

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE

March 4, 2009



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

**30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504
www.AQIP.org
AQIP@hlcommission.org
800-621-7440**

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT
In response to the *Systems Portfolio* of
CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**
The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

March 4, 2009

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| Elements of the Feedback Report | 2 |
| Strategic and Accreditation Issues | 4 |
| Using the Feedback Report | 7 |
| Critical Characteristics Analysis | 8 |
| Category Feedback | 11 |
| <i>Helping Students Learn</i> | 12 |
| <i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i> | 17 |
| <i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i> | 20 |
| <i>Valuing People</i> | 25 |
| <i>Leading and Communicating</i> | 29 |
| <i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i> | 31 |
| <i>Measuring Effectiveness</i> | 34 |
| <i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i> | 37 |
| <i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i> | 40 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE

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

- CAC is dedicated to helping students learn. The College has implemented some well-defined processes that include a three-year program review cycle, student placement testing, and a new curriculum approval process. Building on these successes, the College has a potential to create a systematic approach to student outcomes assessment, which could serve to improve learning throughout the institution.
- The Workforce Development function has grown under the district-wide leadership model without an increase in budgets. The Small Business Development Center has been successful in assisting local business owners. The CAC Foundation has been increasingly successful in raising funds to support the college's mission, particularly in providing access to higher education in the region. The Residence Life program and the Athletics program have improved the overall quality of life at CAC for its students.
- CAC has some processes in place for identifying the needs of students and other key stakeholders. CAC uses focus groups, advisory boards and economic studies to identify needs. The institution also uses surveys and participation rates to assess satisfaction and relationships with students and stakeholders. The college participates in the CCSSE which provides some benchmarking data of its performance versus other peer institutions.
- CAC is dedicated to helping students learn. The College has implemented some well-defined processes that include a three-year program review cycle, student placement testing, and a new curriculum approval process. Building on these successes, the College has a potential to create a systematic approach to student outcomes assessment, which could serve to improve learning throughout the institution.
- CAC has leadership and communication systems in place, including a committee structure that has a vice president as the process owner. The college has recognized the need to develop a set of institutional measures of effectiveness, and there is an

opportunity to include in these new measures a metric for the effectiveness of the leadership and communication systems.

- CAC has a number of academic and support services designed to support institutional operations. The college would benefit from a comprehensive approach to designing effectiveness measures.
- CAC has a variety of approaches for gathering data on the performance and satisfaction of its students, such as CCSSE, ASSIST, licensure exam pass rates, and retention students. Building on this tracking of data and information, the college has a potential to create a systematic approach to analyzing the data for the purpose of improving overall institutional performance.
- The college describes much effort and energy in a planning process that appears to be very inclusive. CAC has developed and implemented long-term and short-term goals that are aligned with its strategic goals. Building on the systematic approach to strategic planning, the college is poised to address the measurement and improvement of its systems for planning continuous improvement.
- CAC recognizes the importance of building and maintaining key collaborative relationships with educational institutions and community organizations. The college has many examples of fruitful collaborations, including k-12 schools, CAVIT, Arizona universities and community colleges, and business entities. As the college expands its district-wide model, their own disclosed opportunity to formalize the measurement and analysis of these key collaborative relationships will lead to additional successful partnerships.

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

ELEMENTS OF CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE'S FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed

your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary. Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If

accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

Critical Characteristics: Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*. An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institutions under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team has identified gaps in the evidence Central Arizona College has presented to demonstrate that it complies with the Five *Criteria for Accreditation*. In the team's judgment, areas exist where you have *not yet* provided evidence that you meet one or more Core Components of the Commission's Five *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you might have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. The team is not suggesting that you currently fail to comply with the *Criteria*, but simply that you need to present additional evidence of compliance prior to the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation. AQIP will provide you with courses of action you can follow to provide this additional assurance. The issues regarding accreditation that the team identified are:

- A CAC has not presented sufficient evidence that it meets Core Components 2c and 3a of the *Criteria for Accreditation*. CAC reports no evidence of student learning in general education. In addition, the systems portfolio shows very little progress from the first portfolio submitted four years ago. Many of the responses to the process questions are not descriptive enough for the reviewers to understand if CAC has appropriate processes in place that clearly inform strategies for continuous improvement. The level of reporting of results in all categories implies that CAC has not been able to instill quality principles in the institution. Almost all of the results and improvements listed appear to be the result of ad hoc approaches, rather than a systematic approach as required by AQIP.

Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies. The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Central Arizona College in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Central Arizona College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

- Although the college collects and reports data, little is related to the performance of its systems and processes. A comprehensive analysis of data related to the performance of systems and processes should lead to action plans that would allow internal stakeholders to see the power of assessment to improve quality.
- The college would benefit from a comprehensive assessment system based upon direct measures of student learning associated with the learning outcomes.
- The culture of assessment is currently driven by a team composed of representative stakeholders, but now needs to be extended throughout the organization so that all stakeholders are assessing their own processes with an eye toward continuous improvement leading to greater student learning and success.
- There are no discernible systematic processes in place throughout the institution to carry out the work of the institution according to the principles of a quality organization. There is a significant amount of effort towards accomplishing the mission of the college, but without systematic approaches the work processes themselves cannot be assessed and improved.
- The college should begin collecting and reporting data and information based on appropriate measures of effectiveness. The measures should contain the ability to provide comparisons with other regional and national colleges for benchmarking purposes.

- CAC should create measures for the processes listed in Category 6 that will lead to improvements in these processes, which will result in overall institutional improvement.
- The processes listed in Category 7 need to be fully developed. Once that is accomplished, then processes for measuring the effectiveness of those processes can be created. For example, CAC is currently making improvements in the academic program review process. With the new academic program review in place, CAC will then need to create a process for the assessment of academic program review that will include measures of effectiveness.
- The institution has the opportunity to make significant growth in its cultural values as defined by its mission, vision, and strategic objectives by clarifying how to measure these key cultural values. By connecting processes, systems, action plans and continuous quality improvement to these values, the daily means become as important as the results.
- CAC should examine how it is applying the AQIP model to improve the processes and systems of the institution. For a second Systems Portfolio, the team of reviewers expected more progress in explaining the institutional processes and reporting of results.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate

lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Central Arizona College serves a 5,400-square-mile region located between Phoenix and Tucson. The college's service area, Pinal County, is the country's sixth fastest growing county. In the last seven years, the county's population increased by 82 percent.
- O1b CAC has been a learner-centered institution since its creation in 1969 and its vision, mission, and values align with the principles of a Learning College. The institution's Strategic Goals reflect the principles of a Learning College.
- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O1d All of CAC's Guiding Documents consider the "learner" as any individual associated with the institution. The Guiding Documents drive institutional decisions, planning, and improvement.
- O1e In addition to a strategic plan and value statements, CAC has developed a Declaration of Civility for a Learning College and the CAC Bill of Rights.
- O2a CAC offers transfer associate degrees, an associate degree of general studies, AAS degrees and certificate programs, community education courses and the GED diploma.
- O2b Learning programs and environments are evaluated on a three-year cycle.
- O3a The institution serves a student population that has a large minority demographic, with only 52.3% reporting as White, Non Hispanic. The largest minority cohort is Hispanic, at 27.8%, followed by Blacks at 6.5% and Native Americans at 5.4%.
- O3b Financial aid is critical to the attendance and persistence of the CAC students. More than 50% of CAC fulltime students are low income.
- O3c Under-prepared students present a major challenge to the institution, with 74% of the student population having pre-college developmental needs.
- O3d Approximately 30% of the students at CAC are within the traditional age range of 18-24.
- O4a The institution's ability to respond to the needs of its stakeholders is enhanced by the number of partnerships fostered by CAC. Key partnerships include Pinal County schools; universities and other Arizona community colleges; residents and employers in Pinal County; government entities; and accrediting agencies.

- O4b As a result of partnership involvement, nine percent (49 employees) of the college's employees are supported by external grant funds.
- O5a The institution recognizes people as the most important component of the Learning College philosophy. The Learning College Academy is used to orient new employees to the culture, emphasizing the employee's contributions to measurable institutional goals.
- O5b The ratio of full-time to part-time employees, both for faculty and non-faculty, has increased significantly in the last four years. The faculty full-to-part-time ratio has increased from 27% to 40%, and the overall employee full-to-part-time ratio has increased from 43% to 53%.
- O5c The ethnicity of CAC employees is 73% White, non-Hispanic; 18% Hispanic/Latino; 4% Black/African American; 2% Native American; and 1% Asian. This compares to the student population of 52% White, non-Hispanic; 28% Hispanic/Latino; 7% Black/African American; 5% Native American; and 1% Asian.
- O5d Eighty-seven percent of the full-time faculty have Masters or Doctoral degrees. Seventy percent have a Masters degree, and seventeen percent have a Doctoral degree.
- O6a CAC has services located throughout Pinal County, including three campuses and six education centers. The primary location is the 420-acre Signal Peak campus, which has 429,000 square feet of facilities, including 63 classrooms. The Signal Park campus also has Residence Life and Athletic Program facilities.
- O6b In addition to the main campus, the college has a 21-classroom campus and an 11-classroom campus as well as three centers, which provide a variety of learning opportunities and college services.
- O6c The college is expanding its interactive television system to increase student access to the college's programs. This system is also linked to the local high schools.
- O6d In the past five years, CAC has doubled the number of multimedia presentation rooms from 32 to 64, which means a majority of the classrooms at CAC are technologically equipped.
- O6e CAC has been an AQIP college since November of 2000, and recently received Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

- O7a CAC's main competition comes from Arizona's three state supported universities, Pima Community College, the Maricopa system, and online alternatives. The size of the competitors allows them to offer a broader array of programs, pressuring CAC to offer the programs deemed most critical by their local employers and students.
- O7b CAC is expanding its online offerings, and is attempting to maintain consistency in the quality of those courses compared to traditional courses.
- O8a The population of Pinal County has been growing and is expected to triple in the next seventeen years to 1.2 million. This growth will cause CAC to increase programming and facilities to meet expected demand.
- O8b The College continues to see tightening budget conditions, with expected decreases in state funding.
- O8c Pinal County voters recently passed a bond for a five-year, \$100 million construction project for CAC.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these "strengths and opportunities" sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Helping Students Learn identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b CAC has been a learner-centered institution since its creation in 1969 and its vision, mission, and values align with the principles of a Learning College. The institution's Strategic Goals reflect the principles of a Learning College.
- O1d All of CAC's Guiding Documents consider the "learner" as any individual associated with the institution. The Guiding Documents drive institutional decisions, planning, and improvement.
- O2a CAC offers transfer associate degrees, an associate degree of general studies, AAS degrees and certificate programs, community education courses and the GED diploma.
- O2b Learning programs and environments are evaluated on a three-year cycle.
- O3a The institution serves a student population that has a large minority demographic, with only 52.3% reporting as White, Non Hispanic. The largest minority cohort is Hispanic, at 27.8%, followed by Blacks at 6.5% and Native Americans at 5.4%.
- O3c Under-prepared students present a major challenge to the institution, with 74% of the student population having pre-college developmental needs.

- O3d Approximately 30% of the students at CAC are within the traditional age range of 18-24, but take 75% of the credit courses.
- O6b In addition to the main campus, the college has a 21-classroom campus and an 11-classroom campus as well as three centers, which provide a variety of learning opportunities and college services.
- O6c The college is expanding its interactive television system to increase student access to the college's programs. This system is also linked to the local high schools.
- O6d In the past five years, CAC has doubled the number of multimedia presentation rooms from 32 to 64, which means a majority of the classrooms at CAC are technologically equipped.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Central Arizona College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1P1 | S | Common student and program learning objectives/outcomes are determined through a collaborative model that includes a three-year program review cycle. A Curriculum Committee ensures that common learning outcomes are mapped to the institution's mission. The Office of CLASS oversees curriculum development and ensures curriculum currency. |
| 1P2 | S | CAC has a process for allowing different stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, area business and industry, and K-12 schools) to identify new courses and programs that are needed by the extended community and appropriate for the market that is being served. Examples provided show programs developed in response to regional employment needs and student needs. |
| 1P3 | S | All students are required to complete an assessment exam for determining placement into the appropriate courses. Placement testing is used to assist students and faculty in determining whether students |

- belong in college-level courses or developmental courses. Placement is monitored by the CLASS office, the Curriculum Committee and the CAO.
- 1P4 S The college presents a comprehensive plan for communicating expectations including catalogs, websites, view books, electronic forms, orientations, and high school guidance counselor workshops, etc. The communication system integrates both academic and student services functions and aligns with recruitment activities and its student information system. Efforts are underway to create a protocol for aligning recruitment activities with the student information system.
- 1P5 S Advisors, in collaboration with the faculty, use a variety of instruments and information (e.g., Discover Inventories) to guide students to programs of study that match their interests and strengths which encourages repeat visits increasing student persistence.
- 1P5 O As a Learning College, CAC might consider having students produce learning plans that are aligned with college resources and over time the institution could then determine the percentage of students who end up meeting their planned learning needs.
- 1P5 O CAC recognizes the need to increase the interaction between students and advisors and to systematize faculty input to recognizing gaps between requisite preparation and academic success. CAC has discovered a direct correlation between repeat advising visits and student persistence. This provides an opportunity to move from a student-initiated process for advising to one that is more systematic and consistent across the student population.
- 1P6 OO While some approaches to documenting effective teaching and learning are employed, such as the math division using embedded assessment techniques, the college has an opportunity to create a more structured and consistent approach across all disciplines that would include the use of direct measures of student learning.

- 1P6 OO The faculty comments on the Learning College survey illustrates that many faculty and staff believe that the Learning College principles are only marginally being implemented effectively and there is a significant desire to advance practices that align with the Learning College principles. The college has an opportunity to analyze its teaching and learning with regards to feedback in relationship to the Learning College.
- 1P7 S The college has implemented the design and delivery of courses with a variety of models as an example of meeting the needs of the students. Examples include: recognizing office hours as known in the past may no longer best model, modifying schedules to reduce the number of student and faculty commutes, and a shift in library support to more be student friendly by using the latest technology.
- 1P7 S A survey, conducted in 2007 to learn about faculty and student perceptions related to the course schedule and course delivery system, resulted in the creation of weekend programs and improvements in ITV technology.
- 1P8 SS ACRES and ACETS provide an electronic curriculum tracking process. This system has been used effectively to update the existing academic curriculum which includes competency based learning outcomes and proficiency standards. Input to curricular changes comes from internal and external constituencies. In progress is a shift in the actual approval process for new curriculum in response to deficiencies in the former process.
- 1P9 S A number of learning support systems such as the Learning Resource Center, libraries, Student Success Program, Student Leadership Organization, Developmental Education, Department Study Groups, and advising, helps CAC determine what students and faculty need relative to learning support under the direction of a system-wide director.
- 1P10 O While there are many efforts to strengthen the learning environment and the learning experiences of students with a number of co-curricular

activities, it is not clear that CAC has made any attempt to align these activities with curricular learning objectives.

- 1P11 O CAC has an opportunity to better define its processes for student assessment. An approach to assessment that will lead to improvements in teaching and learning can be developed for classroom learning, student support services, and additional programs to empower students.
- 1P12 O The college has expressed plans to maintain a common database and partner with state universities to collect transfer performance data. This data is critical if CAC is to discover how its students perform upon transfer producing an opportunity to identify measurable results and indicate areas for improvement.
- 1P13 OO The institution has the opportunity to strengthen its direct measurement and assessment of student learning outcomes.
- 1R1 O CAC is currently implementing an AQIP assessment model of common learning outcomes that can start documenting results for common student learning objectives and specific program learning objectives, and action plans that have resulted for improvements.
- 1R2 OO CAC reports no evidence of student learning in general education. The college would benefit from the development of a systematic approach to assessment of student learning outcomes including its purpose, its general functions and features, how the feedback is integrated into other operations and a culture that consistently improves performance through assessment.
- 1R3 O While survey data has been collected that could be used for improving student learning, the anecdotal examples provided do not demonstrate a measurement system that permits evaluation of the processes required to help students learn.
- 1R4 S CAC has significant success in student retention (Met-Life Foundation semi-finalist for best practices in student retention), and in faculty student and student-student involvement, technology use, ethics, diversity and

other key areas. The college is beginning to use benchmarking instruments to compare its performance with other similar colleges.

- 1R4 O The college has an opportunity to improve its understanding and application of benchmarking techniques as it becomes involved in the National Community College Benchmarking Project. Actual comparative data are important for understanding whether the colleges' results are better or worse than the results of peer groups.
- 1I1-1I2 S CAC has begun to develop processes that focus on improvement and has recently joined the Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy. The college has a process for aligning annual operation plans with the longer term strategic plan. Targets for improvement include support for learners, employees, community partnerships, communication and maximizing resources.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Central Arizona College serves a 5,400-square-mile region located between Phoenix and Tucson. The college's service area, Pinal County, is the country's sixth fastest

growing county. In the last seven years, the county's population increased by 82 percent.

- O4a The institution's ability to respond to the needs of its stakeholders is enhanced by the number of partnerships fostered by CAC. Key partnerships include Pinal County schools; universities and other Arizona community colleges; residents and employers in Pinal County; government entities; and accrediting agencies.\
- O6a CAC has services located throughout Pinal County, including three campuses and six education centers. The primary location is the 420-acre Signal Peak campus, which has 429,000 square feet of facilities, including 63 classrooms. The Signal Park campus also has Residence Life and Athletic Program facilities
- O8a The population of Pinal County has been growing and is expected to triple in the next seventeen years to 1.2 million. This growth will cause CAC to increase programming and facilities to meet expected demand.
- O8c Pinal County voters recently passed a bond for a five-year, \$100 million construction project for CAC.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Central Arizona College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2P1 | O | CAC considers information on economic development needs from formal and informal relationships with internal and external constituents in the context of economic data. CAC utilizes input from administrative and academic staff regarding residential life and athletic programs. While the input from many stakeholders is considered, no systematic approach was described. |
| 2P2 | O | While the college states the expectations regarding other distinctive objectives are communicated through general means including emails, published materials, websites, and meetings, CAC has an opportunity to |

develop a systematic communication strategy to share information more effectively.

- 2P3 O CAC uses an informal process to review staff and faculty needs with regard to other distinctive objectives. External resources are brought in as needed. However, no systematic process was identified.
- 2P4 S CAC lists a variety of appropriate assessment activities for its other distinctive objectives. In particular, for the Economic Development objective, many specific examples demonstrate the institutions commitment to evaluation of its objectives.
- 2P4 O CAC has an opportunity to use the results of the assessment as feedback for adjusting objectives and processes.
- 2P5 O CAC relies most often on written and verbal comments to measure success regarding its other distinctive objectives. In some cases, indirect measures such as surveys, program evaluations, satisfaction surveys are used to good effect. CAC has an opportunity to further develop regular processes for routine data collection and analysis.
- 2R1 S Several of the economic development programs have seen substantial success. For example, the Workforce Development program is very effective in generating student credit hours with a relatively small staff. The Small Business Development Center has assisted 90 new businesses and 545 new and retained jobs. The CAC Foundation has awarded \$1.6 million in scholarship assistance. CAC's Athletic programs have seen good success, finishing 7th in the 2007/2008 NATYCAA Cup standings.
- 2R1 O In many cases, CAC's approach to reporting results of their other distinctive objectives is informal and interpersonal. The college has some results for accomplishing its distinctive objectives, but an opportunity exists to create a more thorough definition of the objectives and their related outcome measures that would result in a better understanding of how to achieve the college's mission.

- 2R2 OO Except for athletic standings, the college has no results to report on comparisons with peer institutions or other external organizations. CAC may benefit from seeking outside sources of peer benchmarking data to aid in performance analysis.
- 2R3 S CAC economic development programs have grown and contributed to the formation of regional partnerships, which in turn resulted in a \$1 million grant to the CAC Foundation. Residence life and athletic programs appear to be increasing student participation and engagement. In the assessment off all three distinctive areas, CAC has an opportunity to develop systematic and quantifiable measurement strategies.
- 2I1 O CAC recognizes that a more systematic process for gathering, analyzing and using data is needed for the continuous improvement of both the economic development and residential life programs. While, some specific improvements are described for workforce development, the SBDC, residential life and athletics, systematic strategies defining institutional processes are not apparent.
- 2I2 O Specific targets for improvement are described for the SBDC, the CAC Foundation, Residence Life, and Athletics. However, the process for determining and prioritizing these targets is not clear. CAC has an opportunity to develop more systematic processes for improvements, setting targets and communication of results to stakeholders.

AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification, student and stakeholder requirements, analysis of student and stakeholder needs, relationship building with students and stakeholders, complaint collection, analysis, and resolution, determining

satisfaction of students and stakeholders, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O3a The institution serves a student population that has a large minority demographic, with only 52.3% reporting as White, Non Hispanic. The largest minority cohort is Hispanic, at 27.8%, followed by Blacks at 6.5% and Native Americans at 5.4%.
- O3b Financial aid is critical to the attendance and persistence of the CAC students. More than 50% of CAC fulltime students are low income.
- O3c Under-prepared students present a major challenge to the institution, with 74% of the student population having pre-college developmental needs.
- O3d Approximately 30% of the students at CAC are within the traditional age range of 18-24.
- O4a The institution's ability to respond to the needs of its stakeholders is enhanced by the number of partnerships fostered by CAC. Key partnerships include Pinal County schools; universities and other Arizona community colleges; residents and employers in Pinal County; government entities; and accrediting agencies.
- O5c The ethnicity of CAC employees is 73% White, non-Hispanic; 18% Hispanic/Latino; 4% Black/African American; 2% Native American; and 1% Asian. This compares to the student population of 52% White, non-Hispanic; 28% Hispanic/Latino; 7% Black/African American; 5% Native American; and 1% Asian.
- O8a The population of Pinal County has been growing and is expected to triple in the next seventeen years to 1.2 million. This growth will cause CAC to increase programming and facilities to meet expected demand.

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

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3P1 | S | CAC uses numerous surveys to identify improvement goals and action plans to respond to student needs. For example, the CCSSE results from 2006 were used to target six improvement goals and develop action plans within the Student Services area. Administering a Course Scheduling survey and using the results for schedule planning indicates a commitment to solicit and respond to student needs. |
| 3P1 | O | CAC would benefit from an articulation of the feedback loop for surveys, which can provide very useful information for improvement when fully analyzed and implemented. |
| 3P2 | S | CAC has focused on increased accessibility as a strategy for building and maintaining relationships. The college has enhanced online student services, and established three campuses and six centers in their service area. In addition, the Customer Service/Technical Support is a student-friendly centralized information source. The redesigned New Student Orientation and Student Development course are intended to build relationships and enhance student connection. CAC's summer program for 5 th -8 th grade students is designed to foster early relationships with prospective students. |
| 3P3 | S | The 2007 Central-Western Pinal County Labor Market study was undertaken in partnership with the Arizona Public Service and the Central Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation, providing valuable information on skills, abilities and educational attainment of the workforce. Additionally, the SBDC works with the county Chambers of Commerce and participates in the Comprehensive County Planning. K-12 schools address the CAC governing board and identify their changing needs |

- 3P4 S Quarterly newsletters and frequent press releases allow CAC to maintain a positive relationship with the community. Advisory councils for career and technical programs foster relationships with industry representatives. Annual orientation programs for high school counselors and forming dual-enrollment and Early College programs facilitates relationships with K-12. Collaboration with other state higher education institutions are developed through state wide articulation task forces
- 3P5 S Potential new student and stakeholder groups are surfaced somewhat informally through various studies and community partnerships. CAC has an annual planning and budget process in which the determination is made if new student or stakeholder groups should be addressed in the college's educational offerings and services. Competing needs are prioritized based on a number of factors, including impact on the local economy, demand on resources, available new resources, and effect on existing programs. The Executive Council determines the course of action.
- 3P5 O Although CAC has identified its student groups and stakeholders very broadly, no information is presented on the identification of new student or stakeholder groups whose needs may need to be addressed, such as students with pre-college developmental needs or part-time students.
- 3P6 S CAC has well established procedures for handling complaints, including concerns regarding academic policies, grades, and financial aid. The process of reporting a Campus Incident is well articulated and trend analysis on incident reports is routinely performed. Results are communicated to the campus community as appropriate. (S: DH, JC, KL, LB)
- 3P7 S The CCSSE and regular surveys of Residence Life, online students and new student orientation participants are used to determine student satisfaction. In addition, community focus groups and surveys are used to solicit public feedback. Advisory councils provide anecdotal feedback on the career and technical programs. Workforce Development Center

- and SBDC regularly solicit satisfaction data regarding their training services.
- 3R1 O Data from the 2008 CCSSE and the Graduation Survey (2006-2007) demonstrate varying degrees of student satisfaction. CAC recognizes the opportunity to reassess and identify current student expectations and to align assessment efforts with those student expectations.
- 3R2 O CAC reports increases in participation in a number services and programs, including the Promise for the Future program for potential students, online tutoring, online advising, and online library reference services. These results, along with persistence and transfer data, provide indirect measures of building relationships with students. The college has an opportunity to report direct results.
- 3R3 O CAC makes an effort to assess stakeholder satisfaction, but the information is largely anecdotal. CAC recognizes the opportunity to develop and refine measurement instruments to meaningfully assess stakeholder satisfaction.
- 3R4 S Evidence for strong relationships with key stakeholders is based on participation and funding in education and educational programs. CAC has a number of successes to report, including increased participation in the annual job fair, the Lifelong Learning Program, and the Annual Math Competition, as well as the award of \$1 million to fund the Promise for the Future Scholarship endowment.
- 3R5 O Some general benchmarking of CCSSE results was described. CAC recognizes the value of increased attention to benchmarking and comparison to peer institutions and will participate in a Student Retention Data Exchange program with a consortium of two- and four- year colleges. CAC would benefit from a fully developed process of comparisons to peer institutions and evaluation of historical trends.
- 3I1 O Recognizing the need for consistent, systematic processes for understanding the needs of students and key stakeholders, CAC's Quality

Council recently initiated an action plan to develop a set of Institutional Measures of Effectiveness

- 312 OO CAC has identified a process for establishing priorities and targets for improvement. However, CAC has identified no specific improvement priorities. Without specific priorities, the college may miss opportunities for improving their processes for understanding student and stakeholder needs.

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

Valuing People explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O4b As a result of partnership involvement, nine percent (49 employees) of the college's employees are supported by external grant funds.
- O5a The institution recognizes people as the most important component of the Learning College philosophy. The Learning College Academy is used to orient new employees to the culture, emphasizing the employee's contributions to measurable institutional goals.
- O5b The ratio of full-time to part-time employees, both for faculty and non-faculty, has increased significantly in the last four years. The faculty full-to-part-time ratio has

increased from 27% to 40%, and the overall employee full-to-part-time ratio has increased from 43% to 53%.

O5c The ethnicity of CAC employees is 73% White, non-Hispanic; 18% Hispanic/Latino; 4% Black/African American; 2% Native American; and 1% Asian. This compares to the student population of 52% White, non-Hispanic; 28% Hispanic/Latino; 7% Black/African American; 5% Native American; and 1% Asian.

O5d Eighty-seven percent of the full-time faculty have Masters or Doctoral degrees. Seventy percent have a Masters degree, and seventeen percent have a Doctoral degree.

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

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4P1 | S | Key employee qualifications are identified using the Institutional Policy and Procedures Document—specific employee credentials, skills, and values associated with each position. |
| 4P2 | S | Development and implementation of the financial supplement capability for recruiting and retaining hard to acquire skills is an innovative and apparently successful endeavor. Ability to fill vacancies and low turnover are indicators of the initiative's success. |
| 4P3 | O | The Declaration of Civility and Employee Bill of Rights are designed to promote a supportive work environment and tool for teaching ethical responsibilities. CAC did not provide sufficient evidence that the design of their work processes contribute to the effectiveness of communication, cooperation, and high performance. |
| 4P4 | S | Personnel are provided a variety of options for training and development, including both in-house training sessions and external workshops and seminars. These are both academic and nonacademic in nature. |
| 4P5 | S | CAC has a system in place to help each employee identify his/her own training needs for the purposes of continuing professional education. |

These needs are then communicated through supervisors to related institutional committees such as Employee Development Committee, Cultural Proficiency Task Force, Advisory, Council, and Learning Forums to help assess campus-wide training needs.

- 4P6 O The recent review and revision of the evaluation process based on feedback from employees is a positive step. CAC may benefit from expanding the evaluation process to align more specifically with objectives set by the college regarding Categories One and Two. This will provide a more structured relationship between employee performance evaluation and strategic goals.
- 4P7 S CAC has developed a compensation package with many supplemental incentives to encourage faculty to commit to a long and productive tenure at the college. The exit interview process captures key information from faculty and staff who are leaving to assess the effectiveness of their experience with the institution to inform changes that could be made to strengthen the employee satisfaction.
- 4P8 O Faculty and staff are recognized by a number of awards. Compensation and benefit plans are available to all faculty and staff. Human Resources is the responsible entity in issues related to employee motivation. In addition, CAC has an opportunity to determine the key issues related to the motivation of faculty, staff and administrators. Once key issues are identified, corrective and enhancement actions can be undertaken to create a more motivated workforce.
- 4P9 O CAC assesses employee satisfaction through forums and informal conversations. CAC might consider implementing a more systematic approach to use data collected from the Learning College Survey to improve employee satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being.
- 4P10 O CAC has self identified a need to recruit and hire employees that are more representative of the student population. This provides an

- opportunity to offer fresh perspective to the college through the eyes of a more diverse faculty and staff.
- 4R1 OO CAC has an opportunity to collect data-based measures of valuing people, and to aggregate the results of these measures to allow for the tracking of progress on its initiatives. Without data-based measures, CAC cannot assess its performance in this area.
- 4R2 OO While some results are described anecdotally (i.e., the revisions to a number of policies and procedures), CAC has an opportunity to collect data-based measures of its processes associated with valuing people, and to aggregate the results of these measures to allow for the tracking of progress on its initiatives. Without data-based measures, CAC cannot assess its performance in this area.
- 4R3 S The college has evidence of the productivity and effectiveness of its people in achieving the institution's goals by the progress listed in achieving the goals of the 2007/08 Operational Plan.
- 4R4 O Stronger benchmarking with other Learning Colleges (starting with the Vanguard Colleges) of how they measure, analyze, and use information to strengthen the valuing of people could strengthen this effort internally.
- 4I1 OO CAC gathers information in an informal process to identify areas for improvement. The College identifies employee performance appraisal as an area for improvement. CAC would benefit from a systematic process for reporting on the evaluation review process, all the way through to the supervisor/employee dialogue. Without that systematic structure, an important process at the college can be left to individuals' interpretations and thus have limited value relative to continuous improvement to the institution as a whole.
- 4I2 O While CAC should be commended for the expansive list of targeted areas for improvement throughout the organization, the college has an opportunity to identify specific targets for improvements in its processes

and systems for valuing people, and to communicate these targets to all appropriate stakeholders.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O1e In addition to a strategic plan and value statements, CAC has developed a Declaration of Civility for a Learning College and the CAC Bill of Rights.
- O5a The institution recognizes people as the most important component of the Learning College philosophy. The Learning College Academy is used to orient new employees to the culture, emphasizing the employee's contributions to measurable institutional goals.
- O6e CAC has been an AQIP college since November of 2000, and recently received the Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.
- O7a CAC's main competition comes from Arizona's three state supported universities, Pima Community College, the Maricopa system, and online alternatives. The size of the competitors allows them to offer a broader array of programs, pressuring CAC to offer the programs deemed most critical by their local employers and students.

O8b The college continues to see tightening budget conditions, with expected decreases in state funding.

O8c Pinal County voters recently passed a bond for a five-year, \$100 million construction project for CAC.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Central Arizona College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5P1 | S | CAC sets direction through their strategic planning process, aligned with learning college principles. They have hired new community outreach directors and developed a new needs assessment tool. |
| 5P2 | O | CAC has deliberately focused their relationship with external stakeholders. The leaders of the college have an opportunity to systematize their efforts to connect to stakeholders and develop processes that guide, build and sustain a learning environment. |
| 5P3 | S | CAC uses a committee structure for developing and making recommendations to the president and board. They have recently streamlined their committee processes. |
| 5P4 | O | CAC recognizes the opportunity to develop institutional effectiveness measures. The development of a Fact Book will aid in the use of data to make decisions. |
| 5P5 | S | CAC has a variety of mechanisms to promote two-way communication across the institution. The implementation of a district wide model is consistent with improving communications. |
| 5P6 | O | No response was provided for this section. |
| 5P7 | S | Best practices are shared on a quarterly basis via the tracking of operational plans, progress and accomplishments. |
| 5P8 | S | CAC recognizes the importance of leadership succession planning through their "grow-your-own" policy. There is an internal process in |

place ensuring that there is always someone available to step in to a vacated position.

- 5P9 OO CAC recognizes an opportunity to develop a set of institutional effectiveness measures and has initiated an Action Project to accomplish this. The college would be well-served to include formal measures of leading and communicating in these measures.
- 5R1 S CAC has shown positive growth in the Learning College inventory responses from 2004-2006.
- 5R2 O CAC has an opportunity to create more meaningful measures for assessing the results for leading and communicating that would allow for peer comparisons with other institutions. CAC may benefit from looking to other Learning Colleges for models.
- 5I1 O Although CAC uses a variety of approaches such as focus groups and employee meetings, there is not a clear, systematic approach to improving processes.
- 5I2 O CAC needs to develop more general measures of effectiveness. Once CAC sets in place more specific measures and results, they can set deliberate data driven targets for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Supporting Institutional Operations addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Central Arizona College serves a 5,400-square-mile region located between Phoenix and Tucson. The college's service area, Pinal County, is the country's sixth fastest growing county. In the last seven years, the county's population increased by 82 percent.
- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O3a The institution serves a student population that has a large minority demographic, with only 52.3% reporting as White, Non Hispanic. The largest minority cohort is Hispanic, at 27.8%, followed by Blacks at 6.5% and Native Americans at 5.4%.
- O3b Financial aid is critical to the attendance and persistence of the CAC students. More than 50% of CAC fulltime students are low income.
- O3c Under-prepared students present a major challenge to the institution, with 74% of the student population having pre-college developmental needs.
- O3d Approximately 30% of the students at CAC are within the traditional age range of 18-24.
- O5a The institution recognizes people as the most important component of the Learning College philosophy. The Learning College Academy is used to orient new employees to the culture, emphasizing the employee's contributions to measurable institutional goals.
- O6b In addition to the main campus, the college has a 21-classroom campus and an 11-classroom campus as well as three centers, which provide a variety of learning opportunities and college services.
- O6c The College is expanding its interactive television system to increase student access to the college's programs. This system is also linked to the local high schools.
- O6d In the past five years, CAC has doubled the number of multimedia presentation rooms from 32 to 64, which means a majority of the classrooms at CAC are technologically equipped.

- O6e CAC has been an AQIP college since November of 2000, and recently received the Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.
- O7b CAC is expanding its online offerings, and is attempting to maintain consistency in the quality of those courses compared to traditional courses.
- O8a The population of Pinal County has been growing and is expected to triple in the next seventeen years to 1.2 million. This growth will cause CAC to increase programming and facilities to meet expected demand.
- O8b The college continues to see tightening budget conditions, with expected decreases in state funding.

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

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6P1 | S | CAC identifies the support service needs of its students in various ways, including the use of student surveys, student information databases and national research projects. Specific needs identified by the college include developmental instruction and online instructional support. |
| 6P2 | O | While the college states that it identifies administrative support service needs in its planning process, the effectiveness of this approach is unclear. There is an opportunity to develop a more systematic process of documenting needs, how they are being supported and how these innovations are transferred within and throughout the organization. |
| 6P3 | O | CAC has an opportunity to examine its approach to the day-to-day management of its supporting institutional operations to ensure that they are meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. |
| 6P4 | O | There are opportunities to use information and results to improve its services for supporting institutional operations and for involved individuals to express concerns and needs throughout the school year with key administrators. |

- 6P5 O While CAC collects and analyzes a number of student surveys, an opportunity exists for CAC to develop specific measures for the academic and support services described in 6C1.

- 6R1 O CAC has made progress in supporting on-line learners with a variety of means that are now showing an impact on course retention. There is an opportunity to develop and track measures of effectiveness for other student, administrative and organizational support service processes, described in 6C1.

- 6R2 O CAC has an opportunity to develop and track measures of effectiveness of all of its administrative support service processes described in 6C1.

- 6R3 O CAC has an opportunity to improve its approach to assessing the effectiveness of its support processes that would allow for comparisons with other institutions.

- 6I1 O CAC has an opportunity to expand its approach to improving the effectiveness of its support processes.

- 6I2 O CAC has identified some targets for improvement related to the CCSSE survey scores and has an opportunity to articulate how action plans for the improvements will be addressed.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring Effectiveness examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O2b Learning programs and environments are evaluated on a three-year cycle.
- O6a CAC has services located throughout Pinal County, including three campuses and six education centers. The primary location is the 420-acre Signal Peak campus, which has 429,000 square feet of facilities, including 63 classrooms.
- O6e CAC has been an AQIP college since November 2000 and recently received the Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.
- O8b The college continues to see tightening budget conditions, with expected decreases in state funding.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Central Arizona College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7P1 | O | While the college has a number of key institutional measures for tracking effectiveness, it is not clear how CAC selects, manages, and uses the information and data generated. |
| 7P2 | S | CAC has a structured process for requesting institutional data, and for prioritizing and determining if requests merit resources allocated based upon selected criteria. |
| 7P3 | O | It is not clear how CAC determines the needs and priorities for comparative data. While comparative data is collected via CCSSE, ASSIST, etc. no criteria is given for the selection of these sources. |

- 7P4 O While the college maintains a website of data reports, there is no apparent process for analyzing the data and in turn using it to improve CAC.
- 7P5 O It is not clear that processes are in place to ensure that department/unit analysis of information aligns with overall institutional objectives. Having a process that links unit goals to institutional goals is not the same as having a process that links the departmental analysis of data with overall institutional objectives.
- 7P6 S CAC maintains appropriate levels of data security and integrity through key professional personnel who have responsibility for specific components. The Systems User Group includes representatives from the major functional areas of the college.
- 7P7 O Implementing processes of collecting and analyzing measures of effectiveness of systems is still underway through the establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
- 7R1 OO While CAC has made efforts to benchmark key performance measures such as with CRSDE and CSSDE, CAC does not have a systematic strategy for measures related to the processes associated with information and data collection, analysis, and use. As part of the HLC Assessment Academy experience, CAC is encouraged to examine not only the student learning outcomes, but also the broader framework for developing a system for measuring effectiveness in all areas of the College.
- 7R2 OO CAC provides no evidence of analyzing benchmarking data to improve systems and processes.
- 7I1 OO Processes for requesting information, reporting and analyzing data are in the developmental stages. Developing these processes will be key to strengthening the institution.
- 7I2 OO As the processes for requesting information, reporting data, and analyzing data matures, CAC will have an opportunity to evaluate the

information obtained, assess its values and improve its processes accordingly, including the development of specific targets for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Planning Continuous Improvement examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Central Arizona College serves a 5,400-square-mile region located between Phoenix and Tucson. The college's service area, Pinal County, is the country's sixth fastest growing county. In the last seven years, the county's population increased by 82 percent.
- O1b CAC has embraced the Learning College philosophy since its creation in 1969 and its vision, mission, and values align with the principles of a Learning College. The institution's Strategic Goals reflect the principles of a Learning College.
- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O6c The college is expanding its interactive television system to increase student access to the college's programs. This system is also linked to the local high schools.
- O6e CAC has been an AQIP college November of 200, and recently received the Reaffirmation of Accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

- O8a The population of Pinal County has been growing and is expected to triple in the next seventeen years to 1.2 million. This growth will cause CAC to increase programming and facilities to meet expected demand.
- O8b The college continues to see tightening budget conditions, with expected decreases in state funding.
- O8c Pinal County voters recently passed a bond for a five-year, \$100 million construction project for CAC.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Central Arizona College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8P1 | S | The institution has a solid process for operational planning in its development, integration, monitoring, and reporting of its progress. |
| 8P2 | S | CAC seeks broad input in selecting short and long term goals. |
| 8P2 | O | It is unclear how CAC incorporates new and unanticipated data or information or institutional needs. CAC may also benefit from a more inclusive process for resolving issues of conflicting priorities. |
| 8P3 | O | While the college has a process for planning that aligns its unit action plans with its strategic plan, the process for designing, developing and implementing cross-functional action plans could be clarified (crossing units), including stakeholder input and feedback communication of choices made. |
| 8P4 | O | Even though the college has clear alignment of its action plans with institutional objectives, it is not clear during the planning process, how priorities are set, resources allocated, and teams built to coordinate across varying institutional levels. |
| 8P5 | O | CAC provides no evidence of selecting measures and improvement strategies. Without this systematic process CAC will not be able to select measures assess performance and make improvements. |

- 8P6 O CAC Could benefit from a systematic analysis and allocation of resources relative to a set of guidelines that are evidence-based, clearly understood and applied consistently across the institution.
- 8P7 O CAC has an opportunity to align training to Strategic Goals, Operational Plans and Action Plans.
- 8P8 O CAC presents no measures of effectiveness for its systems, structures and processes for planning continuous improvement. For example, program review is a process for improving programs. The opportunity is to determine what measures, assessment and advancements that can be made in the program review process.
- 8R1 S Strong emphasis in training staff to support online services and educational delivery is evidence that the institution has made significant advancements in its expanded modalities of learning opportunities and support services aligned with its strategic goals.
- 8R1 O The question for CAC is whether these measures provide the most important results for accomplishing institutional strategies and action plans as they relate to the entire strategic plan.
- 8R2 O By collecting and analyzing measures that report on data points identified as key or critical CAC has a better opportunity to set improvement targets to strengthen the institution.
- 8R3 OO The benchmarking of progress could use stronger measures and analysis to determine quality improvement progress against external organizations' progress. This comparison of information will prove useful when setting projections for performance and determining allocation of college resources.
- 8R4 O CAC has the opportunity to develop a set of measures focused on the effectiveness of the process of strategic planning, operational planning, and the implementation of action plans. These measures would provide the means to show evidence of the effectiveness of the college's efforts.

- 811 OO CAC reports that the AQIP continuous improvement framework is used to improve processes and systems, however no specific evidence was provided.
- 812 OO Specific targets for improvements were not presented.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution'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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Central Arizona College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1a Central Arizona College serves a 5,400-square-mile region located between Phoenix and Tucson. The college's service area, Pinal County, is the country's sixth fastest growing county. In the last seven years, the county's population increased by 82 percent.
- O1c The institution is in the process of reorganizing its structure into a district-wide model.
- O4a The institution's ability to respond to the needs of its stakeholders is enhanced by the number of partnerships fostered by CAC. Key partnerships include Pinal County schools; universities and other Arizona community colleges; residents and employers in Pinal County; government entities; and accrediting agencies.
- O4b As a result of partnership involvement, nine percent (49 employees) of the College's employees are supported by external grant funds.

O6c The College is expanding its interactive television system to increase student access to the College's programs. This system is also linked to the local high schools.

O7a CAC's main competition comes from Arizona's three state supported universities, Pima Community College, the Maricopa System, and online alternatives. The size of the competitors allows them to offer a broader array of programs, pressuring CAC to offer the programs deemed most critical by their local employers and students.

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

| <i>Item</i> | <i>S/O</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9P1 | S | CAC has created new positions to focus on the expansion of access across its service area. Five academic dean positions, three student service dean positions, and eight community outreach positions are charged with the building and maintaining of relationships in the community. |
| 9P2 | S | The College has an annual process for ensuring that the needs of participants in collaborative relationships are being met. This process involves internal review and external input. |
| 9P3 | O | CAC has an opportunity to create, build and support a coordinated approach to internal and cross-campus relationships, and to develop a systematic approach to communication that will assure integration and understanding across such relationships. |
| 9P4 | O | CAC recognizes that it lacks a systematic plan, methodology and timeline for tracking and measuring collaborative relationships. This is a critical first step in continuous improvement. Developing such a plan will allow individuals to focus their efforts and CAC to be more effective in determining priorities and allocation of resources. |
| 9R1 | S | CAC has results demonstrating success for several collaborative relationships, including the Promise for the Future Program, Summer |

Bridge Program and Alumni Mentoring Program. Building upon these assessment efforts as models, CAC will be able to demonstrate success with other collaborative relationships.

- 9R2 OO CAC has an opportunity to develop measures of building collaborative relationships that will allow peer comparisons to other higher education institutions, especially as they relate to the collaborative agreements described in 9C1.
- 9I1 O CAC has identified a need for a systematic and measurable approach to examining the effectiveness of collaborative relationships. With the current ad hoc approach, improvements are likely to occur on a random and unplanned basis.
- 9I2 O The college has identified a gap in the ability to track data on collaborative relationships. Without a systematic approach to measuring the effectiveness of collaborative relationships, target-setting is not possible.