It is clear that when the College employees work together on a process, the results can lead to improved productivity and satisfaction.

Category Five: Leading and Communicating

5P1 Organization's mission and values
The College President has periodically convened a team composed of members of all employee groups to review the Mission and Values and to propose any revisions. The Board of Trustees reviews proposed revisions and must approve changes.

5P2 Alignment of our mission, vision, values, and the commitment to high performance
The College has in place a variety of frequently scheduled meetings designed to promote discussion and foster exchange of views. Among them are:

- Meetings of the elected Board of Trustees are open to the public, and of course, to the College community. Additionally, the Board of Trustees holds an annual planning retreat to discuss the direction of the College.
- “Quality Council” is a regularly scheduled meeting that includes selected members of all employee groups. Meetings focus on matters of general College-wide concern and importance, such as budget, planning, etc.
- AQIP Campus Conversations have been held each year for the past four years, from which new AQIP projects have been distilled from suggestions gathered there.
- The establishment of a Faculty Senate arose from an AQIP project designed to explore how the College could improve internal communication.
- Best Practices” is a convocation of faculty and instructional staff at the start of each fall and spring semester, in which topics feature assessment, classroom instructional successes and related issues.
- College Assemblies are held each fall and spring to inform all employees of important institutional issues.

5P3 Needs and expectations of current and potential students and key stakeholder groups
Elected by the people served by the College, the Board of Trustees directly represents external stakeholders, broadly defined. The HCC Foundation Board, which consists of community leaders from across the service area of the college, also helps the College understand the needs and expectations of external constituencies. Advisory committees for applied programs help determine curriculum and program goals.

Various College employees participate in community service organizations to obtain a sense of the interests and needs of the public we serve. These meetings often provide suggestions for new instructional programs or initiatives.

The College hosts meetings of high school counselors with College instructional administrators to obtain a sense of new students’ needs.
The College has occasionally hosted meetings with high school teachers (recently, with math and English teachers) to discuss mutual problems and interests. The purpose of these meetings has been to work together to help align curricula between high school and college in hopes of reducing the need for developmental studies in entering students.

Surveys of students and meetings with Student Government leadership have given College leaders a clear sense of student interests and concerns.

5P4 Future opportunities while enhancing a strong focus on students and learning

Please see 5P3 responses. Additionally:

- Advisory Committees are critical in keeping academic and career program content up-to-date.
- Employment needs surveys help determine whether to create new programs of study.

5P5 Decisions making and use of teams, task forces, groups, or committees

Major decisions are ultimately the province of the Board, with Cabinet recommendations. However, such decisions are almost always informed by recommendations from departments, faculty groups, or teams that have gathered information and reached consensus. The College has a strong history of using teams and committees. An example is the Insurance Team, which annually reviews and researches issues concerning employee insurance programs and offers recommendations to the Board and Cabinet. The full-time and part-time faculty groups of the College are represented by unions, so the College also engages in collective bargaining.

5P6 Use of data, information, and our own performance results

Examples of the kinds of data the College analyzes include student performance after transfer, student persistence and retention, and student satisfaction (through CCSSE and SSI). These have aided planning of recruitment activities and in laying the groundwork for the College’s Cornerstone Project, a large-scale general education curriculum development project. (Please see 1P11 for a description.)

Those departments that have adopted the annual program report structure based on our five questions are generating data that impact strategic planning in those areas. For example, the Dean of Student Services-Academic Support has standardized this practice across all the programs and services under her supervision.

5P7 Communication between and among the levels and units of our organization

The College relies on meetings, e-mail and face-to-face methods of communicating. As we continue to grow, this remains a concern of many employees. The AQIP Communication Action Project team has implemented the following in an attempt to achieve their goal “to improve the sense of community on campus by creating both formal and informal opportunities for enhancing communication.”

- 360-degree evaluations (employees can evaluate supervisors in instruction)
- Department/division Open Houses
• Department/division social directors
• Employee newsletter (The HEN)
• Faculty Senate
• Friday meeting schedule time (few classes are scheduled on Friday from noon-2 p.m. to allow for a common time for employee meetings, socials & Open Houses.)
• Social events and roundtables
• Staff/faculty lounge

At the Spring 2009 Campus Conversation Day, the participants were asked to indicate if they had participated in or used any of these new methods of formal or informal communication. The most used method was the employee newsletter, with 83% of attendees having read at least one issue. Participation percentages for the other items ranged from 14% to 64%.

Participants were also asked to comment on the success of the Friday meeting schedule initiative. An analysis of the comments indicated that 41% were positive, 9% were neutral and 59% were negative. However, an analysis of the negative comments revealed that the primary reason for a negative rating was “the purpose and specifics of the initiative were not well communicated”. Some employees did not “know” that the initiative was launched in Fall 2008 or that the first and third Fridays of each month were for departmental or divisional meetings while the second, fourth and fifth Fridays were for more College-wide or cross-divisional Open Houses or socials. The second reason for negative comments was related to the number of meetings and there being no coordinated calendar. While each employee has a calendar function in our Heartland e-mail, we do not have a coordinated calendar in our myHeartland portal. There is a team now working on a coordinated calendar solution.

A sentence from our 1999 Self-Study is relevant in this 2009 Systems Portfolio: “Continuing a positive institutional culture by maintaining quality interpersonal interactions as HCC gets larger and larger is a future challenge identified by many employees.” Communication challenges must be overcome as we strive to be a college of distinction.

5P8 Communication of a shared mission, vision, and values
The Mission and Values are a very real part of the culture at Heartland. Each year the Strategic Plan connects what we do with our Mission and Values. Most employees strive to make this a college of distinction. Most of the departments using our five planning questions begin their annual reports by connecting what they do to the College’s mission. Our employee evaluations often tie annual goals to our Mission.

5P9 Encouragement and development of leadership skills
The College strongly believes in professional development. Full-time faculty members have guaranteed dollars to dedicate to professional development each year. Adjunct faculty members are paid a small stipend for their participation in professional development events. Each fall and spring the College offers New Adjunct Orientation, Best Practices, Faculty Academy, WebCT Certification and other Instructional Developmental Center training.
Staff members are also encouraged to use College dollars for professional development activities. Two recent examples would include the on-campus training arranged by the Dean of Student Services – Academic Support (SS-AS) and the Developing New Leaders event coordinated with Kankakee Community College and Joliet Junior College.

Heartland collaborated with NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education to offer professional development on campus for the division of Student Services – Academic Support through NASPA’s The Student Services Institute (SSI) for Community and Two-Year Colleges. The SSI was designed and customized specifically to address the needs of the College’s professionals and paraprofessionals working in community colleges. Heartland’s SSI provided 32 hours of CORE training and courses based on the results of our campus skills and knowledge assessment. Administered by NASPA, the skills and knowledge of SS-AS staff was measured using the CAS Standards for Professional Development in Higher Education. Each session averaged 43.5 participants of the 49 participants registered for the SSI.

Heartland also collaborated with Kankakee Community College to sponsor a workshop for future leaders within our organizations. This professional development opportunity was attended by 23 Heartland employees. Topics included

1. Your Alignment Assignment for Fully Responsible Leadership
2. Heartland Community College’s Future,
3. Panel of Community College Leaders
4. The Illinois Community College System
5. The Myers-Briggs Inventory and
6. Conflict Resolution

5P10 Leadership succession
The Mission and Values are a very real part of the culture at Heartland, and the only real experience we have had with leadership succession is among the Board of Trustees, whose members are elected by the communities we serve. President Astroth has been here since the creation of the College, and the College’s Cabinet has been stable for some years.

5R1 Performance measures of Leading and Communicating
In recent years we have used the Campus Conversation days to obtain feedback from our employees. (Please see 5P7 for a recent example.)

Although a part of instruction has used 360-degree evaluations for two years, the College does not regularly conduct a climate survey or related assessment. The last College-wide employee survey conducted was the 2006 AQIP Examiner Survey.

The chart below shows the overall Heartland results compared to the other institutions for the nine AQIP Categories, arranged in descending order of HCC average ratings. Heartland’s average ratings equaled or exceeded those of the comparison group on most scales. The most notable exception is in Category 2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives, which had not yet been defined by the College. Leading and Communicating received the lowest rating by employees, which was equal to our comparison group rating.
5R2 Results for leading and communicating processes and systems
Again, in recent years we have used the Campus Conversation days to obtain feedback from our employees. (Please see 5P7 for a recent example.)

5R3 Performance of our processes for Leading and Communicating
The results from the 2006 Examiner Survey indicate that Heartland’s results are very similar to those of other colleges. We are better at “making sure that everyone understands and values the mission, goals, and direction of the institution” and are challenged by “measuring how well our systems for leading and communicating are working.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The AQIP Criterion 5: Leading and Communicating</th>
<th>Heartland Community College</th>
<th>Other Organizations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 = Very effective process, 1 = Very ineffective process</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating opportunities for faculty and staff to learn and practice leadership skills.</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making certain that leaders communicate a consistent set of values and expectations for ethics, social responsibility, and service.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.16</td>
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</table>
The AQIP Criterion 5: Leading and Communicating

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Heartland Community College</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making sure that everyone understands and values the mission, goals, and direction of the institution.</td>
<td>3.16 1.1</td>
<td>3.13 1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that leaders weigh relevant information and performance results in making decisions.</td>
<td>2.85 1.15</td>
<td>2.73 1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure that leaders communicate decisions, strategies, and performance objectives throughout the organization.</td>
<td>2.67 1.16</td>
<td>2.72 1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring how well our systems for leading and communicating are working.</td>
<td>2.26 1.11</td>
<td>2.43 1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5I1 Recent improvements for Leading and Communicating

One of the best improvements in recent years is the extension of the College-wide Strategic Plan into the departmental/divisional annual reports. Our five planning questions have allowed employees to connect to the direction of the College.

The AQIP Communication Action Project team’s efforts “to improve the sense of community on campus by creating both formal and informal opportunities for enhancing communication” have again allowed the College to focus on the importance of improving our communication.

5I2. Culture and infrastructure for Leading and Communicating

Our College leaders lead by doing. The efforts to build Phase I and now Phase II of the campus have required much vision and planning. The Strategic Planning and CQI reports have been developed to allow our stakeholders to see where we are going and how well we are doing.

The culture of the College is one based on our values.

- We are student-centered.
- We prize an upbeat, can-do attitude.
- We support, and expect, professional growth of all employees.
- We are all partners in the success or failure of the organization.
- We salute tradition, not adulate it.
- We respect the dignity of all individuals; civility, collegiality and the highest standards of professionalism should characterize HCC.
- We are proud of the quality of the College but always seek improvement.
- We practice ethical decision-making and responsible use of environmental, financial and community resources.
As we get larger, we fear that too many academic, administrative and service “silos” will exist on this campus (as they probably exist on other campuses as well). Although the challenges we face in Leading and Communicating are similar to other institutions, we need to act on the results of the 2006 Examiner Survey if we are to become a college of distinction.

**Category Six: Supporting Organizational Operations**

**6P1 Identify support service needs for students and other stakeholders**

The specific mechanisms used to identify service needs for students and other key stakeholders differ slightly from organizational unit to organizational unit. Broadly speaking, units ask students and stakeholders what they want or need, or units follow generally accepted best practices and then follow up those best practices with some form of student or stakeholder satisfaction analysis. Again, depending upon the unit, these conversations take place either in a formal way as with a needs analysis survey, student satisfaction survey, or a focus group for service consumers; or they take place in an informal way such as having ad hoc conversations with students or stakeholders, addressing and monitoring stakeholder complaints about particular services, or engaging in conversations with similar service providers at other institutions. Some specific examples from specific units are listed below.

**Project RISE:** This federally funded program is designed for lower income students who may be at risk for college completion. Project RISE staff members give all of their participants an initial needs assessment, and each student develops an individualized Academic Performance Plan within 30 days.

**Student Life:** The needs of student groups are determined through weekly meetings with the Student Government Association and the Heartland Activities Committee. Over the summer a retreat is held for the incoming student leaders of key student groups during which goals and action plans for the upcoming year are developed.

**Financial Aid:** Programs and processes in the Financial Aid area are informed by federal and state regulations, best practices shared through professional organizations, feedback from federal, state, and internal auditors, staff input, monitoring daily interactions with students and parents, and monitoring questions from high school counselors and other HCC faculty, administration, and staff.

**Student Records:** Student Records deals with past, present, and future students as well as internal clients such as faculty. Staff receives constant feedback through daily interactions with students and their families. Area staff also have regular communication, both formal and informal, with colleagues throughout the College about problems, processes, and solutions.

**Athletics:** Coaches have almost daily interaction with student athletes. The coaches have near daily contact with the Athletic Director. These conversations cover academic performance and athletic performance as well as the overall health and well-being of student athletes. Additionally, the Athletic Department maintains a presence at many area and division meetings and conducts a general weekly correspondence with the campus at large.