and how messages are framed. Variation of response across groups on communication effectiveness may raise issues of stakeholder focus.

- ◆ *measuring how well our systems for leading and communicating are working.*

High performing institutions recognize need for a systemic approach to leading and communicating, and so identify and develop measures and indicators of effective processes. Perceptions of these processes will depend upon how well performance standards and measures have been established and results communicated.

Key processes involved in Supporting Institutional Operations, AQIP criterion 6

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 improvement efforts.

The AQIP Criterion 6: Supporting Institutional Operations 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
identifying the needs of students for support services.	3.67	1.01	3.38	1.06

The AQIP Criterion 6: Supporting Institutional Operations 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
providing and managing support services that meet the needs of students.	3.83	0.84	3.38	1.07
identifying the support service needs of faculty, staff, and administrators.	3.26	1.12	2.82	1.15
providing and managing support services that meet the needs of faculty, staff, administrators.	3.34	1.06	2.86	1.1
regularly evaluating how well our student and administrative support services work.	2.95	1.08	2.72	1.13

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

◆ *identifying the needs of students for support services.*

Different student segments may have radically different needs. Understanding of students' needs for support services is based upon feedback from students and the systems that serve them, including assessment of academic preparation, tracking of progress, and communication to service providers. Evaluating systems for identifying student needs may raise issues of student recruitment, performance expectations, and enrollment management.

◆ *providing and managing support services that meet the needs of students.*

Providing and managing support services are processes that depend upon appropriate design that is based upon needs, funding related to priorities established in planning, and operational effectiveness in delivery. Analysis of responses to service delivery may raise questions of how services complement learning objectives, whether and how satisfaction with services is measured, results communicated, and improvements sought.

◆ *identifying the support service needs of faculty, staff, and administrators.*

To identify the support needs of faculty, staff, and administrators, an organization must know what they require to accomplish their work well. High performing institutions understand the stated needs of these groups in the context of delivery systems, processes, and performance standards. Questions may arise about how needs are regularly audited, as well as how this listening is related to planning—especially for technology.

◆ *providing and managing support services that meet the needs of faculty, staff, administrators.*

Providing and managing support services that meet the needs of faculty, staff and administrators depends upon effective design, planning, and delivery. Since these services are most often provided by internal operations, questions of service orientation (i.e., seeing other employees as suppliers or those served), collaborative relationships, and systems for continual improvement may arise.

◆ *regularly evaluating how well our student and administrative support services work.*

Evaluating support services requires performance measures of operational effectiveness in meeting needs, efficiency, and satisfaction. Questions that may arise in discussing service evaluation may include how planning for service takes place, how performance measures are established, how results are analyzed and targets for improvement set. “Internal customers” may need systematically to evaluate those who serve them.

Key processes involved in *Measuring Effectiveness*, AQIP criterion 7

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 improvement efforts.

The AQIP Criterion 7: Measuring Effectiveness 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
collecting, storing, and distributing data and information to those who need it.	3.52	1.08	3.13	1.16
establishing a set of key institutional measures for tracking effectiveness in achieving the institution's mission and goals.	3.27	1.05	2.96	1.1
determining and responding to the data needs of our departments and organizational units.	3.17	1.13	2.9	1.15
analyzing performance data and sharing results throughout the institution.	3.03	1.14	2.79	1.14
measuring and evaluating how well our data collection, storage, and distribution system works.	2.95	1.18	2.71	1.12

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *collecting, storing, and distributing data and information to those who need it.*

Collecting, storing and distributing information effectively requires technical capability and proficiency as well as a service orientation. As you evaluate your information systems, issues concerning vendor quality, alignment with strategic objectives, and the fit between technology training systems and personnel may arise.

- ◆ *establishing a set of key institutional measures for tracking effectiveness in achieving the institution's mission and goals.*

All institutions employ a wide variety of measures to accomplish their work. High performing institutions define their key measures of effectiveness. These are sometimes seen as a “dashboard” or “scorecard” that provides leaders and stakeholders with continuous feedback on performance. The number of measures is limited for ongoing, focused attention, and meaningful response. In order to establish key measures, an institution must understand its strategic objectives, systems and key processes. Evaluation may raise questions of whether key measures have been defined, how they are established and communicated, how they are linked to other measures employed in the institution, and how useful they are in operations and planning.

- ◆ *determining and responding to the data needs of our departments and organizational units.*

Determining and responding to data needs requires listening to the voice of the data user, understanding the processes and needs of various organizational departments and units. Questions that may arise include how departments and units use data, how they generate meaningful measures and analyze results, how they understand and articulate their own data needs, and what their requirements are for data access and formats.

- ◆ *analyzing performance data and sharing results throughout the institution.*

Analysis of performance data should take place throughout any effective institution. High performance requires disciplined focus, analysis, and sharing of results. Questions may arise of how results on key indicators and measure are communicated, how success is interpreted, how targets are established and improvements sought, and how performance data are evaluated and used for improvement.

- ◆ *measuring and evaluating how well our data collection, storage, and distribution system works.*

Evaluation of data collection, storage, and distribution is a critical element in building quality systems and quality culture. Accurate, readily available information is the prerequisite for understanding and improving processes. High variation in responses to this item may indicate that the present system is limited, or that some respondents are dissatisfied with aspects of information services and seek means of improvement.

Key processes involved in Planning Continuous Improvement, AQIP criterion 8

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 improvement efforts.

The AQIP Criterion 8: Planning Continuous Improvement 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
reviewing our mission, vision, and philosophy in light of changing priorities and conditions.	3.24	1.05	3.22	1.14
developing strategies that deal with institutional challenges and opportunities.	3.26	1.01	3.16	1.11
translating our strategic objectives into concrete, achievable action plans.	3.07	1.09	3.03	1.13
communicating our strategies and action plans throughout the organization.	2.92	1.11	2.92	1.17
evaluating our systems for planning.	2.8	1.11	2.8	1.14

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

- ◆ *reviewing our mission, vision, and philosophy in light of changing priorities and conditions.*

High performing institutions periodically revisit their mission, vision and philosophy — in light of changes in their students and stakeholders. Why the institution exists, what it wants to become, and how it pursues its objectives are reviewed in light of changes in higher education’s competitive environment, market forces, technology, and student requirements. In evaluating processes for mission review, questions of involvement of stakeholders, effectiveness of environmental scans, cycle times for review and protocols for making change, as well as institutional identity and continuity may arise.

- ◆ *developing strategies that deal with institutional challenges and opportunities.*

Developing effective strategies depends upon the institution’s understanding of its competitive environment. High performing institutions regularly conduct environmental scanning and interpret challenges and opportunities in light of existing resources and systems. In evaluating strategies, questions may arise about the institution’s flexibility and strategic orientation, its knowledge of internal strengths and weaknesses, and the sophistication of its scanning and planning techniques.

- ◆ *translating strategic objectives into concrete, achievable action plans*

Strategic planning is effective only when it can be translated into tactics. Strategy has practical meaning when institutions know what, specifically, they need to do to succeed in achieving their strategies. In evaluating action planning, questions may arise of whether risks and resource requirements are adequately assessed, how effectively plans are deployed, whether those asked to carry out plans have sufficient skills in project management, and whether the institution’s is more inclined to action or “ritualized” contemplation.

◆ *communicating our strategies and action plans throughout the organization.*

High performing institutions communicate their priorities and the actions required to attain them. Effective communication provides the “big picture” for people across the organization, enabling them to see how their roles in operations or action projects contribute to the institution’s success. Questions may arise concerning whether communication planning is part of strategy development, how clearly strategic priorities and actions are communicated to employees at every level, and how groups within departments and units meaningfully interpret their parts in organizational strategies and tactics.

◆ *evaluating our systems for planning.*

Effective planning depends upon a cycle of improvement that includes measures of success. Planning itself should be continually improved. Questions that may arise in evaluating planning systems include how the institution is “in touch” with its environment; how well its statements of aspiration match its measured performance; how clear people’s roles in planning are; whether plans and strategies adopted turn out to be successful; and whether employees’ attitudes toward planning, change, and action are positive.

Key processes involved in Building Collaborative Relationships, AQIP criterion 9

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

The AQIP Criterion 9: Building Collaborative Relationships 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
establishing collaborative relationships with business, industry, and community organizations.	3.64	1.05	3.56	1.1
building collaborative relationships with other educational organizations, including those that send us students and those that receive our graduates.	3.62	1.06	3.52	1.06
building internal collaborative relationships across different departments and organizational units.	2.87	1.2	2.81	1.2
establishing partnerships with vendors, service providers, and contractors.	3.45	0.98	3.35	1.08
evaluating our systems for building collaborative relationships.	2.9	1.09	2.86	1.12

AQIP Examiner asked you and your colleagues to rate the effectiveness of selected key processes in this area. As you study the ratings each received at HCC in the table above, begin to identify where you might

find opportunities for process improvements, bearing in mind why these particular processes are so important to a higher education organization:

◆ *establishing collaborative relationships with business, industry, and community organizations.*

Institutions depend upon relationships with internal and external stakeholders to improve operations, obtain resources, and effectively pursue their missions. Healthy institutions are aware of their strategic and community environments. They actively pursue collaborations that advance mission objectives. Reflection on results for collaboration with business, industry and community may surface issues of performance in communicating the existence and rewards of such relationships, as well as in establishing and maintaining them for mutual benefit.

◆ *building collaborative relationships with other educational organizations, including those that send us students and those that receive our graduates.*

Relationships with other educational organizations may include partnerships for program development, memberships in consortia or communities of practice, as well as collaborations with those who prepare students to enter the institution or who receive its graduates. Reviewing effectiveness of processes for developing such relationships may raise issues of criteria for partnering or institutional membership in collaborative groups, as well as of how needs and expectations of those supplying or receiving students are identified and communicated — what other enterprises call “supply-chain management.”

◆ *building internal collaborative relationships across different departments and organizational units.*

Collaborative relationships across the institution strengthen a culture of service, enhance appreciation of the work of others, and enable improvement of processes that cross unit or departmental boundaries. Respondents who frequently interact with those benefited by their work have opportunities to make their own work requirements known. Those who participate in cross-functional teams for process improvement are likely to evaluate relationships positively. Questions of how collaborative relationships are encouraged and established may arise.

◆ *establishing partnerships with vendors, service providers, and contractors.*

Partnerships with vendors, service providers, and contractors can create benefit in cost savings, efficiency, and improved service based upon knowledge of customer requirements and capability of suppliers. These relationships build trust over time, but must be supported by effective processes to develop criteria, manage risk, and measure results. Exploration of such partnerships often surfaces questions about how feedback loops are established, and how satisfaction with services is evaluated and tracked.

◆ *evaluating our systems for building collaborative relationships.*

Effective collaborative relationships, internal and external, depend upon conscious design. Reflection on evaluation of systems for external relationships may raise questions about how these are established and prioritized in alignment with mission, how mutual benefits are measured and evaluated, and how relationships may be improved or terminated.

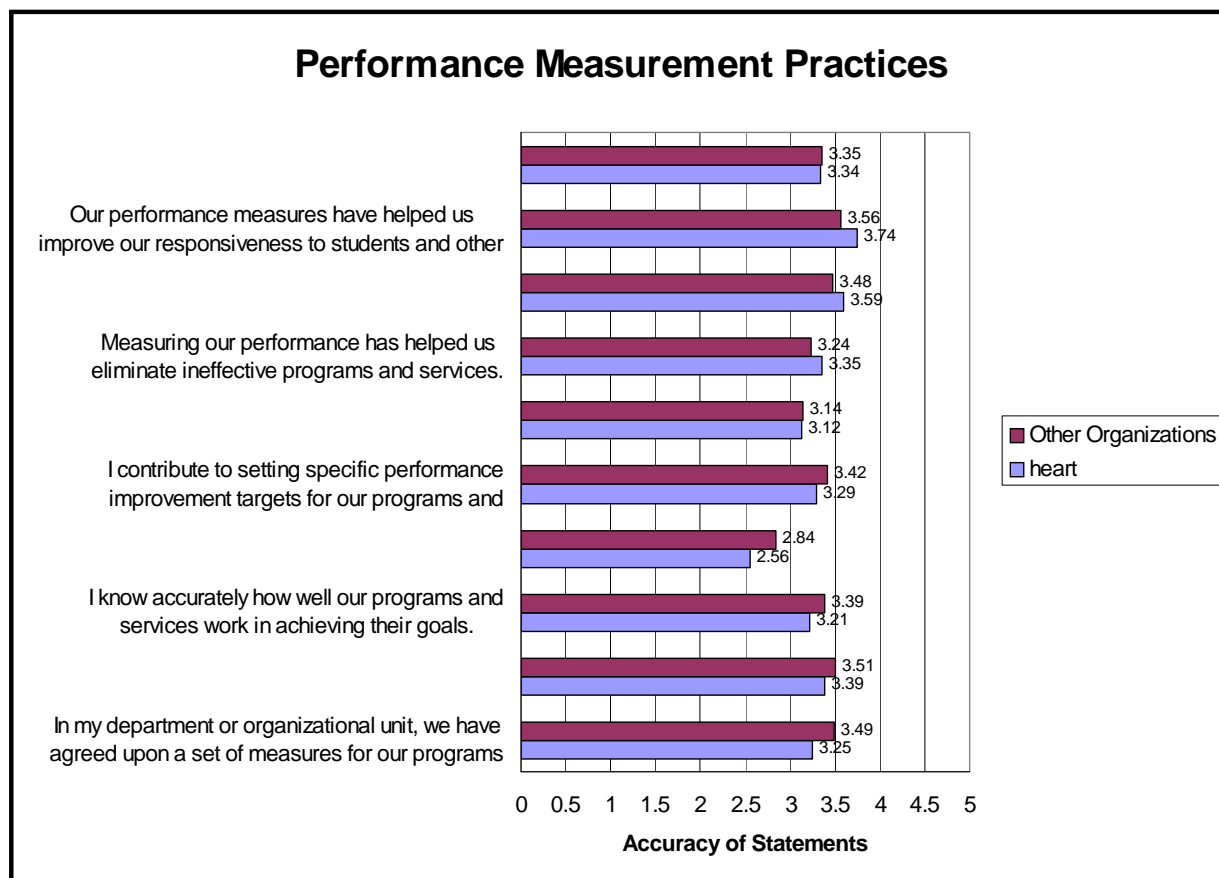
How systematically do we measure our own performance?

Institutions develop processes in order to achieve institutional goals. Ultimately, the test of an effective process is whether or not it helps the institution achieve the performance it wants. Colleges and universities want their students to learn, to graduate, to be successful in life after graduation. They want faculty and staff to thrive, to derive satisfaction and pride from the work they do, to develop their talents and interests. They want employers, parents, and the others who depend on the institution to get what they need: effective employees, independent children, responsible citizens, etc.

Processes *may* work well without measures, but leaving its key goals unmeasured is dangerous for an organization. We all tend to think that we do well those things that are important to us — and that if weren't doing them well, we would become aware of the problems and improve, naturally. But in fact, our desire to *believe* we are doing well often colors our perceptions, and we fail to see the gaps or problems in our processes and activities. Unless we have objective measures and indicators for our most important objectives, it is easy to fail to notice when effectiveness erodes or performance declines gradually, over time.

Holding an organization accountable for maintaining good performance is only one use of measures. Metrics can also reveal where unsuspected improvement opportunities lie. Often, after an organization has worked hard to stabilize or improve its performance, it may conclude that the level it has reached represents a *natural limit* — “we’re now as good as possible.” For example, an institution might be proud of its student retention upon discovering that it keeps 75% of its entering students through graduation. But if it finds that similar institutions are retaining only 40%, it could be *certain* that its performance is superior. And if it finds that some other peer institution is retaining 90%, it then *knows* that it has an opportunity to close the gap between its own current performance and what the other institution has demonstrated is possible. Measures can help us identify opportunities and set “stretch” targets.

AQIP Examiner included ten statements (each ranked 5 = *Very accurate* to 1 = *Very inaccurate*) that describe what might be organizational practices in measuring the performance of its processes. These items measurement were phrased (using *I, my, our, we*) to capture each respondent's individual perspective, and open dialogue on the basis of individuals' direct experience. This graph compares the results for Heartland Community College with those of other organizations using *AQIP Examiner*.



This table summarizes the means and standard deviations for these ten items.

Performance Measurement Practices 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
In my department or organizational unit, we have agreed upon a set of measures for our programs and services.	3.25	1.32	3.49	1.29
I regularly take part in analyzing the performance results of programs and services for which I have responsibility.	3.39	1.37	3.51	1.34
I know accurately how well our programs and services work in achieving their goals.	3.21	1.34	3.39	1.24
I know where our performance stands in comparison with that of similar departments or units in other organizations.	2.56	1.33	2.84	1.34
I contribute to setting specific performance improvement targets for our programs and services.	3.29	1.34	3.42	1.33

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Performance Measurement Practices 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
Our performance measures have helped us reduce our costs and expenses.	3.12	1.19	3.14	1.27
Measuring our performance has helped us eliminate ineffective programs and services.	3.35	1.28	3.24	1.26
Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us improve their accuracy and quality.	3.59	1.15	3.48	1.21
Our performance measures have helped us improve our responsiveness to students and other stakeholders.	3.74	1.14	3.56	1.16
Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us communicate what we accomplish to others in the organization.	3.34	1.23	3.35	1.21

The next table shows how employees with varying length of service perceive the organization's practices in measuring performance. Again, the longest-serving employees may be the most astute observers.

Performance Measurement Practices broken down by employee length of service* 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	3 or fewer years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 or more years
	I contribute to setting specific performance improvement targets for our programs and services.	2.98	3.37	3.41
I know accurately how well our programs and services work in achieving their goals.	2.96	3.36	3.27	3.27
I know where our performance stands in comparison with that of similar departments or units in other organizations.	2.24	2.7	2.52	2.74
I regularly take part in analyzing the performance results of programs and services for which I have responsibility.	3.18	3.46	3.24	3.65
In my department or organizational unit, we have agreed upon a set of measures for our programs and services.	3.38	3.34	3.14	3.1
Measuring our performance has helped us eliminate ineffective programs and services.	3.46	3.47	3.34	3.13
Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us communicate what we accomplish to others in the organization.	3.49	3.32	3.18	3.34

Performance Measurement Practices broken down by employee length of service* 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	3 or fewer years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 or more years
	Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us improve their accuracy and quality.	3.79	3.69	3.47
Our performance measures have helped us improve our responsiveness to students and other stakeholders.	3.93	3.64	3.63	3.74
Our performance measures have helped us reduce our costs and expenses.	3.06	3	3.2	3.24

Finally, here is the response pattern for these questions from employees with a broad or narrow Organizational Perspective. Those who have a “50,000 foot view” of the institution (i.e., those for whom “OP>20”) may be the most knowledgeable about desired performance measurement practices, but those with a more narrow perspective may be accurately reporting what they perceive to be the actual practice. Often, there are strong differences between the performance measures an institution would like to be using and those it actually uses.

Performance Measurement Practices broken down by Organizational Perspective* 5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
	OP>20	OP<=20	OP>20	OP<=20
In my department or organizational unit, we have agreed upon a set of measures for our programs and services.	3.27	3.07	3.54	2.93
I regularly take part in analyzing the performance results of programs and services for which I have responsibility.	3.46	2.44	3.58	2.72
I know accurately how well our programs and services work in achieving their goals.	3.27	2.43	3.46	2.63
I know where our performance stands in comparison with that of similar departments or units in other organizations.	2.58	2.21	2.89	2.18
I contribute to setting specific performance improvement targets for our programs and services.	3.35	2.6	3.49	2.66
Our performance measures have helped us reduce our costs and expenses.	3.12	3.13	3.17	2.74
Measuring our performance has helped us eliminate ineffective programs and services.	3.39	2.75	3.28	2.71

Performance Measurement Practices broken down by Organizational Perspective*	Heartland Community College		Other Organizations	
Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us improve their accuracy and quality.	3.6	3.44	3.52	2.91
Our performance measures have helped us improve our responsiveness to students and other stakeholders.	3.77	3.31	3.6	3
Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us communicate what we accomplish to others in the organization.	3.34	3.42	3.39	2.79

Careful study of these tables can be extremely revealing, and can help your institution pinpoint new opportunities to develop and implement measures of performance. Effective institutions measure the things that matter most to them.

Here are some comments about the items in this section, and the implications that may arise from discussing your institution’s results.

- ◆ *In my department or organizational unit, we have agreed upon a set of measures for our programs and services*

Departments and units that agree upon measures of the effectiveness of their programs and services build a foundation for learning and improvement. Differences of perception may suggest need to look at the processes by which measures are established, whether measures in use are directly connected to work outcomes, and whether measures are meaningful at the department or unit level, understood, and regularly employed.

- ◆ *I regularly take part in analyzing the performance results of programs and services for which I have responsibility.*

Analyzing results involves in improvement activities those who actually do the work, enhances skills in information-based decision-making, and creates an environment for organizational learning. Questions may arise of training in data analysis, empowerment to make improvements where the work is being done, and how units learn from one another in discussing performance measurement practices.

- ◆ *I know accurately how well our programs and services work in achieving their goals.*

Accurate knowledge of the performance of one’s own work area contributes to trust and commitment to improvement. Where performance results are not communicated or understood, it is difficult to establish meaningful connections between actions and results, or to target areas for improvement.

- ◆ *I know where our performance stands in comparison with that of similar departments or units in other organizations.*

Comparative measures enable organizations, units, and departments to look outside of themselves to gauge their performance against others doing similar work. Such comparisons can be made with local or competing institutions, but benchmarking is best conducted with organizations known for

excellence in the processes under review. Understanding how other organizations attain superior results, and applying that learning to improve one's own processes is an advanced quality improvement practice. Questions may arise on how effective benchmarking is conducted: *Where is benchmarking most profitably used? How are the comparative organizations chosen? What techniques are employed for comparison and for process change based on new learning? Will superior performance organizations share their "secrets" for high performance?*

- ◆ *I contribute to setting specific performance improvement targets for our programs and services.*

Setting performance targets is crucial for process improvement. Targets are set based both upon past performance and future goals for improvement. Questions may arise concerning whether performance is being appropriately tracked, how goals for improvement are set, and whether participants are appropriately trained in process improvement and data analysis. Attitudes about improvement may surface (i.e., *We don't have to be bad to get better* or *Admitting improvement is possible means our past performance was inadequate*).

- ◆ *Our performance measures have helped us reduce our costs and expenses.*

One aspect of quality improvement is seeking greater efficiency, reducing unneeded steps in processes, saving time and resources. Performance measures make such improvement rational. They enable institutions to reduce waste as they meet commitments to service. Questions may arise concerning how process improvement and budgeting systems are linked, as well as whether financial data are made available for improvement initiatives.

- ◆ *Measuring our performance has helped us eliminate ineffective programs and services.*

Eliminating programs and services is often more difficult than improving them. The weight of custom and the influence of "politics" can produce inertia that is difficult to overcome, even when need or effectiveness is in serious doubt. Agreed-upon performance measures enable institutions to make evaluations based upon fact. Questions may arise concerning cycles and standards for program and services review, or how data should inform decision-making.

- ◆ *Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us improve their accurateness and quality.*

Improvement depends upon performance being measured over time in light of quality standards. Questions may arise concerning training for quality improvement, empowerment, how targets for accuracy and quality are set, and whether quality tools and techniques are applied consistently.

- ◆ *Our performance measures have helped us improve our responsiveness to students and other stakeholders.*

Responsiveness to students and other stakeholders is an indicator of how seriously an institution takes its mission objectives. Questions may surface about how measures are aligned with student and stakeholder needs and systems for measuring satisfaction, and whether organizational culture and structures encourage or impede responsiveness.

- ◆ *Measuring the performance of our programs and services has helped us communicate what we accomplish to others in the organization.*

Success is measured by meeting or exceeding performance targets. Performance measures can provide persuasive objective evidence of organizational success, thereby increasing everyone's confidence in the competence of program or service delivery. Questions of the institution's systems for communicating and celebrating success may arise.