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:
The Office of Student Recruitment (OSR): The OSR along with Academic Advisement routinely provides current information and administrative assistance to high school guidance counselors concerning the academic, financial, curricular, and co-curricular offerings of the College through a variety of mechanisms. First, the OSR hosts a yearly Guidance Counselor Articulation Day. Second, the Office distributes a monthly e-mail newsletter to all high school guidance counselors in our district. Third, each year the OSR makes at least two visits to each high school and hosts more than 40 on-campus high school group visits each year. Finally, the OSR maintains a web presence with a specific link for high school guidance counselors (see also 3P1).

The OSR has also begun the process of developing relationships with businesses and organizations within the district that have provided adult students to HCC. For example the OSR designed an informational brochure for HR representatives, and OSR personnel attend various community health, education, and labor fairs throughout the year to provide information about the College.

Academic Advisement: Academic Advisement coordinates the College’s dual credit/enrollment program for college- or university-bound high school students. HCC maintains regular contact with high schools interested in this program and offers courses at the high schools. A Memorandum of Understanding with the high school is created, revised, and agreed to each year to ensure that the program goals and partner expectations and responsibilities are well communicated.

Disability Support Services: The Director of Disability Support Services along with OSR representatives, HCC faculty, and others participate on the Transition Planning Council, which is made up of various stakeholders charged with preparing students with disabilities for their transition to postsecondary education and adult services. Through this mechanism, HCC works closely with high school disability teachers, prospective students with disabilities, and parents of prospective students with disabilities.

Workforce Services: Workforce Services oversees Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs specifically developed to meet the needs of nontraditional students who are economically disadvantaged with barriers to their success. Prospective students for these programs are referred through a system of regional service providers. Workforce Services personnel develop relationships and share program information with these providers via individualized one-on-one meetings. These relationships are important not only for student recruitment but they also result in collaborative services necessary to ensure student success. The relationship is a continuous one that is reinforced through presentations at social services providers’ staff meetings and in-service/professional development events. Providers are also asked to serve on an Advisory Board that meets twice a year and shares information concerning services and supports, legislative changes, and participant needs.

As a result of these meetings, Workforce Services added an additional process to enhance communication among partners and student success. It is called Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and results in a single Workforce Services staff member working directly with a social service provider and his or her clients to try to bridge the gaps between welfare, education, and employment. SPOC collaborates with social service providers to develop relationships and the
trust necessary to bring in populations so they might take advantage of opportunities and resources HCC can provide. As this relationship evolves, so does the client/student understanding of the need to pursue education as a pathway to self sufficiency.

**9P2 Relationships with organizations that depend on our students**

Generally speaking, our students will most likely either transfer to a four-year college or university or enter the world of work. HCC has created and maintained relationships with a variety of organizations in both categories as evidenced below:

*Transfer Institutions*: HCC is actively involved with representatives from four-year institutions across the state, ensuring that our courses transfer. We do this through personal contacts as well as through developing articulation agreements in specific academic disciplines. HCC participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), a voluntary statewide transfer agreement among 110 participating two- and four-year Illinois public and independent institutions. The self-reported goal of the IAI is “to help students transfer general education and essential lower division requirements in 27 separate baccalaureate majors.” A number of HCC staff have held leadership positions or have otherwise actively participated in such organizations as the Transfer Coordinators of Illinois and the Community College/Senior College Articulation Coordinators Group. Additionally, advisors, faculty, and other staff attend university-sponsored articulation conferences as well as IAI-sponsored meetings to ensure students are prepared for easy transition to schools that receive our graduates. Internally, information gleaned from and created in these meetings is shared among academic advisors at their weekly meetings and with faculty and others through the meetings of the College’s Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee. Finally, the institution has a transfer coordinator position whose function is to assist both students and College personnel with the transfer process.

Informally, HCC faculty, staff, and administration maintain a series of networks and contacts with our primary transfer institution, Illinois State University (ISU), and with other four-year schools.

*Workforce Services*: Workforce Services staff maintains a series of contacts with business and industry, government entities, and non-profit organizations in order to facilitate student internships and job shadowing, and to help students with the entire job search process. Some specific examples include involvement in CTE advisory teams, management of the Online Job Board, employer surveys about HCC trained employees, annual career events involving area employers, memberships on local boards and councils, and creating and maintaining databases of area employers.

**9P3 Relationships with organizations that provide services to our students**

In the area of personal development services, the coordinator is in contact with community organizations that offer counseling referral services to our students and attends community seminars presented by these organizations. In the area of Disability Support Services, the director collaborates with staff at the Division of Rehabilitation Services on an as-needed basis to discuss the needs of HCC students currently on their caseload. Finally, in the area of Workforce Services, in addition to the activities listed in the items above, staff and faculty develop supporting relationships with businesses through speaking engagements at work sites and at
community organizations. In sum, HCC builds and maintains these relationships both formally and on an ad hoc basis.

Another set of service providers with whom we have built relationships are our international programs. These programs are numerous and varied. Students can study abroad in England, Austria, Australia, Costa Rica, Spain, and Ireland as a result of our partnership with the Illinois Consortium for International Services and Programs. Also, we have extensive relationships in China covering numerous programs. They include incoming and outgoing visiting professor programs with our partner institution (the College for Humanities and Sciences Northeast Normal University) and incoming student ESL/AA programs with Liaoning Normal University. The College is also exploring new faculty programs based in China as well as youth programs. Finally, HCC has partnered with the Community Colleges for International Development grant program to host Egyptian students.

9P4 Relationships with material and service providers
In administrative services areas such as purchasing and vending, HCC focuses on building trust with providers through repeated contact via phone conversations, face-to-face meetings, or continuing business transactions. Also, contacts are made by cold calling, referrals, and consortium (e.g. Illinois Community College System Purchasing Consortium) and buying groups. Decisions are typically made by prioritizing pricing, service, response time, and the like.

9P5 Relationships with other organizations
Again, relationships with organizations such as educational associations, external agencies, consortia partners, and the general community happen within units across our institution in both formal and informal ways. New external relationships are primarily conducted on an ad hoc basis so our institution can be flexible and respond to partnership opportunities quickly. Various units throughout the institution also perform routine environmental scanning of state and local political, economic, and social conditions in order to find beneficial external partnership opportunities. HCC’s President in collaboration with the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees make the final decisions about such partnerships. Their criteria are that the partnership be consistent with HCC’s Mission, Values, goals and purposes. Additionally, the partnership must either fit into our overall financial constraints or provide direct or indirect opportunities for enhancing our financial situation. Finally, individual units within HCC may or may not have specific processes they use to identify potential relationships and/or to enhance existing ones. A typical example of an ongoing partnership at the unit level would be program faculty in business, nursing, or criminal justice routinely meeting with local practitioners in their respective areas to monitor a variety of trends.

Institutional Advancement: Our Institutional Advancement area maintains a number of contacts through its functional areas of Media Relations and Alumni Development and Community Outreach. Staff belong to such organizations as the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the Council for Resource Development, and the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations. More locally, HCC staff partner with the Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of McLean County, and the Regional Office of Education. The unit continually scans the goals and functions of community and service agencies such as these in order to uncover existing and potential synergies with HCC. Additionally, the area has stepped up its focus on alumni.
development and relations and a number of events have been conducted designed to create, maintain, and enhance relationships with HCC alumni. Also, the unit has continually engaged in community outreach in order to make the general population aware of the Mission and functions of the College and to enhance the College’s overall image within the community. As an example, staff has reached out to senior citizens by personally contacting activities directors for independent living centers, senior centers, public libraries, and service organizations. Staff hosted a breakfast in order to introduce them to campus development plans and identified key retirees who can act as future ambassadors for the College.

Finally, Institutional Advancement works to build relationships through a series of one-on-one contacts during which staff can explain the impact the College is having in the community and workforce and to receive feedback about the College’s effectiveness in this regard. For example, at many fundraising events, staff will bring scholarship recipients so they may interact with donors.

**Director of Outreach:** The College’s Director of Outreach focuses on community relationships in our centers in Lincoln and Pontiac. The Director works with the editors of the weekly/monthly newspapers, directors of the radio stations, high school superintendents, and local community and social organizations in order both to promote HCC and to receive feedback about HCC.

**Education Alliance Consortium:** Another example of an HCC unit scanning the local environment looking for partnerships based on aligned goals or purposes is the Bloomington-Normal Education Alliance (BNEA) which was formed in 1996 to promote cooperation and resource sharing among the area public education providers: HCC, ISU, Bloomington and Normal school districts, and the Regional Office of Education. Since then, the BNEA has afforded collaboration in areas such as grant development, joint purchasing agreements, and a wider range of activities that foster high quality education for students.

**HCC Sports Park:** Instead of building our own athletic facilities as an entirely internal endeavor, the HCC President, the local government of the Town of Normal, and business interests in the private sector were able to partner and create plans for a multipurpose facility to be used by many entities. HCC will receive a state-of-the-art park for its four sports teams, complete with classrooms and other amenities that weren't part of its original athletic complex design. The partnership was developed in an ad hoc way, stemming from existing networks and scanning, but wholly consistent with the College’s Mission, Values, and its financial constraints. (See section 2I1 for examples of more relationships)

**9P6 Ensuring that relationships meet the needs of those involved**
The principal way HCC makes sure the partnership relationships described in the sections above are meeting everyone’s needs is by talking with the partners and listening to them. Continuous communication is vital. This feedback is brought back to the appropriate unit for consideration. The networking systems, committee memberships, and individualized conversations described provide ample opportunity for this type of interaction with partners. Additionally, a few areas engage in more formal surveys of the needs, wants, attitudes, and satisfaction of partners. Internal needs are weighed against HCC’s mission and financial constraints. The College could improve by adopting more formal assessments in these areas.
With respect to our international programs, HCC students who return participate in a re-entry evaluation interview. Feedback concerning our China programs is more ad hoc, but we do record such data as course evaluations, grade evaluations, informal interviews with participants, attendance, and the like.

**9P7 Within Campus Communication**

HCC identified within-campus communication at its first Strategy Forum as an area that needed to be addressed and created an Action Project centered on both formal and informal campus communication. The team made the following recommendations, which have been implemented (see also section 5P7):

**Friday Set Aside:** The instructional division has, to the extent possible, reduced the number of classes on Fridays. This non-scheduled time is privileged for instructional department or divisional meetings; for AQIP Campus Conversation Days; for campus-wide “town hall” meetings; for other standing and ad hoc committee meetings; for department Open Houses; and for opportunities to socialize.

**Increased Use of Campus Forums:** Campus Forums are groupings of employee classifications (classified, administrative, professional-technical, faculty) across campus who periodically meet with each other either face-to-face or via e-mail. Some forums had not met face-to-face in several years. The Action Project team encouraged that these existing forums be used with greater frequency to enhance communication across departments and divisions. The Faculty Forum evolved into a Faculty Senate.

**360-Degree Evaluations:** The Action Project team recommended that employees be able to conduct evaluations of their supervisors in order to enhance feedback and communication. The instructional division adopted this as a pilot two years ago so that each full-time faculty member has the opportunity to evaluate their dean, associate dean, and the VP of Instruction.

**Employee Newsletter:** The Action Project team helped shepherd a campus-wide employee newsletter, the HEN, which focuses on employee profiles, calendars of events both on campus and in the community, and social fare.

**Liaisons:** Another mechanism that departments use to help with communication across campus is to create liaison positions. For example, Library Services assigns staff to work with faculty from certain departments in order to help faculty with information literacy issues related to their classes or assignments; Academic Advisors act as liaisons with academic divisions within the College; Tutors engage in a similar practice; and all units across the College have been assigned “point of contact” liaisons whose function is to keep employees in the know and help organize social events.

**International Programs:** Opportunities are advertised and communicated through classroom visits, student newspaper articles, display messages, meetings, College publications, orientation materials, meetings with faculty and staff, and new student welcome nights.
Finally, there are a number of existing meeting obligations and opportunities for employees from different areas across the College to meet, work, and communicate both formally and informally.

9R1 What measures of building relationships do we collect and analyze regularly?
While the vast majority of the College’s measures are episodic and qualitative based on satisfaction with any given partnership, the College does collect some systematic quantitative data which help us evaluate partnerships.

Incoming Students: The VP of Instruction initiated a College Readiness project designed to study the local high school preparation of new HCC students entering in the fall of 2007. The results of the research were shared with high school guidance counselors from local high schools as well as with the math and English faculty from the two largest feeder schools into HCC. There is a desire both to expand and to formalize the sharing of this information, but a process has yet to be developed.

After most of our major campus events such as Open Houses or Information Nights, we send out an event evaluation that allows participants to share their thoughts about the event and to provide suggestions for improvement. Comments are shared with staff and reviewed when planning the next year’s events. Internal HCC staff are also solicited for feedback about the events and their responses reviewed.

The College also monitors a battery of basic demographic information about its students which are routinely shared and, depending on the circumstances, may be useful in evaluating the successes of certain partnerships.

Current Students: Numbers of students using a variety of services that depend on partners, such as Crisis Services or Disability Support Services, are kept routinely. Feedback about the effectiveness of such service partners is not systematic.

Transferring Students: Our Office of Institutional Research (IR) routinely monitors and shares with the Council of Instructional Administrators the grade point averages of students who transfer to ISU and is able to compare them with those of transfers from other community colleges and with native ISU students. For the fall 2008 semester, HCC transfer students earned a 2.92 GPA at ISU while transfer students from other community colleges earned a 2.95 GPA, and comparable ISU native students earned a 3.00 GPA. Historically, IR office has produced data comparing course grades of students who are co-enrolled at ISU.

Graduates Seeking Employment: Our IR Office conducts a yearly employment survey that asks recent graduates a number of questions about their job status, their wages, and their satisfaction with their HCC experience. The reports are shared across the campus and ultimately posted on the IR website. Additionally, numbers related to employer registrations and job postings are collected and reviewed on a bi-weekly basis by Workforce Services staff. Numbers of participants, both students and employers, in job fairs, internships, job shadowing, and on-campus recruiting are collected and monitored as well. Participating employers are also surveyed. All data is reviewed by Workforce Services staff.
**Education Alliance Consortium:** BNEA prepares annual reports that describe grant opportunities leveraged by the partnership as described above, resource sharing, collaborative activities, and initiatives. The reports are shared with the College President as a means to evaluate both the effectiveness and the benefit of the alliance.

**360-Degree Evaluations:** Supervisor evaluation data is shared with each faculty member’s immediate supervisor, with the Dean of Instruction, and with the VP of Instruction. Evaluations of the VP of Instruction are shared with the President.

**Administrative Services:** Over time, we are able to monitor who responds to our needs most effectively and in the timeliest manner. We can tell through direct experience which vendors are responsible, responsive, cooperative, and provide the best service.

**Institutional Advancement:** The quality of the partnerships is ultimately measured by the donations to HCC of time, treasure, and talents by the partners.

**9R2 What are our performance results in building relationships?**

Results will vary from area to area and may or may not be measurable. As noted above, much of the data is informal and qualitative. The College is aware that more can be done in this area. However, we do have some examples of areas that have obtained specific results.

**Incoming Students:** Participants surveyed at our October 2008 Guidance Counselor Articulation Day indicated an 84% satisfaction rate with the frequency and quality of their high school visits. Additionally, 94% were satisfied with the availability of HCC staff for questions.

**Graduates Seeking Employment:** The online job board has been used by more than 2,000 job seekers, and more than 400 employers have posted 700+ openings. Approximately 200 people attended TechFest (career fair), and the participant evaluations from the event were overwhelmingly positive. Six employers took advantage of on-campus recruiting at HCC. HCC’s student internship program saw an 11% increase in student placements over the previous year. Twenty-eight students participated in job shadowing experiences, and their evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. More than 150 area residents took advantage of résumé assistance services; ten people used mock interview services; and 75 people sought general job search assistance.

**Workforce Services/CTE Programs/SPOC Program:** Since the first Business Essentials class graduated in 2002, 85% of all students successfully completed the program. Fewer than 10% of these entering students were employed at their time of entry, while 90% were either employed or continuing their education within three months of program completion. The average wage of students entering the program was $7.13 per hour without benefits, the average wage after the completing the program was $10.71, and most students had benefits.

The SPOC program met with more than 308 individuals, of whom seven were interested in full-time status at HCC and were appropriately referred; three were referred to the Adult Education Program to pursue their GED; and 18 were referred to the Business Essentials class.
**Institutional Advancement:** The College raised more than $1 million in support for the Workforce Development Center based on relationships built, maintained, and enhanced. Each of the three previous fundraising events held has set new records for dollars raised.

9R3 How do results compare with other institutions?
The College has not systematically engaged in these types of comparisons other than in an ad hoc, anecdotal, and qualitative way.

9I1 Recent Improvements
Many areas across the College have undertaken improvement initiatives with respect to building and maintaining collaborative relationships using the qualitative and ad hoc data that they have. Others are basing improvement initiatives on more systematic and quantitative data. Some examples of both are presented below.

**Incoming Students:** HCC is continually trying to improve and update the content and look of its recruiting web pages based on feedback from many sources.

**Current Students:** Given the increase in students using crisis services, the director has increased contact with the student newspaper to talk about student crisis issues, improved data collection of student visits, revised institutional “early warning forms” for faculty to include personal development referrals, helped to increase the visibility of the Bacchus Club, whose purpose is to provide peer education for healthy lifestyles, and assisted with the Student CORE Alcohol and Other Drug Survey.

Given the importance of developmental education at Heartland, faculty involved with developmental education have decided to create a group called the Developmental Education Coordination Team (DECT). The team is encouraging conversation across math, English, and reading developmental education faculty. This team is building on the work of an AQIP Action Project team that attempted to model statistically a developmental education tracking system. While the specific results of the AQIP Project were mixed, the usefulness of the cross-discipline conversations for faculty teaching developmental education courses suggested that some members of the group continue on with a different agenda. Faculty share their teaching strategies, their student assessment strategies and their program evaluation strategies.

**Transferring students:** The College has improved its website for transfer students based on conversations with ISU and other four-year institutions, as well as in an effort to keep current with IAI information.

**Workforce Services:** Workforce Services is exploring new software to more effectively manage the demands on data collection and reporting, given an increase in student, community, and employer stakeholders.

**Institutional Advancement:** We have improved the data entry and tracking system, which are predicated on relationship building and developing contacts within key organizations. International Programs: We have added more destinations for the study abroad program, we have developed Chinese language credit courses at HCC, we have extended the length of stay for
visiting professors from one- to two-year appointments, and we made a series of changes in the ESL/AA program.

912 How do culture and infrastructure support targets and improvement?
In general, the College is young enough, small enough, and flexible enough that it has been able to scan the environment and enter into relationships “on the fly,” and this has been encouraged by the institution. As HCC becomes older, larger, and slightly less flexible, it will need to systematically evaluate the opportunities and constraints associated with an increasing number of programs and partnerships using data to set targets and mark improvements. At the current time we are just beginning to engage in the process. A few areas have been doing this with respect to building partnerships while most others have not. Areas that have begun to set targets emphasize the role of networking and best practices, the importance the College places on setting targets and collecting data in areas other than building collaborative relationships, the support stemming from the College’s Mission and the College’s historical emphasis on collaboration, and finally, the models provided by the College’s various AQIP Action Projects.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AA: Associate in Arts
AACC: American Association of Community Colleges
AAS: Associate in Applied Science
AAT: Associate in Applied Technology
AC: Assessment Committee
ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AES: Associate in Engineering Science
AQIP: Academic Quality Improvement Program
AS: Associate in Science
AS: Academic Support
ASC: Academic Support Center
BNEA: Bloomington-Normal Education Alliance
CAREER: Comprehensive Agreement Regarding the Expansion of Educational Resources
CAS: Curriculum and Academic Standards
CCSSE: Community College Survey of Student Engagement
CCTV: Closed Circuit Television
Cert: Certification
CIA: Council of Instructional Administrators
CO: Communication student learning outcome
CORE: Drug and Alcohol Survey
CQI: Continuous Quality Improvement report
CT: Critical Thinking student learning outcome
CTE: Career and Technical Education
DECT: Developmental Education Coordination Team
DI: Diversity student learning outcome
EAV: Equalized Assessed Valuation
MS: Emergency Medical Services