

Reviewing the KPI data that relate to such things as costs, transfer performance, employment rates, and diversity of the student body, we generally feel we are performing at or above our comparison group means over most of the indicators.

7I1 Recent Improvements

The College's recent participation in the NCCBP noted above in 7P5 will enable us not only to compare our data with those of other community colleges but also will allow us to share results internally and use them across the College to enhance decision making.

The IR Office will soon have a single database or low tech warehouse containing most of the relevant data elements needed to create the KPIs across the campus and across many units. This will mark an improvement over the current system of managing several separate databases in order to capture the necessary data elements.

The College anticipates that regularized participation in national surveys such as the SSI and the CCSSE will help us continue to gather data about student attitudes and behaviors and help the College compare its results with those of other institutions.

7I2 How do culture and infrastructure support targets and improvement?

The College has had a Continuous Quality Improvement orientation since its first days, and CQI is clearly reflected in our core values as presented in our Overview. Consequently, the culture of the College is very supportive of this.

The bureaucracy of the College is relatively flat for a college of our size, which allows us to be creative and flexible in our processes. The downside of this is that sometimes our formal systems lag behind our flexible processes. Several of our systems could be tightened up or otherwise improved. For example, data is used all the time in a variety of decision making situations, but some of the data must be generated on an ad hoc basis rather than being routinely and readily available for immediate analysis to support decision making.

Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement

8P1 What are your key planning processes?

During fall 2007, HCC adopted a planning model that integrates institutional, statewide and accreditation perspectives and can be applied throughout the College. The planning model is based on Five Key Questions:

1. Why are we here? The College's Mission and Values provide the answer to this question and the foundation for all planning. These are, in turn, influenced by both the Community College Act and statewide higher education goals.
2. What are we trying to accomplish? The College's *Operational Goals* are stated at the highest level in the Goals and Purposes associated with the Mission. They direct the ongoing activities of the College and are monitored by appropriate performance indicators.
3. How are we doing? A variety of regular institutional, state and accreditation reports

contain data and information that enable College personnel to monitor the success of both operational goals and strategic initiatives.

4. *What does it mean?* Analysis of the performance data in the context of national, statewide, community and other internal and external environmental factors provides the basis for making adjustments in operations and planning new initiatives.
5. *Where are we going?* The *Strategic Goals* focus on *new initiatives, significant improvements* and *areas of special emphasis* that provide direction for expansion and/or improvement efforts.

Figure 1 below presents a diagram of the HCC planning model based on the Five Key Questions. The model is applied at the college-wide level, as well as at divisional, department, program, position, and even individual levels, resulting in an integrated model for planning and monitoring institutional effectiveness. This model is also applied at the Board of Trustee level, with community leaders, community college colleagues, and other stakeholders.

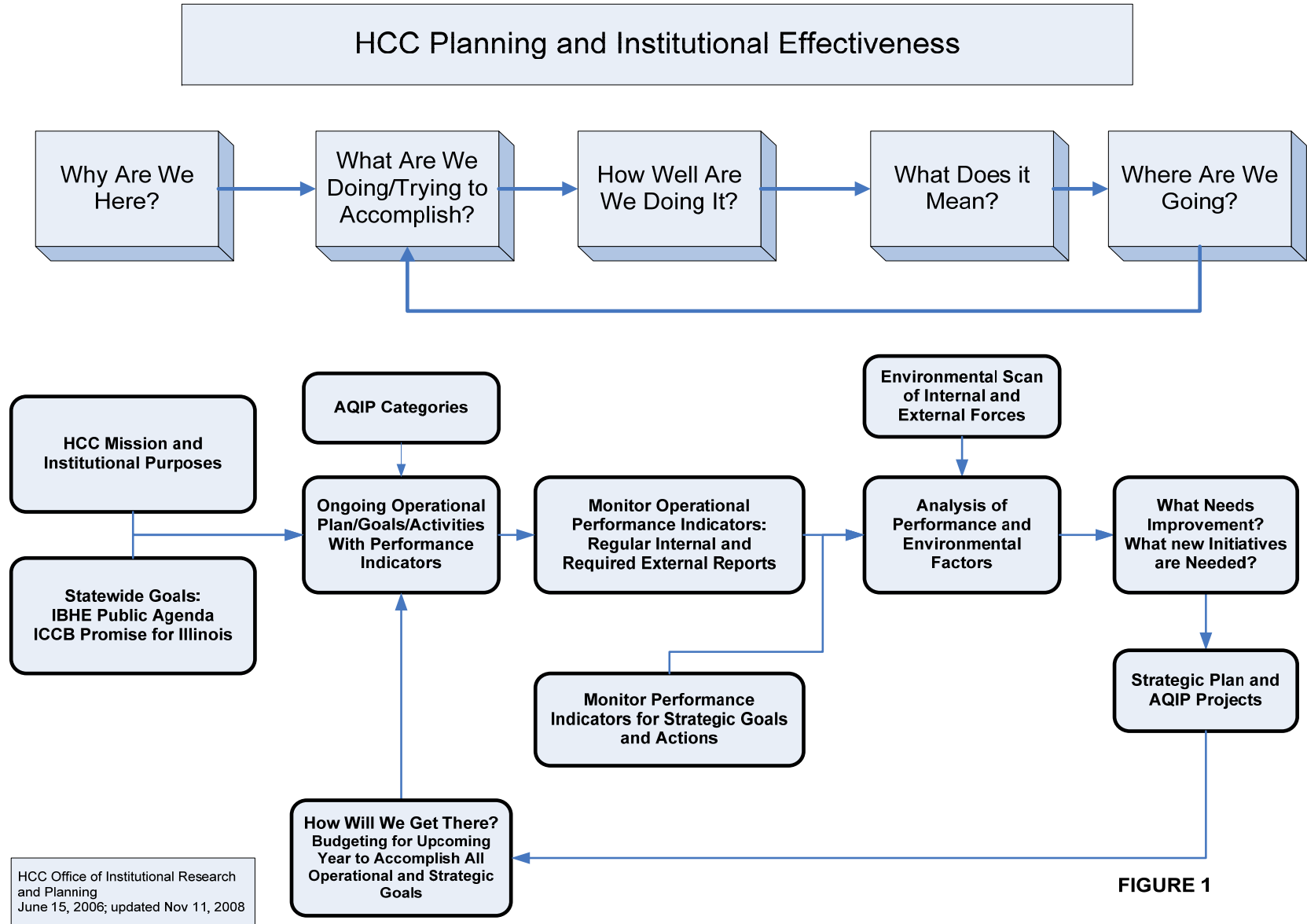


FIGURE 1

The current statement of the HCC Mission, Vision and Values was adopted in October 2007 at the beginning of the current strategic planning cycle. These statements of the College's core purposes and guiding principles are designed to use the most effective language and to include all of the substantive/functional areas of the Community College Act (110 ILCS 805/1-2), both sets of statewide goals and the nine AQIP Categories. The Mission, Goals and Purposes, and Values are presented within Table 1 below.

Current State System Initiatives that Impact HCC: The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has identified six major goal areas as high priority in their strategic plan, *ICCB Promise Revisited* (2006) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is developing four goals in its updated Public Agenda (2008). The College is responsible for setting goals and reporting data on the common institutional indicators and the mission-specific indicators associated with these statewide goals. These statewide goals are therefore also used in planning process.

Table 1 presents the alignment of HCC Institutional Goals with AQIP Categories, HCC Values, and the two sets of revised statewide goals.

The cycle of review immediately below outlines the major steps in the development and annual monitoring of the strategic planning process:

- Monitor performance indicators.
- Analyze environmental factors.
- Compare performance to expectations.
- Evaluate areas in need of improvement.
- Design new initiatives.
- Budget for new initiatives and action projects.

At the conclusion of the present planning cycle (during FY 2012), all components will be reviewed as the initial step in the next cycle.

HCC Mission and Goals	AQIP Category	HCC Values	IBHE Public Agenda Goal	ICCB Promise Revisited Goal
<i>Access to higher education.</i>				
We admit any student who can benefit from our programs and services and provide academic, financial and other support services designed to maximize their potential for success.	3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	1 We are student-centered.		<i>Affordable Access</i> – Deliver accessible and affordable learning opportunities for all residents of Illinois.
We offer instruction and services in convenient locations, times and formats and maintain a moderate tuition.	2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	1 We are student-centered.	<i>Affordability</i> – Help ensure that college is affordable to all Illinoisans.	<i>Affordable Access</i> – Deliver accessible and affordable learning opportunities for all residents of Illinois.
<i>Excellence in teaching and learning</i>				
We respond to the lifelong learning needs of a diverse student body.	3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	1 We are student-centered.	<i>Diversity</i> – Work to increase access and success in a more diverse college student body and faculty ranks, including those with disabilities.	
We prepare students for success in life by providing career and technical education, developmental education and the first two years of a bachelor's degree.	1 Helping Students Learn 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	1 We are student-centered.	<i>Attainment</i> – Improve educational attainment through high-quality teaching and learning, increased focus and outreach to nontraditional students, and stronger emphasis on preparing graduates in high-demand workforce areas.	<i>Effective Transitions</i> – Offer rigorous courses, programs and services designed to enable students to transition from one learning environment and level to another. <i>Enhanced Adult Education</i> – Enhance Adult Education and Literacy programs necessary for individuals and families to have high quality standards of living in Illinois.
We provide community education programs, public service opportunities and training for district employers and their employees.	2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs 9 Building Collaborative Relationships	1 We are student-centered.		<i>Competitive Workforce</i> – Address workforce and economic development needs with flexible, responsive and progressive programs.
We cultivate community success through programs that reflect and anticipate academic and economic needs.	1 Helping Students Learn 3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs			<i>Competitive Workforce</i> – Address workforce and economic development needs with flexible, responsive and progressive programs.

HCC Mission and Goals	AQIP Category	HCC Values	IBHE Public Agenda Goal	ICCB Promise Revisited Goal
We teach students to think critically, to solve problems, to communicate effectively in both speaking and writing, and to analyze issues from multiple perspectives.	1 Helping Students Learn	1 We are student-centered.		Effective Transitions – Offer rigorous courses, programs and services designed to enable students to transition from one learning environment and level to another.
We prepare students for effective citizenship within a global context by promoting an appreciation of human diversity and commonality.	2 Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	6 We respect the dignity of all individuals; civility, collegiality, and the highest standards of professionalism should characterize HCC.	Diversity – Work to increase access and success in a more diverse college student body and faculty ranks, including those with disabilities.	
We hold students to high expectations for learning and growth through continual assessment and improvement of our academic programs.	7 Measuring Effectiveness 8 Planning Continuous Improvement	7 We are proud of the quality of the College but always seek improvement.		High Quality – Emphasize high quality in all programs, services and operations.
We prepare students for life beyond the classroom through a variety of activities related to student interests.	3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs	1 We are student-centered.		Services for Student Success – Provide programs and services to assist students succeed in their educational endeavors.
We recognize outstanding teaching and encourage the use of emerging technology and innovative methods.	4 Valuing People 6 Supporting Institutional Operations	7 We are proud of the quality of the College but always seek improvement	Attainment – Improve educational attainment through high-quality teaching and learning, increased focus and outreach to nontraditional students, and stronger emphasis on preparing graduates in high-demand workforce areas.	High Quality – Emphasize high quality in all programs, services and operations.
We support professional development for all employees as we strive for continuous improvement.	4 Valuing People 5 Leading and Communicating 8 Planning Continuous Improvement	2 We prize an upbeat, can-do attitude 3 We support, and expect, professional growth of all employees 4 We are all partners in the success or failure of the organization 5 We salute tradition, not adulate it. 7 We are proud of the quality of the College but always seek improvement.		High Quality – Emphasize high quality in all programs, services and operations.
	5 Leading and Communicating 6 Supporting Institutional Operations 7 Measuring Effectiveness	8 We practice ethical decision making and responsible use of existing environmental, financial and community resources.	Efficiency – Promote efficiency and accountability in higher education operations.	

TABLE 1

8P2 Short-term and long-term strategies

The College develops its short- and long-term strategies through an implementation of the planning model detailed above. The institutional purposes and goals associated with the Mission serve as the foundation for the College's ongoing operational goals and activities. Most operational goals are identified with the organizational unit primarily responsible for them: Instruction, Business Services, Continuing Education, or Institutional Advancement. The development of specific actions and appropriate performance indicators for the operational goals is ongoing. Unit goals are developed as they relate to the institution's long-term strategies and are approved by the appropriate Vice President. Unit directors are responsible for seeking input from all employees in their area in the development of their goals. Such goals should also have some relation to the individual's personal goals as identified during the annual employee review process.

Long-term strategies are established by the Board of Trustees and the Cabinet based on the planning model and the cycle of review, as well as a review of unit goals. The College's Quality Council, which is representative of employee groups across the campus, also serves as a review forum. The five key questions (Why are we here?, etc., described above) also serve to guide the development of short- and long-term strategies. The following goals represent the institutional priorities of the institution in FY09.

Goal 1: Continue to enhance the financial position of the college.

- Explore opportunities to expand financial resources.
- Prudently manage revenue and costs.
- Regularly examine existing programs, services, and operations to ensure their viability.

Sample Performance Measure: Total grant dollars per year

Goal 2: Continue to improve the institution by participating in the AQIP process.

- Implement a minimum of three meaningful Action Projects at all times.
- Develop and maintain the AQIP Systems Portfolio.
- Create opportunities to integrate AQIP processes more fully into routine college activities.

Sample Performance Measure: Membership in AQIP committees and teams is drawn from all segments of the campus community.

Goal 3: Continue to provide the highest quality education for students.

- Implement the Beyond Buildings College Development Plan.
- Emphasize sustainability principles throughout all College endeavors.
- Continue to develop student life programs.
- Develop and implement a long-range, full-time faculty hiring plan to address staffing needs.

Sample Performance Measure: Percentage of energy acquired from renewable sources.

Goal 4: Foster a campus-wide climate of cultural understanding and global awareness.

- Actively recruit and enroll students from a variety of backgrounds for both credit and noncredit programs and courses.
- Provide support services to enable students from all groups to achieve the same level of academic success.
- Continually review and improve processes that facilitate the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Foster a climate that is welcoming to all students and employees.
- Continue to develop international programs.

Sample Performance Measure: Number of participants in international exchanges.

8P3 Developing key action plans

Key action plans are developed in accordance with the College's strategic planning model. Department goals, action plans, and performance indicators are reviewed at the divisional level and presented to the Cabinet for review. Institution-wide and division operational goals are assessed in conjunction with a review of college-wide goals and priorities determined. Furthermore, plans are shared with the Board of Trustees for input, and the Board has a key role in endorsing college-wide strategic goals. Following Board approval, strategic goals are posted on the College website.

8P4 Coordinating planning, strategies, and action plans

Unit directors are responsible for ensuring that goals and objectives are in accordance with and derived from the institutional goals and mission. Action plans are developed to meet institutional goals. The Quality Council is charged with reviewing goals and integrating them into the budget.

8P5 Setting objectives, measures, and targets

College units are responsible for determining goals and the performance measures for their units. The Cabinet is responsible for the performance measures of strategic goals. Some examples of performance measures are listed above with the strategic goals.

8P6 Resources and needs

The strategic plan guides the budget process. Thus, institutional priorities and accompanying action plans are incorporated into the budget after careful review by department administrators, the appropriate cabinet-level administrator, and review and discussion by all Cabinet members. The Board of Trustees has final approval of the budget.

Budget requests from departmental supervisors must include a rationale for any increase or additions with an explanation of how that request supports institutional priorities and is consistent with the strategic plan.

Multiple year financial projections take into account priorities such as a commitment to sustainability, such as the establishment of a Green Institute and environmentally friendly building and operational practices, a Student Life program that includes athletics and other programs, the accumulation of reserves for bond rating and emergency or unanticipated expenses, and hiring plans in order to increase the ratio of full- to part-time faculty. The annual retreat of the Board of Trustees explores these strategic goals and the financial strategy used to accomplish the action items.

8P7 Assessing and addressing risk

The strategic planning model and financial reserves plan is a specific response to managing risk. A financial reserves plan has been developed over a 4-5 year period that is modified as circumstances change. State funding, tuition and fees, local taxation, and equalized assessed valuation (EAV) all impact the institution's ability to respond to its priorities. The planning model, which includes an environmental scan, has been developed to ensure that risk is continually assessed and actions modified to address any changes.

8P8 Addressing changing environments

The faculty collective bargaining contract specifies a budget allocation for professional development activities. For non-faculty employees, the College has identified a guideline of 2% of operating expenses for professional development activities. Faculty and non-faculty sabbaticals are also offered to staff. On-campus workshops, presentations, and web-based seminars covering such topics as curriculum design, delivery methods, and assessment are also available typically through the College's Instructional Development Center (IDC). HCC also offers credit and non-credit class tuition waivers, partial tuition reimbursement for approved coursework at non-HCC institutions, and a financial award for degree completion, which is added to the salary base.

8R1 Measures of effectiveness

Results for ongoing performance indicators are presented in the College's annual Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Report as well as in other regular internal and external reports, including Program Review, Performance Report and the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, some of which are available on the IR website. Plans are currently being formulated to create an online vehicle for sharing even more performance results throughout the organization.

The Five Key Questions model for planning is in its second year of widespread use. The first step toward measuring the effectiveness of the model is the extent to which it is utilized. Several Deans and Associate Deans have asked their department heads to use the five questions on an annual basis for reporting plans and progress. For example, all of Student Services, Academic Support and Math/Science, as well as some other departments have adopted the model for their annual reviews. The model is also used exclusively for instructional program review. In short, the model has been deployed to several areas and further deployment is anticipated.

8R2 Performance results

An annual update of progress toward achieving strategic goals shows that, while prior goals were generally not stated in measurable language, progress was nevertheless being made. Additionally, the annual Performance Report to ICCB shows that most goals have been achieved and target levels of performance, where stated, have been attained.

8R3 Projections for the next 1-3 years

The first performance measures have been defined to accompany the four Strategic Goals, and in some cases target levels of performance have been established. Subsequent annual reports will include performance results data for each measureable goal. Within the next 1-3 years we anticipate not only establishing additional performance measures and targets but also having a

comprehensive reporting and monitoring mechanism available for easy tracking of performance on a wide variety of college-wide and unit goals and action plans.

8R4 Comparing results with other organizations

Current sources of comparative data include the IPEDS Data Feedback Report and the ICCB Performance Report. ICCB provides statewide data for a wide variety of common and mission-specific indicators for performance measures established by a statewide committee in support of the IBHE strategic plan. These statewide data show that HCC performs better than peer averages on nearly every available indicator. HCC has joined the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) so comparative data on additional measures will be available in the coming year.

8R5 Evidence of effectiveness, measurement and evaluation

The widespread adoption of the Five Key Questions model provides evidence that the model is accepted, which is a first step in demonstrating its effectiveness. In the coming years, we plan to identify a more systematic method for obtaining feedback from employees on the effectiveness of the model and the HCC planning process.

8I1 Recent Improvements

The adoption of the Five Key Questions planning model is the most notable recent improvement. The model provides for seamless integration of planning at all levels and across functional units of the College, while maintaining simplicity in approach. Further improvements in the integration of all aspects of planning and continuous improvement will align additional planning processes with the model.

8I2 How do culture and infrastructure support targets and improvement?

The concept of continuous quality improvement has been an integral part of Heartland's strategic planning since the establishment of the College. One of the College's core values is "We are proud of the quality of the College but always seek improvement." This fundamental feature of the College's culture provides the foundation for data-informed planning and decision-making, leading to a natural tendency to use data to guide planning and decision-making.

In the short history of the College, the early years were characterized by frequent albeit informal interaction among employees of all units and levels because of the physical environment. With the move to the permanent campus in 2000, staff were more scattered, which produced an unintended consequence of increased isolation and reduced informal communication opportunities. One of the first AQIP Action Projects addressed this issue and resulted in several initiatives designed to increase communication. We perceive a need to build upon those initiatives to increase the systematic discussion of goals, action plans and performance measures.

Category Nine: Building Collaborative Relationships

9P1 Relationships with organizations from which we receive our students

The overall processes through which HCC creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships with educational organizations from which we receive our students can be demonstrated through the following examples of systematic programming: