# 2006
# AQIP Systems
## Portfolio

student driven...community focused

**NORTHEAST IOWA**
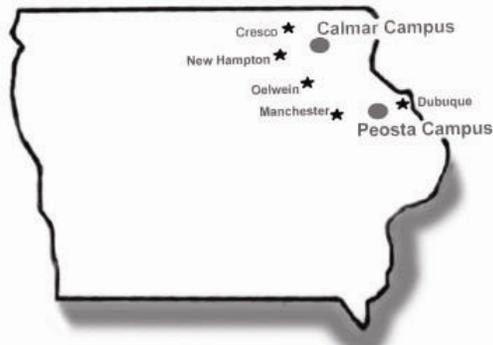*COMMUNITY COLLEGE*

NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Organizational Overview

## 01 Distinctive Features



### Location

Northeast Iowa Community College is a public, non-profit institution located in the far northeast corner of Iowa. The district borders Minnesota on the north and Wisconsin on the east. From the flat farmland to the west to the stately bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River on the east, the district occupies an especially beautiful and varied part of the state.

### History

NICC has been in existence for over 40 years. In that time the institution has undergone many changes, including several name changes.

NICC dates back to 1965. At that time, the Iowa General Assembly enacted legislation to create a statewide system of post-secondary schools known as "merged area schools." Legislators charged the Iowa Department of Education with developing and overseeing these merged area schools. The department divided the state into 16 merged area school districts. It gave permission to the merged area school in each district to provide vocational training, draw down federal funds, and charge tuition.

After much debate, local leaders chose the small town of Calmar (population 1,058) as the site for the merged area school in Area One. Calmar was centrally located in the new district. It was also strategically placed at the intersection of three major highways, allowing students easy access to instruction.

Local leaders submitted an application to the Iowa Department of Education, and in July 1966

the department approved the creation of Area One Vocational-Technical School.

Superintendent Max Clark moved quickly to start providing educational services. In August 1966, Area One offered its first vocational and general education classes in temporary, rented facilities. A few months later, in December 1966, the school acquired a 210-acre farm, the perfect building site for the proposed Calmar campus. Construction started the following year.

The first name change came when the district expanded to the south. Area One covered Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek counties and sections of Bremer, Buchanan, and Mitchell counties. In 1970, Area Eight to the south disbanded and joined other districts. Area One adopted Dubuque and Delaware counties and parts of Jackson and Jones counties. Following the expansion, the name Area One no longer fit. Instead the school adopted the name Northeast Iowa Technical Institute, or NITI.

The expansion also triggered a need for more space. Students from the southern end of the district would have to travel too far to take classes at Calmar. A temporary solution was to rent classrooms in downtown Dubuque.

However, as enrollment grew, the need for a southern campus became more pressing. In 1974 the school purchased 95 acres in the small town of Peosta (population 651). Construction got underway in 1978, and the Peosta campus was ready to welcome students in 1979.

The next major change came in 1988. At that time we received approval from the Iowa Department of Education to offer the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degrees. With this approval, we became a comprehensive community college and changed our name to Northeast Iowa Community College.

Since then, we have continued to evolve. We have expanded to include six NICC Centers, including two in Dubuque and one in each of the small towns of Cresco, Manchester, New Hampton, and Oelwein. We recently started

construction of a seventh center in Waukon. The purpose of the centers is to bring education and training to people where they live and to serve as a catalyst for economic development.

In 1997 we joined the National Safety Council in creating the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety on the Peosta campus. The purpose of NECAS is to provide training to prevent injury and death in agriculture.

Another expansion came in 2000. Working with the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and Iowa State University, we opened the Northeast Iowa Dairy Center on the Calmar campus. The dairy center includes a state-of-the-art dairy operation and facilities for instruction and research.

Following a long period of expansion in enrollment and facilities, we are now taking a moment to breathe. Instead of focusing on quantity, we are focusing on quality and consistency with mission and vision.

NICC's mission is straightforward and set the tone for all initiatives.

### Mission

*Northeast Iowa Community College provides accessible, affordable, quality education and training to meet the needs of our communities.*

The vision of NICC is based on a strong set of values. These values are incorporated into the language of the vision and serve as a daily reminder of what is important to the institution.

### Vision

*Northeast Iowa Community College will live the values of service, excellence, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity.*

*Service:* Delivery that meets or exceeds the educational needs of our stakeholders

*Excellence:* A commitment to a culture of continuous improvement, striving toward distinction

*Respect:* Recognition of individual dignity by promoting an atmosphere of hospitality, trust, and cooperation

*Innovation:* An open climate fostering collaboration, improvement, and advancement of ideas

*Stewardship:* Responsible management of personnel and material resources for the common good

*Integrity:* Honest and objective policies and practices reflecting responsible institutional citizenship

## 02  Scope of Educational Offerings

### *Credit Programs*
We provide a full range of credit programs leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate. These are listed in Table 0-1.

*Table 0-1 Credit Programs*

**Associate in Arts Degree (AA)**
- General AA
- Business Administration
- Communication
- Community and Regional Planning
- Criminal Justice
- Early Childhood
- Education
- Entrepreneurial Studies
- Fire Science
- Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Legal Assistant/Paralegal

**Associate in Science Degree (AS)**
- General AS
- Agriculture
- Industrial Technology Teacher Education
- Pre-Veterinary Medicine/Dairy

**Associate in Science/Career Option Degree (ASCO)**
- Electronic Engineering Technology
- Human Services Specialist

**Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS)**
- Accounting Specialist
- Administrative Assistant
- Agriculture Management
- Agriculture Sales and Service
- Arboriculture
- Associate Degree Nursing
- Automotive Technology
- Business Specialist
- Computer Analyst
- Computer Technology
- Construction Management
- Cosmetology
- Dairy Science Technology
- Electroneurodiagnostic Technology
- Electronic Technology
- Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic
- Enology
- Health Information Technology
- Human Services Generalist
- Industrial Electrician
- John Deere Agricultural Technology
- Marketing Management
- Massage Therapy Specialist
- Medical Lab Technology
- Radiologic Technology
- Respiratory Care
- Surgical Technology
- Viticulture

**Diploma**
- Accounting Clerk
- Automotive Mechanics
- Building Materials Management
- Carpentry
- Coding Specialist
- Commercial/Residential Electrician
- Computer Applications Technician
- Cosmetology
- Dairy Science Technology
- Dental Assisting
- Desktop Publishing Specialist
- Diesel Mechanics
- Early Childhood
- Heating and Air Conditioning
- Human Services Technician
- Marketing
- Medical Transcriptionist
- Office Technology-General
- Office Technology-Legal
- Office Technology-Medical
- Office Technology-Secretarial
- Practical Nursing
- Professional Massage Therapy
- Welding

**Certificate**
- Agriculture GIS/GPS
- Agriculture Manager and Marketing
- Agriculture Office Technician
- Agronomy
- Cabinet Making and Finishing
- CAD Specialist
- Dairy
- Enology
- Entrepreneurial Studies
- Floor and Framing Skills
- Foundation Skills
- Nail Technology
- Tourism
- Viticulture
- Web Design Technician

### *Non-Credit Programs*

We also offer a full range of non-credit programs.

Continuing Education provides opportunities for lifelong learning, ranging from fun recreation programs to assistance in getting ready for college. We offer alternative high schools, adult basic education, and English as a second language classes. We also provide vocational programs and mandatory continuing education for professions licensed or certified by the state.

Economic Development focuses on meeting the needs of business and industry in the district.

We provide training for new and current employees through job training programs, custom contract training, and consulting services. In addition, we provide innovative retraining programs for workers who have lost their jobs due to plant closings or layoffs.

Table 0-2 lists our non-credit offerings.

***Table 0-2 Non-Credit Programs***

**Continuing Education – Adult Basic Education**
- Alternative High Schools
- PAVE Program (special education)
- Adult Basic Education
- GED Testing
- English as a Second Language

**Continuing Education – Vocational Areas**
- Agriculture
- Business
- Computer Training
- Health Occupations
- Family and Consumer Science
- Industrial Technology
- Office Occupations

**Continuing Ed – Mandatory Occupational Training**
- Accountants
- Audiologists
- Cosmetologists
- Dentists
- Dental Hygienists
- Dental Assistants
- Dieticians
- Funeral Directors
- Insurance Agents
- Lawyers
- Medical Examiners
- Nursing Home Administrators
- Pharmacists
- Physical Therapists
- Psychologists
- Realtors
- Respiratory Therapists
- Social Workers
- Speech Pathologists
- Water/Waste Operators

**Economic Development**
- Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E)
- Iowa Jobs Training Program (206F)
- Consulting and Custom Training
- Jobs Re-Training

**03 Student Base, Needs, and Requirements**

Our credit programs are open to all students. In FY 2005, we had an unduplicated credit enrollment of 6,951 students.

Most of our students come from within the district. In FY 2005, 92% of our students were Iowa residents and 8% were from other places. Less than 1% were from other countries. Table 0-3 shows a breakdown of student residency.

**Table 0-3  Student Residency**

| Residency – FY 2005 | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Iowa* | *Other States* | *Foreign* |
| 6,402 | 529 | 46 |

NICC students are very homogenous, with the overwhelming majority being non-Hispanic Whites. Table 0-4 shows student ethnicity, although it is worth noting that when asked, many students left the question blank.

**Table 0-4  Student Ethnicity**

| Ethnicity – FY 2005 | | |
|---|---|---|
| *White* | *Black* | *Hispanic* |
| 4,859 | 86 | 46 |
| *Asian* | *American Indian* | *Unknown* |
| 32 | 23 | 1,905 |

Like other community colleges, NICC tends to attract more female than male students. In fact, 62% of credit students are women, and 38% are men. Table 0-5 shows students by gender.

**Table 0-5  Gender Balance**

| Gender – FY 2005 | |
|---|---|
| *Female* | *Male* |
| 4,323 | 2,628 |

The majority of NICC students are traditional students under the age of 23. In FY 2005, traditional students accounted for 64% of the student body. The remaining 36% were non-traditional students age 23 or over. Less than 1% of students were over the age of 55. Table 0-6 shows a breakdown of student ages.

**Table 0-6  Age Groups**

| Age Groups – Fall 2005 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *17 + under* | *18-22* | *23-26* | *27-30* |
| 978 | 3,485 | 805 | 427 |
| *31-39* | *40-55* | *56 +* | *Unknown* |
| 596 | 609 | 36 | 15 |

While NICC has a strong head count of traditional students, it is important to note that many of these younger students take courses while in high school, then move on to other colleges.

In fact, much of our growth in enrollment in recent years is due to an explosion of high schools students taking college-level courses. Between fall 2001 and fall 2005, our enrollment grew from 3,621 to 4,833. High school students accounted for 81% of this enrollment growth.

Another trend is a dramatic growth in the number of part-time students. Between fall 2001 and fall 2005, the number of part-time students grew from 1,655 to 2,672. During the same period, the number of full-time students only increased from 1,966 to 2,161. This means that part-time students accounted for 84% of our enrollment growth.

There are several reasons for this shift towards part-time enrollment. One is the number of high school students enrolling in college classes. By nature, these students are part-time. Another is a drop in the number of high school seniors, leading to a smaller pool from which to draw full-time students. A third is a healthy regional economy, leading to low levels of unemployment and fewer adults enrolling in college full-time.

Table 0-7 shows the number of students enrolled in credit courses by campus.

**Table 0-7 Enrollment by Campus**

| Calmar – Fall 2005 | | | Peosta – Fall 2005 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Full-time* | *Part-time* | *Total* | *Full-time* | *Part-time* | *Total* |
| 879 | 1,262 | 2,141 | 1,282 | 1,410 | 2,692 |

In addition to credit enrollment, NICC has substantial enrollment in non-credit programs. In FY 2005, we counted 47,856 enrollments in non-credit programs. Of these, 25,258 were unduplicated. Our non-credit students accounted for 496,910 hours of training. Table 0-8 shows enrollment in non-credit programs.

**Table 0-8 Non-Credit Student Enrollment**

| Non-Credit Students – FY 2005 | |
|---|---|
| Vocational-Technical Programs | 17,390 |
| Adult Basic Education | 1,441 |
| Continuing and General Education | 3,251 |
| Recreational Programs | 1,962 |
| Other | 4,973 |

Both our credit and non-credit programs respond to the needs of our students. Their needs are consistent with our mission. Students want

accessible and affordable high-quality education and training. Specifically, they expect:

- Open access
- Quality instruction and services
- Affordable tuition and fees
- Financial aid and scholarships
- State-of-the-art technology and facilities
- A flexible delivery schedule
- A variety of delivery methods, including face-to-face and online instruction
- Developmental programs
- Honors and leadership development activities
- Extracurricular activities
- Career planning and placement
- Seamless transfer to colleges and universities
- Opportunities for lifelong learning

## 04 Collaborations

At NICC, we cultivate a variety of external and internal collaborative relationships.

*Educational Partners* - We work closely with the 26 K-12 school districts in the region to deliver contracted classes and post-secondary enrollment options (PSEOs) to high school students. We collaborate with other community colleges on statewide initiatives and specific educational programs. We maintain guaranteed transfer agreements with the three Iowa Regent institutions and five private colleges. We also have developed joint admissions agreements with several of these colleges.

*Business Partners* - NICC maintains strong ties with business and industry. Several of them provide significant support to our vocational programs. A prime example is the John Deere Agricultural Technician program. The John Deere Corporation provides state-of-the-art equipment for the program, and John Deere dealers sponsor specific students.

We collaborate with Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations throughout the district to create new jobs and provide workforce training. Our Town Clock Center in Dubuque provides professional development opportunities for business and industry. For instance, it hosts the Northeast Iowa Business Accelerator. The business accelerator provides assistance to entrepreneurs who want to start a business or expand an existing one.

In addition, business and industry play an active role in our educational programs by serving on program advisory boards and offering students internships and on-the-job training.

*Administrative and Legislative Partners*
Our relationships with administrative agencies and legislators are very important to us. We work with AQIP and the Higher Learning Commission to maintain accreditation, set high standards, and engage in continuous improvement. We also work with agencies to gain or maintain accreditation of specific programs.

We maintain frequent contact with state and federal legislators. We share the impact of community colleges on individuals and communities in their district. They, in turn, offer insight into funding priorities and the political process surrounding higher education.

*Resource Development Partners* - The NICC Foundation serves as our primary vehicle for maintaining relationships with contributors. The foundation accepts small and large gifts from individuals, civic groups, foundations, businesses, and industries.

*Other External Partners* - We work closely with public and private agencies that help students overcome obstacles to getting a post-secondary education.

*Internal Partners* - We promote internal collaboration by engaging all employees in planning and decision making. All departments submit an annual action plan to three college-wide committees. The three committees review the plans to make sure they match NICC's vision, mission, and strategic plan. They prioritize them before passing them on the President and Cabinet for consideration.

We also maintain a number of committees in charge of ongoing issues, such as curriculum and faculty development. We develop ad hoc committees as needed.

## 05 Faculty/Staff Base

NICC has many loyal faculty, support staff, and administrators. Average tenure is 11.9 years among full-time faculty, 10.8 years among full-time support staff, and 9.4 years among full-time administrators.

Our faculty consist of 36% full-time faculty, 6% full-time non-teaching faculty, 16% regular part-time instructors, and 42% adjunct instructors. Support staff include 62% full-time and 38% part-time staff. At the administrative level, 84% work full-time and 16% work part-time. Table 0-9 shows employees by employment status.

**Table 0-9 Employment Status**

| Status | Faculty | Support Staff | Professional |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Full-time* | 126 | 76 | 87 |
| *Full-time non-teaching* | 20 | - | - |
| *Part-time regular* | 57 | 47 | 16 |
| *Adjunct* | 144 | - | - |

NICC values education and tends to attract employees with solid educational backgrounds. More than 45% of our faculty and professional staff have a Master's degree or above, and 33% have a Bachelor's degree. Table 0-10 shows the education of faculty and professional staff.

**Table 0-10 Educational Level**

| Education | |
|---|---|
| Juris Doctor | 2 |
| Doctorate | 22 |
| Master's Degree | 152 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 110 |
| Associate Degree | 23 |
| Less than Associate Degree | 28 |
| TOTAL * | 337 |

*\* Not all adjunct faculty are counted in this total.*

There are two collective bargaining units at NICC: the NICC Higher Education Association and the NICC Support Staff Association. The two associations meet with a team from the college to negotiate annual contracts. To facilitate the negotiation process, we are looking at adopting interest-based bargaining. This method assumes that both parties have more common interests than conflicting ones.

## 06 Facilities, Equipment, Technology, and Regulatory Environment

NICC has a designated service area established by the Iowa Department of Education. The district has a population of 206,941 and covers 4,991 square miles, an area about the size of Connecticut. The district includes eight full counties and parts of five others.

*Facilities* - In order to cover this large area, NICC currently maintains two campuses and six centers. Our facilities are listed in Table 0-11.

**Table 0-11 Facilities**

**Calmar Campus**
- The Darwin L. Schrage Administration building (8,800 square feet) houses most of our administrative offices.
- The Student Union (10,000 square feet) is home to the cafeteria, book store, and most student services.
- Wilder Learning Resource Center (36,200 square feet) houses the library, learning support services, several classrooms, and an auditorium.
- Max Clark Hall (46,000 square feet) has classrooms, labs, and office space for the nursing, general education, and other programs.
- Industrial Technologies (60,500 square feet) includes labs, classrooms, and offices for vocational programs.
- The Agricultural Technology building (35,900 square feet) includes classrooms, labs, and office space for the John Deere program and other ag-related programs.
- Northeast Iowa Dairy Center (58,000 square feet) includes classrooms, offices, and a state-of-the-art dairy operation with milking and research facilities.
- The new Child Development Center (8,000 square feet) includes a child care facility, classrooms, and offices.

**Peosta Campus**
- The Peosta Campus Building (152,400 square feet) includes classrooms, labs, offices, student services as well as the library, book store, and cafeteria.
- The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (10,900 square feet) holds classrooms and training equipment for safety trainings.
- The Child Development Center (8,000 square feett) provides child care for up to 114 children.
- The Maintenance Building holds equipment.

**Centers**
- The Cresco Center is located in the small town of *Cresco*. It consists of two buildings. One holds an office area and six classrooms; the other is a shop/lab facility.
- The Oelwein Center is connected to the high school in *Oelwein* and consists of three classrooms and offices.
- The Chickasaw County Center is located in *New Hampton* and consists of a classroom and office space.
- The Delaware County Center is located in *Manchester* and holds one classroom and an office.
- The Dubuque Center is a three-story facility in *Dubuque*. Because of its focus on adult education, it houses a large learning center, classrooms, and computer labs.
- The Town Clock Center in *Dubuque* has state-of-the-art classrooms, computer labs, and conference facilities.

*Technology* - NICC seeks to provide a robust and reliable technology system for students and employees. We maintain 1,442 computers on the college network. Students have access to 38 computer labs of various sizes. We also offer wireless networks at Calmar and Peosta.

Over the last two years, we have moved all student records to Datatel. We have re-designed the NICC web site. We have also launched NICC Xpress, a web portal allowing students and employees easy access to courses, schedules, and grades.

*Health and Safety* - NICC is in compliance with all national, state, and local health and safety regulations. The Campus Crime Report shows no reportable crimes over the last five years. In the past year, we have updated our emergency plan, formed building emergency response teams, and conducted training exercises at all sites.

*Accreditation* - NICC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. We are seeking re-affirmation through AQIP. In addition, a number of our programs are nationally accredited.

## 07 Competitive Environment
While we work closely with other institutions, we also compete with them for the same students. Potential competitors are listed in Table 0-12.

*Table 0-12  Academic Competitors*

| Private Four-Year Colleges |
| --- |
| • Luther College |
| • Upper Iowa University |
| • Loras College |
| • Clarke College |
| • University of Dubuque |
| **Universities** |
| • Iowa State University |
| • University of Iowa |
| • University of Northern Iowa |
| **Community Colleges and Technical Schools** |
| • Hawkeye Community College |
| • Kirkwood Community College |
| • Eastern Iowa Community College |
| • North Iowa Area Community College |
| • Southwest Wisconsin Technical Institute |
| **Online Universities** |
| • University of Phoenix |
| • Capella University |

We have limited competition for our non-credit programs. Many clubs and organizations provide recreational programs, but the need is so great that they do not pose a threat to our continuing education programs. We receive strong legislative support for workforce development initiatives through the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training (260E) and Iowa Jobs Training (260F) programs.

## 08 Opportunities and Vulnerabilities
Since joining AQIP, we have focused on creating a culture of continuous improvement. We have conducted numerous assessments to identify our most important opportunities and threats. Table 0-12 identifies our top priorities.

*Table 0-12 Priority Issues*

| Top 5 Vulnerabilities |
| --- |
| In the next three years, we need to address the following vulnerabilities: |
| 1. A drop in the number of graduating high school seniors |
| 2. An increase in part-time enrollment accompanied by a decrease in full-time enrollment |
| 3. Aging facilities |
| 4. Heavy reliance on state aid and tuition and fees |
| 5. Limited other resources to develop new programs and offset fluctuations in enrollment |

| Top 5 Opportunities |
| --- |
| In the next three years, we are primed to take advantage of the following opportunities: |
| 1. Engaging all members of NICC in continuous quality improvement through a new annual planning process. |
| 2. Addressing changes in enrollment by developing and implementing a Strategic Enrollment Plan. |
| 3. Developing and implementing an Educational Master Plan to ensure quality and consistency of educational offerings. |
| 4. Securing funding to implement our Master Facilities Plan, including remodeling of existing facilities and construction of new facilities. |
| 5. Establishing new partnerships to meet the changing workforce needs of the district, including exploring new programs in the bio-technology field. |

# Category 1:  Helping Students Learn

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 1C1  Common Student Learning Objectives

All learning at NICC is based on 12 common student learning objectives.  These objectives were developed in 1997 by the Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Committee.  The committee no longer exists, but the student learning objectives still stand.

The 12 objectives are common to every student at NICC, regardless of program.  Together they represent the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are essential for students to succeed in life and in work.  All credit courses meet one or more of these objectives.

Table 1-1 shows the 12 common learning objectives and their associated outcomes.

*Table 1-1  Common Student Learning Objectives*

| Learning Objectives |
| --- |
| At the end of their course of study at NICC, all students will be able to: |
| **1.   Communicate effectively.** |
| Students will show effective use of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. |
| **2.   Understand cultures and their interrelationships.** |
| Students will recognize differences between cultures and how those cultures may impact each other. |
| **3.   Locate, interpret, and use information effectively.** |
| Students will show proficiency in research methods. They will know how to locate information from various sources; analyze and evaluate information; arrange and classify information; and communicate their results with accuracy, clarity, and a sense of purpose. |
| **4.   Understand themselves and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills.** |
| Students will show the ability to accurately assess their strengths and limitations through the exploration of personal values, attitudes, preferences, and communication styles.  They will practice these skills in the areas of decision making, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and team building. |
| **5.   Demonstrate critical thinking skills.** |
| Students will demonstrate comprehension and application of course concepts and principles.  They will develop, express, test, and evaluate ideas.  They will analyze and evaluate problems.  They will clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. |
| **6.   Demonstrate respect, dignity, and moral and ethical decision making.** |
| Students will recognize their responsibility to improve the world by respecting the rights, values, and beliefs of others. |

| Learning Objectives |
| --- |
| **7.   Understand the principles of mathematics, science, and technology.** |
| Students will demonstrate basic mathematical principles in practical and applied settings.  They will use the basic processes involved in uncovering the secrets of nature.  They will assimilate and apply the knowledge needed to meet workplace goals. |
| **8.   Appreciate literature, history, and the arts.** |
| Students will appreciate the impact of the arts, literature, and history on the human community. |
| **9.   Embrace lifelong learning.** |
| Students will understand the role that learning plays in a successful life and will take responsibility for their own learning. |
| **10.   Promote personal and community wellness.** |
| Students will build awareness of the environment.  They will explore socio-cultural factors in wellness and recognize threats to human wellness. |
| **11.   Develop workforce skills.** |
| Students will develop competency in general education courses and in specialized program courses in technical and transfer areas. |
| **12.   Understand technological and social changes.** |
| Students will recognize how world affairs cause changes in business and industry.  They will participate in collaborative projects that breach different disciplines and cultures.  They will gain competence in using technology to complete projects. |

In addition to the common student learning objectives, most programs have specific learning objectives.  This is especially true in the vocational-technical area.  In some cases, we develop these in collaboration with the appropriate accrediting, certifying, or licensing agency.  In others we ask the program advisory board for assistance.  The board helps us define the knowledge and skills students need to meet entry-level requirements in their chosen field.

While the common student learning objectives apply to every credit student at NICC, they do not extend to our non-credit side.  Our continuing education programs and customized training programs for business and industry usually fill a specific need.  The learning objectives are unique for each program.

### 1C2  Alignment with Mission

At NICC all activities and planning start with our mission, vision, and philosophy.  They provide a foundation for our current educational programs and practices – and serve as a springboard for all future programs.

Our vision incorporates our philosophy. It states: "The NICC educational community will live the values of service, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity within a culture of continuous improvement." We use these values to guide our expectations for our programs and our students.

NICC's mission is to "provide accessible, affordable, quality education and training to meet the needs of our communities."

Our central focus is to provide education and training through our credit and non-credit programs. We maintain an open-door policy and reasonable tuition and fees so that any individual in our district has the opportunity to get a college education. At the same time we take great pride in providing education and training programs focused on quality. Our goal is to prepare students to transfer to a four-year college or university or enter the job market, fully prepared to meet the needs of the workforce.

Many of our students are underprepared to enter college so our first task is to help them adapt to the college culture and higher expectations. We offer a supportive environment in which students can work on acquiring the skills they need to succeed. Prospective students take a placement test and, if needed, enroll in a developmental class. These classes blend seamlessly with the rest of our college classes. They allow students to "catch up" in one area while taking transfer-level courses in others.

As we review existing programs and consider new ones, we make sure they match our mission, vision, and philosophy.

- Our Vice President of Academic Affairs oversees the process of new program development. Before considering new programs, the Vice President revisits the mission and vision to make sure the idea fits into the philosophical framework of NICC.

- The Curriculum Committee monitors course guides to ensure that they match our mission, vision, and philosophy. The committee reviews and approves new course guides and changes to existing ones.

- Faculty use the course guides and the common and program-specific learning objectives to design their courses. They often include the course guide objectives in their syllabus. Many also establish additional objectives to clearly communicate the standards they have set for their course. These, too, closely align with the college mission and vision.

## 1C3 Instructional Programs and Methods

At NICC, we offer students a variety of educational opportunities through our degree, diploma, certificate, continuing education, and customized training programs.

At the center of our operation are the educational programs that lead to a degree, diploma, and certificate. They include:

- Associate in Arts (AA)
- Associate in Science (AS)
- Associate in Science–Career Option (ASCO)
- Associate in Applied Science (AAS)
- Vocational-Technical Diploma
- Vocational-Technical Certificate

Our key instructional programs are in general studies, nursing and allied health, business and industry, agriculture and dairy, criminal justice, and computer technology and support. Table 1-2 shows our largest programs.

*Table 1-2  Largest Programs by Enrollment*

**Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)**

|        | FY2001 | FY2002 | FY2003 | FY2004 | FY2005 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Calmar | 169    | 207    | 304    | 312    | 275    |
| Peosta | 183    | 264    | 326    | 352    | 325    |
| Total  | 352    | 471    | 630    | 664    | **600** |

**Associate in Arts (AA)**

|        | FY2001 | FY2002 | FY2003 | FY2004 | FY2005 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Calmar | 171    | 159    | 193    | 195    | 154    |
| Peosta | 498    | 504    | 437    | 476    | 414    |
| Total  | 669    | 663    | 630    | 671    | **568** |

**Business Specialist (AAS)**

|        | FY2001 | FY2002 | FY2003 | FY2004 | FY2005 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Calmar | 46     | 42     | 31     | 39     | 37     |
| Peosta | 65     | 89     | 91     | 99     | 103    |
| Total  | 111    | 131    | 122    | 138    | **140** |

**Criminal Justice (AA)**

|        | FY2001 | FY2002 | FY2003 | FY2004 | FY2005 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Calmar | 13     | 17     | 23     | 37     | 46     |
| Peosta | 40     | 72     | 70     | 68     | 67     |
| Total  | 53     | 89     | 93     | 105    | **116** |

Other large programs include:

- Computer Analyst
- Radiology Technology
- Health Information Technology
- Business Administration
- Education
- Dairy Science
- Agriculture
- John Deere Agricultural Technician
- Automotive Technology

In order to meet the needs of our students, we deliver our courses in a variety of formats.

- We offer traditional classroom and lab instruction.

- We deliver some courses over the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), a statewide fiber optic network linking classrooms in various sites via live television.  The ICN helps students get access to classroom instruction close to home.  For instance, the instructor may teach in an ICN room in Peosta – and still reach students in ICN rooms in Waukon and Cresco more than 100 miles away.

- We offer online courses using WebCT.  This allows students to access courses from any location at any time of day and night.

- We have recently added several hybrid classes that combine an online component with a traditional classroom component. Hybrid courses offer students the flexibility of an online environment.  At the same time they enjoy the benefits of a traditional course, including class discussion, activities, and the opportunity to build "face to face" relationships with their instructor and fellow students.

- We offer several televised courses.

- We also offer students an independent study option, but only after we have exhausted other options.  Called "special arrangement," this option allows students to complete a course under faculty supervision.

- We give students the opportunity to complete an occupational experience with a cooperating business.  These internships give students direct experience in their chosen field.

- Finally, some of our health programs require students to complete a clinical experience.

Table 1-3 shows the number of courses offered in each format during spring 2006.

*Table 1-3  Course Delivery Methods*

| Delivery Method | Sections Offered | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Calmar | Peosta |
| Lecture | 175 | 198 |
| Combined lecture and lab (includes clinicals) | 102 | 106 |
| Lab | 23 | 25 |
| ICN | 84 | 83 |
| Online | 65 | 65 |
| Hybrid | 1 | 2 |
| Televised | 2 | 2 |
| Special arrangement | 10 | 5 |
| Occupational experience | 16 | 11 |

Technology plays an important role in all our delivery methods.  Some courses rely entirely on technology, and others incorporate it.  For instance, our new NICC Xpress web portal makes it easy to add an online component to a traditional course.  It allows instructors to post announcements, set up message boards, and have students submit journal entries and assignments online.

**1C4  Preparation for a Diverse World and Accommodation of Learning Styles**
At NICC we place great value on diversity and individuality.  Our goal is to respect diversity in our students and to help prepare all students to live and work in a diverse world.  This also means teaching students in a way that meets their learning needs.

We start by preparing our faculty to understand and respond effectively to students with diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, and learning styles.

- New faculty have the opportunity to participate in an orientation program.  The program calls attention to student demographics, diversity, learning styles, and options for accommodations.

- All full-time and part-time regular faculty are required to meet the criteria in the Quality

Faculty Plan. This includes taking two out of three courses for initial certification. They include History of the Community College, Diverse Learners, and Teaching Methods and Evaluation. All of these courses include information on diversity and learning styles.

- New faculty have an opportunity to join our Faculty Mentoring Program. The program links a new instructor with an experienced faculty member who can share ideas about classroom management, instruction, assessment, diversity, and learning styles.

- All new full-time and part-time regular instructors are evaluated two times per year for the first three years. Their supervising Dean observes one of their sessions and provides written and oral feedback. This feedback helps instructors identify where they shine and where they can improve in terms of meeting student needs.

- All full-time and regular part-time faculty are invited to participate in our fall and spring workshops. Many of these workshops focus on student diversity and learning styles.

### Preparing Students for Diversity

One of our central goals is to prepare students to work in a global environment. This is especially important with the interconnected global economy and the changing demographics of our region. Many students have personal experience with mergers, layoffs, and outsourcing, and this fuels their interest in learning how to survive and thrive in the local and global community.

We seek to bring global issues into all our learning experiences. For instance, in addition to learning about American health care practices, our nursing students learn about other ways to provide health care. They may explore cross-cultural variations in health and disease concepts. They may debate whether health care should be a business or government responsibility. In addition to understanding the mechanics of cars, our auto technology students consider the impact of our reliance on oil and explore new technologies, such as hybrid cars and hydrogen fuel.

Most courses incorporate issues related to diversity. Some instructors add information

about the contributions of various cultural and ethnic groups. Others look for textbooks with chapters on special populations. Still others completely transform their course to make it more multicultural. They prefer primary sources, including original texts, oral sources, and guest speakers. Some of these sources may be divergent, presenting students with the challenge of seeing the world from different perspectives and finding their own place in the world.

In addition to incorporating a global perspective and multicultural content into our courses, we promote diversity in the following ways:

- Invite students to serve on our Diversity Committees.

- Sponsor diversity activities on special occasions and throughout the year. For instance, NICC purposefully does not use Martin Luther King Day as a holiday. Instead, faculty and staff use the day to infuse diversity awareness into classroom and campus activities.

- Celebrate Diversity Week with daily immersion activities, including guest speakers, exhibits, movies, and discussion led by faculty and students.

- Sponsor monthly student discussion forums on diversity issues, such as racism and how to meet the challenges of living with mental and physical disabilities.

- Sponsor a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) on the Peosta campus.

- Sponsor field trips to events celebrating diversity.

- Offer international travel options for students.

- Offer a program called Ventures that gives students incentives and/or extra credit for attending events that expand their horizons and get them out of their comfort zone.

### Accommodating Learning Styles

We carefully consider the learning style of each student. We know that their unique learning style affects the way they receive, process, evaluate, and integrate information.

We want all students to have the opportunity to request accommodations. Some students enter college without ever having been identified with a disability. They may have learned to "hide" or compensate for the disability, but it still exists and encumbers their progress.

In order to encourage students to seek help, we ask all faculty to include an accommodations statement in their syllabi. The statement simply makes students aware of where to go if they believe they need accommodations. This sometimes opens the door for addressing an issue for the first time.

We also bring up accommodations to all new and prospective students. We let them know that any student with an identified disability can request accommodations, in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). We offer the following accommodations:

- Books on tape
- Large print books
- Braille books
- Sign language interpretation
- Testing accommodations, including having a test reader, working in a quiet room, and having extended time to complete tests
- Note takers
- Peer tutors
- Mobility assistance
- Taped lectures
- TTY (text telephone) or TDD (telecommunication device for the deaf)
- Assistive technology

Our Learning Centers coordinate all accommodations. They work directly with instructors by sending them an accommodations statement, describing exactly what needs to be offered to a particular student. They are only a phone call away when instructors want to consult about what they can do to better serve a student with disabilities.

We maintain Learning Centers at Calmar and Peosta, but also in our Dubuque Center. The Dubuque Center serves a large population of adults with basic education needs.
The Learning Centers provide more than accommodations; they are a place for all students to make the most of their learning experience. The Learning Centers provide professional staff who can assist students with

coursework. They link students with peer tutors. They provide access to computers and assistive technology. Many students find the Learning Centers to be quiet and productive places to work, both for individuals and small groups.

For the past year, a district-wide Learning Center Task Force has worked on reviewing Learning Center services to ensure that they meet student needs and improve academic outcomes. Once we have a full report, we will consider recommendations to make the Learning Centers even more effective in responding to students and helping them learn.

Students at NICC are also fortunate to have access to Writing Centers at Calmar and Peosta. The Writing Centers focus specifically on helping students with writing, from working on basic sentence skills to proofreading final drafts of papers. By working one-on-one with a writing tutor, students gain confidence and skills and often start expressing themselves in a much more sophisticated manner.

In addition to encouraging students to use our Learning and Writing Centers, we incorporate the following steps to accommodate their individual learning styles:

- Offer classes in various formats, including classroom instruction and online delivery.

- Keep class sizes small so that faculty work more closely with each student.

- Encourage faculty to use a variety of teaching methods to appeal to different learners, including those with a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preference. For instance, faculty may combine lecture, audio or video tapes, small group discussion, and hands-on activities, all in one session.

- Allow faculty to arrange the physical environment in ways that appeal to different learning styles. For instance, they may use traditional lecture arrangement with straight rows of tables and chairs. They may arrange desks in a circle or horseshoe format to promote whole class discussion, or in clusters to promote small group projects. They may even push them all aside to make room for physical or hands-on activities.

- Offer labs for hands-on learning.

- Provide classroom technology that allows faculty to use a variety of teaching methods. For instance, most classrooms include an LCD projector, a DVD player, a VCR, a television, and an overhead projector. Some classrooms also have laptop computers.

## 1C5  Intellectual Environment

NICC is committed to providing an inclusive community for both students and employees. All members of the college are responsible for creating an atmosphere that fosters openness, mutual respect, and diversity. By practicing these values every day, we expect students to be well prepared to live and work in a diverse world when they graduate.

### *Non-Discrimination*

We maintain strong policies and practices against discrimination of any kind. Our Statement of Non-Discrimination states that it is the policy of NICC "not to illegally discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices." The same statement goes a step further by setting clear expectations for the college curriculum. It states:

> *"It is the policy of this district that the curriculum and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women and men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a pluralistic society."*

The Statement of Non-Discrimination clearly sets the tone for an open environment that supports and encourages the expression of ideas. We support the open expression of ideas through many avenues, including:

- Classroom discussion
- *Northeastern Press* student newspaper
- Student forums
- Faculty and staff forums

- Public displays, such as bulletin boards and display cases

### *Intellectual Freedom and Inquiry*

Like most colleges, NICC promotes intellectual freedom.

Intellectual freedom exists within a certain level of structure. Structure comes from program and course guides. These are carefully aligned with those of other institutions, through articulation agreements and common course numbering. It is important that we "deliver" what we promise when working with other institutions.

We also seek a certain level of consistency within our institution. Our new Vice President of Academic Affairs has started the process of reviewing programs to make sure that they are consistent across campuses. For instance, if we offer a program at Peosta, we need to make sure the program follows the same guidelines and requirements at Calmar.

As long as faculty meet program guidelines and course guides, they have almost unlimited freedom to express their ideas.

We encourage faculty to share ideas with each other, within and between departments. This happens both formally and informally. Faculty members often debate ideas over lunch or during breaks. They continue these debates in department meetings, during faculty workshops, and during the annual department planning process. When sparks fly, we know that we have a healthy intellectual environment that supports the free expression of ideas.

Faculty also enjoy intellectual freedom in their classrooms. They are free to put their "personal imprint" on courses by using the teaching style that best matches their personality, and by sharing their unique interests. Some of the best courses develop when faculty members can share their passions, whether it be taking apart computers or pondering ethical dilemmas.

There are very few restrictions on faculty. Board Policy 618 is one of the few policies posing any restrictions on what is said in the classroom. The policy provides criteria for teaching controversial topics. They are simple and straightforward. Controversial issues must fit the curriculum. They must be current,

significant, and of interest to students. They must come within the range of knowledge, maturity, and competence of students. Finally, faculty must present both sides of the issue and devote only the amount of time needed for a satisfactory study of the issue.

The main concern of Board Policy 618 is to avoid indoctrination of students when it comes to religious or sectarian beliefs. Faculty are encouraged to express their opinion as long as they let students know that they are opinions, not authoritative answers.

We encourage both faculty and students to pursue new ideas. We do this by supporting students in taking general education courses in the liberal arts. We also offer several interdisciplinary courses. Interdisciplinary courses help students see issues from more than one perspective and promote a healthy debate of ideas. Finally, one of our faculty members is exploring the idea of bringing learning communities to NICC. This, too, offers an exciting opportunity to test new ideas.

### Reflection
Reflection is a very important part of college-level learning. It encourages students to take ideas, evaluate them, and apply them to their personal and professional lives. Many instructors use journal writing to encourage students to engage in reflection. Others use class discussion or ask students to write reflective papers at the end of each unit.

Another important strategy at NICC is portfolios. Many instructors use portfolios to encourage students to showcase their work and reflect on their learning. Instructors use portfolios in courses ranging from writing to nursing.

### Intellectual Property
NICC promotes respect for intellectual property, and we emphasize this to both students and employees.

An important area of concern with faculty is who owns online course materials. The faculty contract clearly spells this out. It states that NICC retains ownership of the course description and title, course objectives and outcomes, and the general course guide representing the course. The instructor who developed the course retains ownership of

specific teaching materials, including course syllabus, assignments, activities, and tests. The instructor has the right of first refusal to train other instructors to teach the same course using the materials he or she developed.

Copyright is another concern. NICC expects all faculty and students to abide by copyright and fair use laws. We expect individuals to create their own work in an honest and ethical manner, without "borrowing" or "stealing" the ideas of others.

We introduce students to the idea of intellectual property in our new student orientation. We let students know that ideas are a form of property, and that when they use them, they need to give proper credit.

We repeat the same message in the college catalog. It states, "Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any course at NICC. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are examples of such dishonesty and will result in serious consequences."

Instructors typically include a statement on plagiarism in their syllabi. They define plagiarism to help students understand what it is. They explain that individuals engage in plagiarism when they present another's ideas as their own, use direct quotes without quotation marks, and use indirect quotes without citing the source. In addition, most instructors spell out consequences for engaging in plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a growing issue at NICC, as it is on all college campuses. This is, in part, due to the massive amount of information available on the Internet. Many students "cut and paste" from Internet sources, neglecting to properly cite their sources. Only a few go as far as to purchase or download free essays from the Internet.

Our primary concern is that our students learn information literacy and respect intellectual property rights. In order to curb plagiarism, NICC subscribes to a plagiarism prevention and detection service called *turnitin.com*. This service allows faculty and students to submit essays and get an instant "plagiarism report." The report even provides color-coded links to the sources of lifted information.

When faculty catch a student plagiarizing, they file a report with the appropriate Dean. The

Dean sends a letter to the student and files the report in the student's file. If there are repeated cases of plagiarism, the student is placed on academic probation and eventually suspended.

However, in most cases faculty use *turnitin.com* as a teaching tool to help students prevent plagiarism. Many students simply are unaware how to appropriately cite or paraphrase information. By submitting an early draft, they can revise the draft to be plagiarism-free by the time they turn it in for a grade.

## PROCESSES

### 1P1 Determination of Common Student Learning Objectives

Our Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Committee wrote the common student learning objectives in 1997. This committee was district-wide and included both administrators and faculty. Coming up with the common student learning objectives was a lengthy process involving research and discussion in an attempt to define, "What are the qualities we want to see in our graduates when they leave NICC?"

In addition to the common student learning objectives, we maintain specific learning objectives for each program. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean overseeing the program take the lead in determining these objectives. If it is an existing program, they work closely with faculty to come up with appropriate objectives. If it is a new program, they usually create an advisory board composed of experts from the field.

Since our programs do not exist in isolation, we collaborate with accrediting and licensing agencies, transfer institutions, and business and industry.

- If the program is accredited, certified, or licensed, it must meet specific standards. We use these standards to develop learning objectives for the program.

- The program and its courses also need to meet the expectations of transfer institutions. When we develop articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities, the receiving institutions often provide learning objectives that help maintain consistency in transfer-level courses.

- Our advisory boards play a critical role in determining program-specific learning objectives in our vocational and technical programs. They specifically help determine the student learning outcomes that serve as the culminating demonstration of learning as applied in the workplace. These objectives are meant to meet or exceed business and industry expectations and standards.

Each program maintains course guides that list course-specific learning objectives. The Curriculum Committee oversees these course guides and approves any additions, deletions, and revisions. This ensures a common standard across the institution.

### 1P2 Design of New Courses and Programs

One of the hallmarks of the community college is its ability to respond to community needs. This is true for NICC as well. We constantly review local, state, and national demographic and workforce trends to determine how we can best serve our communities.

For instance, northeast Iowa is seeing a growing trend in local vineyards and wineries. Four years ago we joined the Viticulture and Enology Science and Technology Alliance (VESTA), a partnership of colleges, universities, vineyards, wineries, and state agricultural agencies offering education in grape growing and wine-making. We now offer certificates and AAS degrees in Viticulture and Enology for those interested in joining the rapidly growing wine industry as skilled workers or entrepreneurs.

Another new initiative is the establishment of a Gas Utility Construction and Service program at Peosta. This program is a collaboration between NICC and Aquila, Alliant Energy, and Infrasource. Students in the program will learn to install, maintain, and operate natural and propane gas distribution systems. We currently offer a diploma, but will expand to include an AAS degree in the near future.

The most important part of starting a new program is verifying that a need does, in fact, exist. Administrators and faculty carefully review trend data to make sure that the new program will meet an anticipated job market. We may establish an ad hoc advisory board with experts from around the state to help us determine the feasibility of starting a new program.

We follow the same process when we develop new programs as we do when we develop program-specific learning objectives:

- New programs that must meet accreditation or licensing requirements have predetermined standards for content and credit hours. These requirements drive curriculum development.

- Employers in the identified market provide information on needed competencies. We make sure to build these competencies into the curriculum.

- Transfer institutions provide information about needed courses. Again, we make sure to add these to the curriculum so that new programs provide the opportunity for a smooth transfer to a four-year college.

Our Curriculum Committee plays a vital role in developing new programs and courses. The committee participates in the initial design and final approval of all programs and courses. When committee members receive a proposal, they look to see if the program or course meets a community need, fills a gap in educational offerings, and promotes student learning.

Student learning is at the center of new program and course design. We look at the demographics of students likely to enter the program and plan our activities accordingly. For instance, some programs may tend to attract displaced workers; others may appeal more to recent high school graduates planning to transfer to a four-year school.

We also consider the learning styles of our students when we design new programs and courses. For instance, we look at new instructional technologies to see if they will enhance student learning. When needed, we provide professional development opportunities for faculty to enhance their teaching skills and learn about new technologies. For instance, one of our faculty members recently completed training in how to use iPods and podcasting in general education courses.

**1P3  Determination of Student Preparation**
NICC has an open-door policy. This means that we are ready to serve students no matter what

their preparation. The question is never if, but how they fit into our educational programs.

Because of our commitment to open access, we need to have good screening tools in place to determine proper placement. We know that proper placement improves student success in meeting both common student learning objectives and course-specific objectives.

We use ACCUPLACER as our primary placement tool. Before enrolling, students must take the ACCUPLACER test for reading, writing, and math. High school students can take the test at their high school. Anyone else can take it at our Testing Centers.

Table 1-4 shows the cut-off scores used to determine placement in specific writing, reading, and math courses.

*Table 1-4  Placement Scores*

| | ACCUPLACER Score |
|---|---|
| **Writing** | |
| Communication – Reading and Writing Intensive ESL | 2-5 |
| Foundations of Writing | 6-7 |
| Composition I | 8-12 |
| **Reading** | |
| Communication - Reading and Writing | Below 66 |
| College Courses | 66-120 |
| **Math** | |
| Pre-Algebra Math Fundamentals | Arithmetic Test: Below 80 Elem. Algebra Test: Below 44 |
| Introductory Algebra | Arithmetic Test: 80-120 Elem. Algebra Test: 44-59 |
| Intermediate Algebra Math for Liberal Arts | Elem. Algebra Test:  60- |

When students come with other placement tests, such as the ACT, ASSET, or Compass, we use equivalency charts to determine their placement in NICC courses.

Some general education courses have specific prerequisites. For instance, in order to advance to higher-level communication classes, students must complete Composition I with a C- or better. If they fall below the qualifying grade, we ask them to take the course again.

In the same way, some program courses require specific prerequisites. It may be completion of a

course with a qualifying grade, or it may be a specific score on a placement test. Nursing students, for instance, must have a qualifying math score before they can enroll in the math-intensive Introduction to Pharmacology.

So, our philosophy is simple. While students may not be admitted to a particular program, they can always be admitted to the college. We give them plenty of opportunity to work towards meeting the entrance requirements of their desired program.

**1P4  Communication of Expectations**
NICC lets prospective and current students know about our expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives in a variety of ways.

First of all, we emphasize in all marketing materials that we are an open-door college that welcomes all learners. We want prospective students to know that we have a place for them. It is just a matter of finding out what they need.

It is easy for both current and prospective students to find information on the NICC web site (www.nicc.edu). The web site offers an easy-to-use menu designed with specific types of users in mind. For instance, there are links entitled "I am a current student," "I am a future student," and "I am a continuing education student." By following the appropriate path, students can easily find relevant information about admission, registration, and program and degree requirements.

Students can find most of the information in the NICC College Catalog on the NICC web site. However, many students still prefer to have a hard copy of the information.

The NICC College Catalog is easy to use. It offers sections on admission, financial aid, and graduation requirements. One of the most helpful parts for prospective and current students is the chapter called *Degree and Diploma Requirements*. It devotes a page to each diploma or degree program and describes entrance requirements, length of program, and recommended course sequence.

The entrance requirements vary by program. All students must complete ACCUPLACER testing to determine the appropriate placement in

writing, reading, and math courses. Some programs require additional paperwork before students can be admitted. For instance, the Human Services and Early Childhood programs require prospective students to complete criminal record and child/dependent adult abuse checks before admission. Nursing and allied health programs require the same record checks. They also require students to submit a current physical and up-to-date immunization records before they are allowed to start clinicals. The John Deere program requires students to provide proof of sponsorship from a dealer.

Students can find the same information in our program-specific brochures. Each brochure describes entrance requirements and graduation requirements.

At NICC, we find that personal communication is the best way to help prospective students understand our expectations. We maintain regular contact with every high school in our district. Our High School Relations Coordinator and Tech-Prep Coordinator promote general education and vocational programs. Our two Career Connections Coordinators work with prospective students to ease the transition from high school to college. All four make regular visits to high schools to share information with principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and prospective students.

One way that we share our expectations with high school students is to let them take the ACCUPLACER placement test at their high school. When students have the results, their registrar or guidance counselor can help them sign up for appropriate college-level courses. Some of these courses are offered at their high school; others require travel to one of our campuses or centers.

When prospective students come on campus, we have another opportunity to share our expectations with them. Our Student Enrollment Managers are happy to meet with prospective students and discuss possible programs with them. We also encourage prospective students to participate in *Welcome Wednesday*, a half-day event including a campus tour, visits with faculty, and information about admission, registration, and student support services.

We continue to have many points of contact with new students. Our Central Advising staff help

students cover program requirements and readiness issues.  They look at ACCUPLACER scores and place students in the appropriate reading, writing, and math courses.  Students also receive help from our Registrars, Counselors, and Adult Re-Entry Coordinators.  Every contact provides another opportunity to reinforce the same message – that we want students to succeed and that we have plenty of support services to help them do so.

Once students have been at NICC for a semester, they usually know what to expect and become more assertive in meeting their needs.  With our new web portal, students can register for courses online after meeting with their advisor.  If they try to register for a course without having the appropriate prerequisite, the computer will block their attempt, and they will have to go to the Registrar's Office.

**1P5  Assistance in Program Selection**
NICC is committed to helping students select a program that matches their needs, interests, and abilities.  We do this in several ways:

- Our Marketing Department develops clear and specific materials that accurately portray our programs and what it takes for students to succeed in those programs.

- Our Office of Admissions offers free interest inventories to help prospective students discover possible career paths.

- Central Advising helps students zero in on a program.  Students may start with a broad interest, such as agriculture.  As they learn more about our programs, they usually find one that meets their needs and interests.  For instance, one student may choose Agriculture Sales and Services; another may sign up for the John Deere Agricultural Technician program.

- Our Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Centers assist adult students in exploring potential careers.  Many of these students are laid-off workers and displaced farmers and homemakers entering college for the first time.  They may have excellent skills, but they often need a new look at career possibilities.  This may mean abandoning traditional gender expectations.  For instance, due to the great demand for

nurses in our region, a number of male students have made the leap into this traditionally female field.  In the same way, a number of female students have entered the traditionally male fields of computer technology, carpentry, and agriculture.

- Once students have chosen a field, their ACCUPLACER scores help us determine their level of preparation.  If students feel that their test result does not accurately reflect their abilities, they may retake the test up to two times within a year.  This gives them some room to improve if they had a "bad day."  Their score helps us place them in the appropriate courses.

- If students have a disability, we encourage them to seek accommodations.

- Finally, our attendance tracking and *Academic Alert* systems let us know if students are succeeding in their studies.  If they have trouble with attendance and grades, we offer support to help them get back on track.

**1P6  Effective Teaching and Learning**
Teaching is effective when students are engaged in their learning and make steady progress towards their goals.  For some this means completing a course for the first time; for others it means graduating with a two-year degree and pursuing other goals, such as transferring to a four-year college or finding employment in their field.

Effective teaching starts with the hiring process.  We look for candidates who have the appropriate education and experience to teach at the college level.  What sets successful candidates apart is that they love teaching and are passionate about their field.  Successful teachers show the kind of enthusiasm that sparks student engagement.

We measure and document effective teaching in several ways:

- All faculty develop a syllabus for each course, including course objectives, textbook and materials, assignments, and grading criteria.  Their Dean reviews the syllabus and offers feedback.

- Our Deans observe and evaluate new full-time and part-time regular faculty two times per year for the first three years, then once every three years. This gives faculty direct feedback on their teaching methods and suggestions for improvements.

- Our Deans keep an open-door policy and encourage students to share any concerns about their experience in specific courses. In most cases, the Dean directs them back to the instructor to address any issues and come up with an appropriate solution. If this is not possible, the Dean sits in as a mediator and helps the instructor and student reach some type of resolution.

- At the end of each semester, students fill out anonymous course evaluations. The evaluations measure student satisfaction with course objectives, classroom resources, and instructor performance. The supervising Dean reviews the course evaluations and provides the instructor with a written summary. Instructors are expected to use the information as a tool to revise and improve their courses.

- The Deans monitor program and course attrition rates. If there is a high rate of attrition in a course, the Dean tries to sort out contributing factors. Is there an issue with low attendance? Materials that are too complex? Inappropriate placement? Ineffective instruction? The Dean uses this analysis to work with the instructor to improve retention.

- We recently conducted our first Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The survey assesses the quality of education at community colleges. We look forward to receiving the results so that we can focus our efforts on educational practices that promote student learning and retention.

- Another measure of effective teaching is student success in meeting licensing and certification requirements. For instance, the nursing program closely tracks student pass rates on the nursing board exam. The pass rate directly reflects on the program. If there is a decline in pass rates, the Dean and faculty take a close look at why.

- We use program reviews to measure the effectiveness of our vocational-technical programs at least every five years. We look at enrollment, attrition, graduation, transfer, and employment rates.

- Following graduation, we send a *Graduate Outcome Survey* to solicit feedback from students. The survey queries students about their perception of the education they received and whether or not their expectations were met.

- We also send an *Employer Survey* to employers to gauge their perceptions of student knowledge and entry-level competencies. This gives us another level of feedback to determine if our teaching is effective in meeting the needs of students and employers.

**1P7  Effective Course Delivery System**
NICC seeks to provide an effective and efficient course delivery system. We involve a number of individuals in making decisions about course delivery. Table 1-5 shows the key players involved in creating an effective and efficient course delivery system.

*Table 1-5  Key Players in Instructional Delivery System*

| Employee | Role |
|---|---|
| Vice President of Academic Affairs | <ul><li>Consults with Deans to determine course offerings.</li><li>Determines number of courses and sections to be offered.</li><li>Ensures that delivery of curriculum is consistent with the strategic plan and program educational plans.</li></ul> |
| Provosts (2) | <ul><li>Determine faculty course loads.</li></ul> |
| Registrars (2) | <ul><li>Publish course schedule.</li><li>Manage enrollment in courses.</li></ul> |
| Deans (6) | <ul><li>Review course offerings to ensure that they align with department goals.</li><li>Ensure that courses are offered in sequence, with appropriate frequency.</li><li>Consult with faculty members to determine teaching assignments.</li><li>Hire adjunct faculty as needed.</li></ul> |
| Faculty | <ul><li>Participate in department-level planning related to course offerings.</li><li>Deliver courses.</li></ul> |

When we look at course delivery, we use some general principles to guide our decisions. We schedule general education courses during convenient times during fall and spring. We also

schedule key courses during Winterim (7 days), May Term (7 days), and summer session (12 weeks). These condensed courses allow students to fill gaps in their educational program. They also provide a convenient option for four-year students who are home on break.

It takes a little more work to schedule program-specific courses. Each program has an educational plan that specifies courses and course sequence. We review these plans to make sure we offer courses in sequence and at the appropriate frequency. In some cases this means once a semester or once year; in others it means every two years.

If a student is off track and needs a course to graduate, we allow for an independent study called Special Arrangement. This allows the student to complete course requirements under the supervision of a faculty member who normally teaches the same course.

We are currently revising our course delivery system to improve efficiency. In the past, we focused almost exclusively on the needs of our students, sometimes at the expense of the institution. We offered numerous sections of courses to meet the scheduling needs of our students. In some cases, we offered several morning, afternoon, evening, and online sections of the same course. This meant that we had to wait to see which courses would fill – and then close those with low numbers.

We are now adopting an approach called "precision scheduling." Precision scheduling means using data to analyze student needs and then targeting our courses to meet those needs. This creates a schedule that keeps students at the center, but cuts out waste. Precision scheduling has many advantages:

- It reduces the need to cancel or add sections at the last minute.

- It reduces last-minute hiring or re-assignment of faculty.

- It helps retain good adjunct faculty by offering them a fairly stable and predictable schedule.

**1P8  Curriculum Currency and Effectiveness**
NICC has a program review process that looks at programs on a rotational basis. All vocational programs go through a program review every five years. Some program reviews happen more often, as determined by licensing and certifying agencies.

A variety of individuals assist in a program review. Program faculty on both campuses compile data and fill out an evaluation report. They share their results with the supervising Dean. The Vice President of Academic Affairs oversees the program review process with the help of three faculty and staff members from other departments. During the program review, the panel has the opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the program.

The program review provides an opportunity to assess the currency and effectiveness of the program and its courses. The panel looks at enrollment data, graduation data, curriculum, feedback from students and employers, advisory board recommendations, labor trends, marketing strategies, and financial status. The goal is to highlight the strengths of the program and make recommendations for improvement.

If a program appears to be struggling, the Vice President of Academic Affairs can require a viability study. The viability study is an independent review of the program along with recommendations for improvement or suspension. This review helps Cabinet make a recommendation on the future of the program. If the recommendation is to suspend or discontinue the program, faculty are notified and consulted about other teaching opportunities if they are credentialed in another program.

**1P9  Learning Support Needs**
At NICC we assess and address student and faculty learning support needs in several ways.

- We use ACCUPLACER to determine student need for developmental courses.

- Our Learning Centers keep track of students needing accommodations. Some come with an individual education plan from high school; others come with a newly diagnosed disability. Learning Center staff design accommodation plans and pass them on to faculty. Faculty, in return, consult with Learning Center staff about how best to serve individuals with disabilities.

- Central Advising staff counsel students about schedules. This may include setting realistic expectations about course load and choosing an appropriate blend of courses.

- Our Counseling and Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career staff assist students in identifying other obstacles to pursuing an education. Students may have concerns about money, housing, transportation, child care, medical care, and legal issues. Staff provide referral to community resources and try to help students address issues that get in the way of learning.

- Another support for students is make-up testing. Make-up testing allows students to take a test in a supervised setting if they missed class the day of the test.

Perhaps the biggest learning support services for both students and faculty can be found in our Learning Centers, Writing Centers, and libraries.

### Learning Centers
Any student can access our Learning Centers at Calmar, Peosta, and the Dubuque Center. The Learning Centers provide professional staff who can help with homework in almost every field. They offer peer tutors for students who need them.

For faculty, the Learning Centers serve as an extension of their classroom. They can share their syllabus and assignments with Learning Center staff and ask them to support students in addressing specific challenges.

### Writing Centers
Both Calmar and Peosta have a designated Writing Center. The Writing Center is a popular place for students to get help with writing projects. Writing Center staff can assist with all stages of the writing process, from generating ideas to polishing the final assignment. Faculty often refer students to the Writing Center for help with persistent problems, such as run-on sentences and sentence fragments. When students have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a writing tutor, they often overcome lifelong problems with writing mechanics.

### Libraries
Library services play a major role in supporting learning at NICC. The Wilder Library on the Calmar campus holds more than 18,000 books,

275 periodicals, and 4,000 audio-visual titles. The Burton Payne Library at Peosta holds more than 13,000 print titles, 190 periodicals, and 2,000 audio-visual titles. Both libraries solicit input from faculty and students as to what types of resources would be helpful to them in their teaching and learning.

Our library staff are ready and available to help students and faculty. They are experts at locating materials on campus or through interlibrary loan. They offer library tours and introductions to the library's extensive collection of online databases.

Students and faculty can access many library resources online. For instance, they can use the library catalog and reserve books and other resources. They can access about 1,200 e-books. They can conduct academic research, using 17 subscriber databases, including EBSCO Host, SIRS Knowledge Source, and Opposing Viewpoints. If they get stuck, they can submit a form called *Ask a Librarian* and get online help from a reference librarian.

### 1P10 Alignment of Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities
At NICC, we seek to educate the whole person. We recognize that there is more to being a college student than just attending courses and working towards a degree. For many, it is a life-changing experience that involves a new way of looking at the world and themselves. Our goal is to support them in that process.

We provide a number of co-curricular activities designed to enhance the curriculum and help students develop.

*Honor Societies* – Both Calmar and Peosta maintain active chapters of Phi Theta Kappa, and Peosta has a chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma. By participating in these honor societies, students get opportunities extended learning, leadership positions, and campus and community service projects.

*Student Clubs* – Our student clubs provide opportunities for fellowship and extended learning. The two largest clubs are Business Professionals of America (BPA) and SkillsUSA. Other active clubs include the National Student Nurses' Association, National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, American

Association of Respiratory Care, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children, NICC Arboriculture League, NICC Dairy Science Club, Post-Secondary Agriculture Students Association, and Entrepreneurs Club. Students participating in some of these clubs travel to state and national conferences and competitions, thus testing and honing their skills and expanding their horizons. Many of our students return with state and national awards, and this fuels their interest in learning.

*Student Senate* – Each campus maintains a Student Senate comprised of students from all areas of the student body. Student Senate seeks to develop and promote activities that enrich the social, cultural, and academic atmosphere at NICC and provide opportunities for growth in leadership, communication, and responsibility.

*Student Newspaper* – Students from each campus publish a semesterly print and online newspaper called *Northeastern Press*. A student editor on each campus works with student writers and photographers to report on campus news and issues of interest to students. Students taking a course called News Writing and Reporting contribute to the newspaper. This is a perfect example of how we blend curricular and co-curricular goals.

*Student Activities* – Both campuses offer an extensive Student Activities program designed to help students develop a sense of belonging and expand their horizons. We offer lectures, movies, music, games, plays, field trips, city trips, food experiences, and intramural activities. We also sponsor a program called *Ventures*, giving students extra credit for participating in cultural activities that expand their horizons and contribute to classroom learning.

*Student Ambassadors* – Student Ambassadors is a new program with five participants. Student Ambassadors represent the college at recruiting fairs, community events, and college functions. They provide campus tours for prospective students and assist with new student orientations. As the program develops, it will provide more opportunities for these outstanding students to represent the college internally and externally.

*Career Connections* – Throughout their course of study, students can get help from Career Connections. This program helps students locate and secure internships and jobs and make a smooth transition to employment.

*Career and Employment Services* – When students are ready to graduate, Career and Employment Services can help them write resumes and cover letters and prepare for job interviews. This extends their learning by teaching them to market the knowledge and skills they have gained in their courses.

**1P11  Student Assessment Process**
It is extremely important to assess how students are progressing in their learning.

We encourage faculty to clearly explain their grading criteria in their syllabi. The more students know up front, the better they can prepare themselves to meet the criteria.

We do not grade on attendance. However, many faculty use participation as one of their grading criteria. They clearly spell out the criteria for participation, including coming prepared and on time, having read course materials, participating willingly and enthusiastically in classroom discussion and activities, and showing respect for other students and their backgrounds and opinions.

When assessing students, it is important to use both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment gives students feedback on their work while they still have an opportunity to improve it. It focuses on the process of learning. Summative assessment focuses on outcomes and usually consists of a grade for a project or course.

Our faculty use a variety of assessment tools, depending on the program and course. They use several different types of assessment to cover different learning styles and preferences. Some of these assessment tools include:

- Pre- and post-testing
- Background knowledge probe
- Focused listing or minute paper
- Muddiest point
- Memory matrix
- Models
- Concept maps
- Application cards
- Quizzes

- Student-generated test questions
- Multiple choice tests
- Essay tests
- Essays
- Presentations
- Portfolios
- Self-assessments
- Learning logs or journals

**1P12  Preparation for Other Settings**
NICC works closely with other educational institutions and employers to ensure that our graduates are prepared to succeed in other settings.

- We are working with community colleges and Regents institutions in Iowa to institute common course numbering.  This will help facilitate transfer from one institution to another.

- We offer a Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract.  This contract guarantees that students graduating with specific degrees will be admitted with junior status to many four-year colleges and universities.

- We maintain joint admission agreements with a number of colleges and universities in Iowa.

- The Iowa Regents Transfer Report shows how students transferring from NICC perform compared to "native" students and students from other community colleges.

- Our annual *Graduate Outcomes Survey* shows if our graduates are employed in their field or a related field, unemployed, or pursuing additional education.  The survey also gives them an opportunity to state if they felt prepared to enter their profession.

- Our annual *Employer Survey* asks employers if they have hired or would hire NICC graduates.  If they employ one or more graduates, we ask them to assess their knowledge, skills, and overall preparedness for entering the workforce.

**1P13  Measures of Student Performance**
NICC collects a number of student performance measures, from the time students enroll to the

time they graduate and beyond.  Table 1-6 shows these measures.

*Table 1-6  Measures of Student Performance*

| Time | Measures |
|---|---|
| Entry | • ACCUPLACER scores<br>• Transfer records |
| Ongoing | • Enrollment records<br>• Attendance records<br>• Academic alerts<br>• Course completion rates<br>• Grades and grade point averages<br>• Persistence ratios |
| Exit | • Completion of graduation requirements<br>• Licensure/certification exams<br>• Demonstration of exit competencies<br>• Successful transfer to a four-year institution<br>• Successful employment in their field |

# RESULTS (R)

**1R1  Results for Student Learning Objectives**
Although NICC has no formal plan to assess the 12 common student learning objectives, these objectives are embedded into departmental goals, course guides, and course competencies.

Several programs collect data to determine student success in meeting specific program objectives.  For instance, our nursing program uses a comprehensive assessment matrix measuring key learning objectives and results of licensing exams.

We are pleased to have high rates of students passing the nursing board exam.  The NCLEX exams show that our students score within 95% of the national average on both the Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN) exams. Table 1-7 shows our results on both exams.

*Table 1-7  Nursing Board Scores*

| | NCLEX Exam Results | |
|---|---|---|
| | LPN | RN |
| FY 2001 | 93% | 89% |
| FY 2002 | 98% | 91% |
| FY 2003 | 98% | 79% |
| FY 2004 | 96% | 85% |
| FY 2005 | 97% | 89% |

Our students also tend to do well in other allied health fields.  Tables 1-8, 1-9, and 1-10 show their results on the Health Information

Technology, Radiology Technology, and Respiratory Care exams.

*Table 1-8  HIT Certification Pass Rates*

|  | RHIT Certification Results |
|---|---|
| FY 2000 | 100% |
| FY 2001 | 78% |
| FY 2002 | 100% |
| FY 2003 | 90% |
| FY 2004 | 91% |

*Table 1-9  Radiology Technology Pass Rates*

|  | AART Certification Results |
|---|---|
| FY 2001 | 89% |
| FY 2002 | 100% |
| FY 2003 | 100% |
| FY 2004 | 92% |
| FY 2005 | 94% |

*Table 1-10  Respiratory Care Pass Rates*

|  | CRT Results | Registry | Clinical Sim. |
|---|---|---|---|
| FY 2000 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| FY 2001 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| FY 2002 | 100% | 100% | 67% |
| FY 2003 | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| FY 2004 | 100% | 80% | 100% |

Very few of our vocational and technical programs use national or state exams. The results for our Cosmetology students are shown in Table 1-11.

*Table 1-11  Cosmetology Board Scores*

|  | Cosmetology Services | Iowa Law |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2004 | 100% | 75% |
| FY 2005 | 100% | 75% |

Most of our vocational and technical programs measure that students have met program goals. In these programs, students must meet exit competencies before they are allowed to graduate. Skills checklists in general education, technical knowledge, and lab experience measure student proficiency and readiness to graduate and enter the job market.

**1R2  Results for Knowledge and Skills Base**
We know that our students have acquired the knowledge and skills they need when they fulfill graduation requirements and pass any required licensure exams.

We granted 836 credit awards in FY 2005. Of these 20% were in transfer-level programs.

Other indicators include our students' performance at transfer institutions. The Fall 2005 Regents Transfer Report from Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa shows that our students fare well compared to "native" students. Their cumulative grade point average is listed in Table 1-12.

*Table 1-12  Performance at Regents Schools*

| Cumulative Grade Point Average | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Calmar Students | Peosta Students | "Native" Students |
| Iowa State University | 2.87 | 2.63 | 2.91 |
| University of Iowa | 2.76 | 2.76 | 2.99 |
| University of Northern Iowa | 2.74 | - | 3.04 |

Another indicator that students have acquired the knowledge and skills they need comes from our *Graduate Outcomes Survey.* The survey provides information about our graduates' employment and education status. Table 1-13 shows the results for NICC graduates with technical degrees and diplomas.

*Table 1-13  Graduate Placement*

| Calmar | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Continuing education | Employed | Employed in related field |
| FY 2003 | 28% | 76% | 80% |
| FY 2004 | 35% | 64% | 82% |

| Peosta | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Continuing education | Employed in Field | Employed in related field |
| FY 2003 | 29% | 77% | 73% |
| FY 2004 | 29% | 76% | 77% |

**1R3  Results for Helping Students Learn**
We have limited results regarding the impact of our processes related to helping students learn. We have good usage statistics for our student support services, indicating a clear need for these services. For instance, in FY2005, we recorded a total of 616 students with disabilities. Most of these students sought accommodations to help them succeed. During the same period, we logged 25,566 contact hours in our Learning Centers and Writing Centers.

In the future, we would like to find ways to measure how these support services translate

into academic success. We can envision linking Learning and Writing Center usage to student retention, grades, and program completion.

**1R4 Comparison to Other Institutions**
One measure of how our students compare to students from other institutions can be found in their performance in national contests. Our students do especially well in the agricultural area. For instance, at the March 2006 Post-Secondary Agriculture Students National Conference, our students placed first in the team contest and second in the individual contest of the Crops Specialist Career Program. They placed second and fourth in the team contest and third in the individual contest of the Dairy Specialist Career Program. Finally, our team placed fourth in the Agricultural Machinery Service Technician Career Program.

Another measure of how our students compare to their peers is their pass rate on national board exams. In FY2005, the national pass rate on the RN nursing board exam was 87%. The Iowa pass rate was 84%. Students from NICC exceeded both the national and state average with a pass rate of 89%.

Finally, our students perform at about the same level as other community college students from Iowa when they transfer to one of the three Regents institutions. Table 1-14 shows their cumulative grade point average as listed in the Fall 2005 Regents Transfer Report.

*Table 1-14  Performance at Regents Schools*

| Cumulative Grade Point Average | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Calmar Students | Peosta Students | IA CC Students |
| Iowa State University | 2.87 | 2.63 | 2.67 |
| University of Iowa | 2.76 | 2.76 | 2.78 |
| University of Northern Iowa | 2.74 | - | 2.84 |

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

**1I1  Methods of Improvement**
One of the ways we are improving our processes for helping students learn is by creating action plans following our program reviews. Each program review identifies strengths and areas needing improvement. We establish goals and action plans so that we can continue to improve. The action plans define the

task, assign responsibility, determine resources needed, list activities to be accomplished, and provide for yearly follow-up. With time, each program area will have established goals and a clear plan of action.

**1I2  Targets for Improvement**
We are currently in the process of reviewing all programs to determine if they meet program goals and help students transfer to other colleges or move on to jobs in their field. In the next year, we plan to achieve the following:

- Implement precision scheduling to meet the needs of students and the institution.

- Develop an Educational Master Plan to ensure consistency and high standards in all educational programs

- Achieve accreditation for programs not yet accredited.

- Meet or exceed average scores for national and state board or licensing exams.

- Meet or exceed average GPA for transfer students from Iowa community colleges to the state's Regents schools.

- Maintain high rates of employment among graduates, and increase the percentage of students working in their field of study.

- Determine ways to measure how student support services impact student learning.

We share our results and improvement priorities with students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the public through the following means:

- NICC web site
- Marketing materials
- News releases
- Direct mail to constituents
- New student and parent orientation
- Faculty and staff workshops
- *Communique* internal newsletter
- NICC Xpress announcement

# Category 2:  Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 2C1  Institutional Objectives

NICC is in a period of rapid change.  Over the last three years, we have switched to a different accreditation system by joining AQIP, welcomed a new President, made some significant changes to the way we organize our work, and developed a new strategic plan.

Our strategic plan, also known as V7 (Vision 7) focuses our efforts on seven institutional objectives.  Table 2-1 shows the seven objectives and the accompanying vision statements.

*Table 2-1 Institutional Objectives*

| Objectives and Vision Statements |
|---|
| **1.    Student Access and Success** |
| NICC values access and success for all students.  The College reduces barriers to education and provides student-centered support services.  The College maintains an effective strategic enrollment plan and promotes student success and the building of a foundation for lifelong learning by helping students identify goals and by supporting them in achieving those goals. |
| **2.    Teaching Excellence and Innovation** |
| NICC provides an educational environment that values teaching excellence and innovation.  The College has an educational master plan that continues the College tradition of excellence in education and offers opportunities for ongoing improvement.  The College promotes teaching innovations and links to the local and global communities. |
| **3.    Partnerships and Collaborations** |
| NICC values its existing community, business, and educational partnerships and strives to establish new partnerships that are mutually beneficial for students, College employees, partners, and communities. |
| **4.    Planning and Continuous Improvement** |
| NICC engages in ongoing planning and assessment aimed at the continued excellence of educational and training programs and support services.  College employees share a common goal of maintaining a one-college focus. |
| **5.    College Environment and Diversity** |
| NICC encourages an environment that promotes collaboration and a culture that is open, inquisitive, positive, and focused on success in all endeavors.  NICC accepts fully the responsibilities inherent in global citizenship by focusing on diversity throughout the College. |

| |
|---|
| **6.    Fiscal Management and Resource Development** |
| NICC maximizes the use of revenue from all available sources to support College programs and services.  The College maintains fiscal integrity through effective management of resources and the use of sound budget processes and standard accounting practices.  The College provides opportunities for broad participation in setting spending priorities. |
| **7.    Instructional and Institutional Technology** |
| NICC provides a robust and responsive system of technology that supports all aspects of the institution for its students, College employees, and communities.  Technology is used appropriately to educate students and to enhance communication across the College and throughout the district. |

### 2C2  Alignment with Mission and Vision

The seven institutional objectives flow directly from NICC's mission and vision.

The first step in developing a strategic plan was to review and revise our institutional mission and vision.  Next we identified the seven objectives.  By creating a vision statement for each objective, we were able to align the objectives with our institutional mission and vision.

We also made sure that the seven objectives and their vision statements support NICC's values.  These values are embedded into our institutional vision and include service, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity.   These values are not only part of our plan; we seek to integrate them into how we operate on a day-to-day basis.

### 2C3  Support for Helping Students Learn

All seven objectives identified in V7 have an impact on student learning.  They directly support and complement our processes and systems for helping students learn.

Table 2-2 shows how the specific goals under V7 align with activities that support student learning.  These activities are explored more fully throughout this portfolio.

*Table 2-2 Activities Supporting Student Learning*

| V7 | Goals | Examples of Activities that Support Student Learning |
|---|---|---|
| **Student Access and Success** | **Goal 1** – Reduce barriers that prevent current and prospective students from pursuing a college education. | • TRiO-Upward Bound<br>• Alternative high school<br>• PAVE program (special education)<br>• Adult Basic Education program<br>• GED testing<br>• Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Services<br>• Flexible scheduling<br>• Distance education<br>• Courses offered close to home at NICC Centers<br>• NICC Foundation scholarships<br>• Work study opportunities and internships |
| | **Goal 2** – Develop and implement a strategic enrollment management plan. | • Establishment of Strategic Enrollment Management Team |
| | **Goal 3** – Increase access to support services for all students. | • Accommodations<br>• Learning Centers<br>• Writing Centers<br>• Libraries<br>• Counseling<br>• Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Services |
| | **Goal 4** – Support students in achieving their educational goals and building a foundation for lifelong learning. | • Advising<br>• Counseling<br>• Continuing Education |
| | **Goal 5** - Provide seamless transition for students entering the College, transferring to other institutions, and/or entering the workforce after graduation. | • High School Relations<br>• Tech-Prep<br>• Career Connections<br>• Contracted courses<br>• Post-secondary enrollment options (PSEOs)<br>• Common course numbering<br>• Transfer agreements<br>• Joint admission programs |
| **Teaching Excellence and Innovation** | **Goal 1** – Ensure the relevance of current programs and the timely and appropriate creation of new programs. | • Program accreditation and certification<br>• Program reviews<br>• Viability studies<br>• New program creation |
| | **Goal 2** - Enhance curricula and learning resources to respond to student needs. | • Curriculum Committee<br>• Library resources |
| | **Goal 3** – Encourage and support teaching innovations and use of best practices. | • Service learning<br>• Interdisciplinary learning<br>• Multicultural courses |
| **Partnerships and Collaboration** | **Goal 1** – Support existing and seek new educational partnerships. | • PSEOs and contracted courses<br>• Charter school<br>• Common course numbering<br>• Transfer agreements<br>• Joint admission programs |
| | **Goal 2** - Increase collaboration with business and industry in the NICC district through innovative partnerships. | • Business and industry partnerships (examples: John Deere, Aquila, Alliant Energy, and Infrasource)<br>• Town Clock Center for Professional Development |
| | **Goal 3** - Increase NICC's role as a resource and partner in community development efforts. | • Chamber and economic development participation<br>• Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation<br>• National Education Center for Agricultural Safety<br>• Northeast Iowa Business Accelerator |
| **Planning and Continuous Improvement** | **Goal 1** – Create a shared focus on continuous improvement, using the college strategic plan as a guide. | • Strategic plan<br>• All-College Day<br>• Annual planning process focused on the strategic plan |
| | **Goal 2** - Coordinate institutional research and utilize findings in college decision-making. | • Establishment of Office of Institutional Research<br>• Coordination of data collection and storage |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Planning and Continuous Improvement*** | ***Goal 3*** - Involve members from throughout the college in an ongoing planning process that integrates planning, assessment, and budgeting. | • Annual department planning<br>• Strategic Planning Committee<br>• College Vision Committee<br>• Budget Committee |
| | ***Goal 4*** - Evaluate college programs and processes and engage in continuous improvement efforts. | • Strategic Enrollment Management Team<br>• Strategic Planning Committee |
| ***College Environment and Diversity*** | ***Goal 1*** – Focus on strong internal communications and opportunities for shared governance of the college. | • New annual planning process<br>• Strategic Planning Committee<br>• College Vision Committee<br>• Budget Committee |
| | ***Goal 2*** - Educate students, college employees, and communities about the responsibilities of global citizenship. | • Student Senate<br>• Student clubs<br>• Honor societies<br>• Service learning<br>• Library resources |
| | ***Goal 3*** - Expand diversity efforts across the college and throughout the district. | • Diversity Committees<br>• Diversity awareness activities<br>• Student forums to discuss diversity issues<br>• Courses focusing on diversity<br>• Travel and study abroad opportunities<br>• Library resources |
| | ***Goal 4*** - Enhance college facilities and surroundings to promote positive college life. | • Master Facilities Plan<br>• Construction of Child Development Center at Calmar<br>• Construction of NICC Center at Waukon<br>• Community development activities |
| | ***Goal 5*** - Enhance college activities and programming to promote positive college life. | • Student activities<br>• Student clubs |
| | ***Goal 6*** - Enable college employees the ability to contribute at maximum potential and the opportunity to pursue satisfying personal lives. | • Performance evaluation<br>• *Leading from Within* program<br>• Wellness initiatives |
| | ***Goal 7*** - Provide relevant opportunities for personal and professional development. | • Faculty Development Committees<br>• Quality Faculty Plan<br>• Online credentialing courses<br>• Faculty and staff workshop days |
| ***Fiscal Management and Resource Development*** | ***Goal 1*** – Link resource allocation to strategic planning. | • Budget Committee |
| | ***Goal 2*** - Maintain fiscal integrity through effective management of resources. | • Annual audit<br>• Balanced budget |
| | ***Goal 3*** - Expand and diversify college resources. | • Exploration of new funding initiatives<br>• Preparation for bond issue<br>• Exploration of hiring a grant writer |
| ***Instructional and Institutional Technology*** | ***Goal 1*** – Ensure adequate planning and budgeting for staying current with emerging technology. | • Infrastructure assessment<br>• Datatel implementation<br>• Information technology strategic plan |
| | ***Goal 2*** - Provide a reliable infrastructure that enhances the work of the college and is accessible to students, college employees, and other constituents. | • Infrastructure assessment<br>• NICC web site<br>• NICC Xpress web portal<br>• Online registration |
| | ***Goal 3*** - Provide a reliable instructional technology system that enhances and complements learning. | • Wireless campus<br>• Web CT hosting<br>• NICC Xpress web portal |
| | ***Goal 4*** - Provide a reliable institutional technology system that enhances productivity and information access. | • Datatel conversion<br>• Training of Datatel users<br>• Datatel Support Specialist position |
| | ***Goal 5*** - Provide comprehensive and user-friendly online services and web site functionality. | • NICC web site<br>• NICC Xpress web portal |

**P**ROCESSES

**2P1 Determination of Distinctive Objectives**
When our new President came on board in July 2004, her first priority was to develop a new strategic plan.

A lot of the preliminary work had already been done.  We had completed the AQIP Constellation Survey and held our first AQIP Conversation Day.  We had established four AQIP Action Projects and were in the process of implementing those.  Finally, we had looked at community college trends and collected needs assessment data on our students and communities.

The President convened a small committee to take the completed data and draft a strategic plan to be presented to all NICC employees. During All-College Day in April 2005, all employees came together to review the proposed plan.  The event provided a wonderful opportunity to engage in table discussion about the merits of the proposed plan and come up with creative ways to implement it.

Following All-College Day, all employees had the opportunity to read the plan more carefully and give written or verbal feedback.  We revised the plan in response to this feedback before bringing it to the Board of Trustees.  The Board of Trustees approved the plan at the June 2005 board meeting.

**2P2 Communication of Expectations**
We communicate our expectations regarding V7 in a variety of ways.

All-College Day is significant because we have all employees in one room.  On this particular day we close our offices and classrooms and come together in a facility that is large enough to accommodate all employees.  We devote the day to big-picture thinking.  During All-College Day we learn about trends, review the strategic plan, and talk about ways to implement it.  We use a fast-paced format, with the goal of engaging and inspiring our employees.

In 2005, we reviewed and responded to the newly drafted strategic plan.  We continued this work at our All-College Day in April 2006.  This time we introduced the idea of entrepreneurial thinking.  We challenged our employees to catch

the entrepreneurial spirit and come up with new and innovative ways to move the strategic plan forward.

We use several other communication channels to help our employees stay focused on the strategic plan throughout the year, including:

• President's e-mails
• *Communiqué* internal newsletter
• Strategic plan CD-Rom given to all employees
• Annual planning process

**2P3 Determination of Faculty and Staff Needs**
We have streamlined our annual planning process so that we can quickly identify and respond to faculty and staff needs.  This includes needs related to implementing the strategic plan goals.

The process works in the following way:  In the fall Deans and department heads meet with their department to create an annual plan.  They discuss how to link their efforts to the strategic plan and the AQIP categories.  As they develop their plan, they clearly identify the human and material resources needed to implement it.

They then submit their proposal to the College Vision Committee to see if it matches NICC's vision and mission.  Next it goes to the Strategic Planning Committee.  This committee reviews all proposals and prioritizes them based on their ability to further the strategic plan.  Finally the Budget Committee reviews the proposals and looks for ways to fund them, either with new or existing resources.

The three committees include members from all levels of the institution.  Faculty and staff have a strong voice on these committees and are able to speak directly to faculty and staff needs.

The final step in the process is for Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the three committees and incorporate them into the annual budget presented to the Board of Trustees.  The Board of Trustees approves the budget and is mindful of faculty and staff needs.

**2P4 Assessment and Review of Objectives**
We are developing a process for assessing and reviewing the goals in the strategic plan.

For instance, the President recently created a Strategic Enrollment Management Team and charged the team with developing performance measures for one of the goals in the strategic plan. Members of the team include the Dean of Student Services, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Economic Development, Assistant to the President for Resource Development, Director of Institutional Research, Director of Marketing, and Provosts.

We already collect a variety of measures that could be used to measure each of the goals in the strategic plan. However, instead of using all of them, we will determine which ones will be most effective in measuring each goal.

Once we have determined which measures to use, we will establish procedures for data collection. The next step will be to determine how to present the data to students, employees, and other stakeholders. We are intrigued with the possibility of using a dashboard to track and communicate results and would like to investigate this method more.

The Strategic Planning Committee will be in charge of revising the strategic plan. One of the committee's tasks is to engage the NICC community in making revisions. Every employee will have the opportunity to give feedback on the current plan and provide suggestions for future goals and activities.

**2P5  Measures of Accomplishing Objectives**
NICC collects a number of measures that match the goals in the strategic plan. As mentioned above, we expect to use some, but not all of the following measures, to determine progress towards each goal.

*Table 2-3 Possible Measures*

**Student Access and Success**
- Percentage of Trio-Upward Bound students enrolling at NICC
- Percentage of alternative high school students enrolling at NICC
- Percentage of GED graduates enrolling at NICC
- Student demographics
- Placement scores
- Developmental course offerings
- Retention and success in developmental courses
- Credit course offerings
- Retention and success in credit courses
- Student persistence rates
- Support service usage

- Scholarship distribution
- Program completion rates
- Graduation rates
- Pass rates on board exams
- Student performance at transfer institutions
- Graduate survey showing rates of employment
- Employer survey rating graduates

**Teaching Excellence and Innovation**
- Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Course evaluations
- Faculty certified under Quality Faculty Plan
- Average section size
- Faculty-student ratio
- Faculty load

**Partnerships and Collaboration**
- Establishment of new NICC Centers
- Enrollment at NICC Centers (head count and credit hours)
- High school enrollment (head count and credit hours)
- Articulation agreements with transfer institutions
- Number of students enrolled in joint admission programs
- Number of students transferring to transfer institutions
- Number of 260E and 260F job training partnership agreements and amount generated

**Planning and Continuous Improvement**
- College accreditation
- Program accreditation, licensing, and certification
- Program reviews
- Percentage of departments participating in annual planning
- Number of annual planning proposals submitted and funded

**College Environment and Diversity**
- Student demographics
- Employee demographics
- Construction of new and renovation of existing facilities
- Library collections
- Participation in and evaluation of diversity activities
- Campus crime report
- Number of grievances filed

**Fiscal Management and Resource Development**
- Annual audit
- Operating budget
- Tuition and fee rates
- Number of 260E and 260F agreements and amount generated
- Funded grant proposals
- NICC Foundation holdings

**Instructional and Institutional Technology**
- Datatel implementation
- Number of online and ICN courses hosted
- Retention and success in online courses
- Use of online subscriber databases and other electronic library tools
- Number and ratio of computers to students
- Number and ratio of computers to employees

## RESULTS (R)

### 2R1  Results in Accomplishing Objectives
We are in the process of determining how best to track our strategic goals.  It is possible to get a sense of our progress towards each goal by reviewing this portfolio.  Table 2-4 lists the location of baselines and early results.

*Table 2-4 Location of Baseline Data and Early Results*

| Student Access and Success |
| --- |
| **Category 1**-Helping Students Learn–1R1<br>**Category 3**-Student and Other Stakeholder Needs-3R1<br>**Category 6**-Institutional Operations-6R1 |
| **Teaching Excellence and Innovation** |
| **Category 1**-Helping Students Learn–1R1<br>**Category 4**-Valuing People-4R1 |
| **Partnerships and Collaboration** |
| **Category 1**-Helping Students Learn-1R1<br>**Category 3**-Student and Other Stakeholder Needs-3R1<br>**Category 9**-Building Collaborative Relationships–9R1 |
| **Planning and Continuous Improvement** |
| **Category 5**-Leading and Communication–5R1<br>**Category 7**-Measuring Effectiveness–7R1<br>**Category 8**-Planning Continuous Improvement–8R1 |
| **College Environment and Diversity** |
| **Category 1**-Helping Students Learn–1R1<br>**Category 4**-Valuing People-4R1<br>**Category 5**-Leadership and Communication–5R1<br>**Category 6**-Institutional Operations–6R1 |
| **Fiscal Management and Resource Development** |
| **Category 6**-Institutional Operations–6R1<br>**Category 9**-Building Collaborative Relationships–9R1 |
| **Instructional and Institutional Technology** |
| **Category 1**-Helping Students Learn–1R1<br>**Category 6**-Institutional Operations-6R1 |

### 2R2  Comparison of Results
We realize the importance of having comparative data.  As we determine our specific performance measures, we will consult with colleagues at other community colleges about which measures are most reliable and helpful.

We are also considering joining the National Community College Benchmark Project.  The NCCBP gives community colleges opportunities to report outcome and effectiveness data, receive reports, and compare their data with those of peer institutions.  Interestingly, many of the NCCBP measures match our strategic plan, making joining the project that much more appealing.  NCCBP performance measures include:

- Enrollment demographics
- Retention and success in developmental and college courses
- Class size
- Ratio of students to faculty
- Ratio of students to staff
- Persistence rates
- Completion rates
- Performance at transfer institutions
- Student satisfaction rates
- Student goal achievement
- Employment and career preparation

### 2R3  How Results Strengthen Institution
Having results will strengthen our institution and enhance our relationship with stakeholders in our district.  It will demonstrate:

- A clear direction for the future
- Assessment of student and community needs
- Responsiveness to needs
- Engagement of all employees
- Open communication
- Wise use of resources
- Evidence of institutional effectiveness

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

### 2I1  Methods of Improvement
We plan to take the following steps to improve the way we implement our strategic plan:

- Determine measures for each strategic goal.
- Establish data collection methods.
- Determine how to communicate results.
- Collect comparison data from other institutions with similar goals.

### 2I2  Targets for Improvement
Our immediate priority is to determine measures for each strategic goal.  Once these are in place, we need to establish data collection methods and communicate those to all employees.  We will use the following communication tools:

- All-College Day
- President's e-mails
- Annual planning process
- Committee meetings
- Advisory board and community meetings
- News releases
- NICC web site

# Category 3:  Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 3C1  Key Groups of Students and Stakeholders

NICC sees great value in understanding the needs of students and other stakeholders.  We categorize our stakeholders into internal and external stakeholders.  Each group is further divided into subgroups.  Table 3-1 shows our internal stakeholders, and Table 3-2 shows our external stakeholders.

### 3C2  Requirements and Expectations of Students and Stakeholders

In order to serve all our stakeholders well, we try to identify the requirements and expectations of each group.  These are included in Tables 3-1 and 3-2.

*Table 3-1 Internal Stakeholders and Their Requirements and Expectations*

| Group | Subgroups | Long-Term Expectations | Short-Term Expectations |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Current Students* | *Credit Students*<br>• Vocational-technical students<br>• AA students<br>• High school students<br>• TRiO-Upward Bound students<br>• Alternative high school students<br>• Transfer students<br><br>*Non-Credit Students*<br>• Continuing education students<br>• Adult basic education students<br>• Alternative high school students<br><br>*Cross-Cutting Groups*<br>• Underprepared students<br>• Students with disabilities<br>• Non-traditional students<br>• Students in non-traditional careers<br>• International/ESL students | Accessible and affordable high-quality education and training that allow students to graduate, transfer, obtain employment, and upgrade their knowledge and skills | • Quality instruction and services<br>• Accessible courses and support services<br>• Affordable tuition<br>• Financial aid and scholarships<br>• Developmental courses<br>• Opportunities for honors enrichment and leadership development<br>• Extracurricular activities<br>• Access to college courses for high school students<br>• Joint admission agreements with colleges and universities<br>• Career planning and placement<br>• Flexible delivery schedule<br>• Variety of delivery methods, including face-to-face, online, ICN, and hybrid instruction |
| *Board* | • Trustees | A well-managed institution that responds to the needs and expectations of stakeholders while adhering to the college mission, vision, values, and budget | • Clear mission, vision, and values<br>• Annual update of strategic plan<br>• Needs assessment of current and future stakeholders<br>• Data-driven decision-making<br>• Participation by all employees in annual planning process<br>• Fiscal responsibility<br>• Balanced budget<br>• Annual audit<br>• Accreditation of college<br>• Accreditation, certification, and licensing of programs |
| *Employees* | • Administrators<br>• Faculty<br>• Professional staff<br>• Support staff | A safe, stable, and caring workplace that values its employees and their contributions | • Annual contract negotiations<br>• Competitive salary and benefits<br>• Professional development opportunities, including workshops, conferences, and sabbaticals<br>• Recognition events |

*Table 3-2 External Stakeholders and Their Requirements and Expectations*

| Group | Subgroups | Long-Term Expectations | Short-Term Expectations |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Prospective Students* | • High school students<br>• Alternative high school students<br>• TRiO-Upward Bound students<br>• GED students<br>• Reverse transfer students<br>• Adults needing re-training | Accessible and affordable high-quality education and training | • Timely and accurate information<br>• Easy admission process<br>• Easy advising and registration process<br>• Online registration<br>• Assistance with financial aid applications |
| *Alumni* | • Former students who have attended and/or completed a program or degree | Opportunities to maintain lifelong ties with the college | • Ongoing contact with faculty and staff<br>• Promotion of alumni achievement<br>• Opportunity to serve on advisory boards<br>• Opportunities to teach credit and/or non-credit courses<br>• Opportunities to return to NICC for lifelong learning<br>• Opportunities to contribute financially to the NICC Foundation in the form of scholarships, grants, or endowments |
| *Family Members* | • Parents and spouses of current and prospective students | Affordable high-quality education and training for their children in a safe environment close to home | • A safe campus<br>• Affordable tuition and fees<br>• Strong record of student retention and completion<br>• Strong record of student transfer and employability<br>• Open lines of communication with parents (while meeting state and federal confidentiality rules) |
| *Communities* | • Residents of Allamakee, Bremer, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Jackson, Jones, Howard, Mitchell, and Winneshiek counties | A vibrant institution that serves as a hub for educational, cultural, and economic development activities | • Timely information about college events and activities<br>• Continuing education offerings that meet community needs and interests<br>• Local access to education, training, and events at Centers<br>• Economic development activities<br>• Community partnerships and collaborative activities |
| *Educational Institutions* | *Feeder Institutions*<br>• K-12 school districts<br><br>*Transfer Institutions*<br>• Other community colleges<br>• Private colleges<br>• Public universities | Seamless transitions between educational programs | • Up-to-date information about NICC<br>• Placement testing<br>• Assistance with FAFSA and scholarship applications<br>• Post-secondary enrollment option (PSEO) and contracted courses<br>• Common course numbering<br>• Joint admission agreements with colleges and universities |
| *Business and Industry* | • Small businesses<br>• Industry<br>• Agriculture | A skilled workforce that is prepared to respond to changes in the local and global economy | • Interns and graduates who can make a contribution to their place of employment<br>• Development of new programs to match the changing workforce needs<br>• Contract training<br>• Technology training<br>• Diversity training<br>• Easy access to re-certification and continuing education |

| Legislators | • Mayors<br>• State legislators<br>• Congressional delegation | Quality, cost-effective educational opportunities for their constituents | • Fiscal responsibility to taxpayers<br>• Cost-effective use of state and federal funds<br>• Prevention of brain drain from state<br>• Retention of the state's workforce<br>• Preparation of future workforce<br>• Economic development leadership |
| Accreditation and Licensing Boards | • Higher Learning Commission<br>• AQIP<br>• Iowa Department of Education<br>• Program accreditation and licensing boards | A strong educational program that meets state and federal standards and keeps accurate records | • Timely reports<br>• Accessible data and records<br>• Programs that meet or exceed standards and benchmarks<br>• Focus on continuous improvement |

## PROCESSES

### 3P1  Identification and Analysis of Student Needs

NICC is committed to student success and responsiveness to community needs.  We use a variety of methods to identify the changing needs of our student groups.  They include:

*Placement Tests* – Placement tests help us gauge student preparedness for college-level courses.  We rely on ACCUPLACER scores for reading, writing, and math.  These scores help us determine trends in student preparedness and allow us to schedule the appropriate number of developmental courses.

*Learning Centers* – Our Learning Centers maintain records on students with documented disabilities and their needs for accommodations. The staff work directly with administrators and faculty to meet student needs related to physical, mental, and learning disabilities.

*Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Centers* – Staff work directly with adults making career and life changes.  They assist them in starting an education, exploring non-traditional careers, and finding employment.  This office is particularly valuable in providing information about the needs of specific student groups, including displaced workers, displaced homemakers, farmers seeking a new career, criminal offenders, and single and divorced parents.

*Advising and Counseling Sessions* – Students provide direct information about their needs during advising and counseling sessions. For instance, they may state which courses they need and when they need them.  Many also touch on needs related to housing, employment, child care, and transportation.  Some bring up mental health and substance abuse issues. These informal sessions often yield important information about student needs.

*Academic Alerts* – Faculty monitor student attendance and progress.  If a student is absent or failing, faculty file an *Academic Alert*.  This alerts a number of individuals, including the student, Dean, Counselor, and Financial Aid Officer that the student is at risk of failing and may need additional support.

*Enrollment Reports* – Enrollment reports also reflect trends in student needs.  One of these trends is a decrease in the number of full-time students and an increase in the number of part-time students due, in part, to a healthy economy. The reports indicate a need to shift our focus. For instance, in order to better serve students working full-time, we are looking at exploring evening and weekend degree programs.

*Course Evaluations* – At the end of each semester, faculty distribute course evaluations to students.  These evaluations provide an opportunity for students to rate each course on how helpful it was in meeting their needs.  They comment on strengths and make suggestions for improvements.  Instructors often use these evaluations to modify their courses.

*Focus Groups* – A number of NICC employees have been trained in focus group facilitation. They occasionally conduct student focus groups to determine directions for marketing, new programs, and revision of existing programs.

*ACT College Outcomes Survey* – Until two years ago we used the ACT College Outcomes

Survey to determine student satisfaction with their college experience. The survey provides clear feedback about student needs.

*CCSSE Survey* – This year we switched to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). We conducted the first survey in April 2006. Results from the survey will help us determine how well we are doing in meeting student needs.

*Graduate Follow-Up Survey* – Graduates receive a written survey about their employment and/or educational status. The survey helps identify if graduates have moved on for further education or found employment in their field or a related field. The survey partly measures satisfaction, but also reflects on our students' employability following graduation from NICC.

*Employer Survey* – A number of employers fill out a survey about their satisfaction with applicants from NICC. This helps us assess if graduates are prepared for the local workforce – or if programs need to be retooled to fit the changing needs of employers in the region.

### 3P2  Relationships with Students

Relationships are at the core of our operation. We place great emphasis on building relationships with our students – before they start, while they are here, and after they leave.

We work hard to make individuals feel welcome at NICC. Our hope is to make their first experience a good one. We view the first interaction as the beginning of a lifelong relationship. If students have a good experience, they are more likely to stay and complete their education or training. They may recommend us to family and friends. In the future they may enroll in additional credit or non-credit programs.

Table 3-3 shows some of the ways in which we build relationships with prospective students (P), current students (C), and alumni (A).

*Table 3-3  Building Relationships with Students*

| Activity | P | C | A |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Media** | | | |
| • College catalog | X | X | X |
| • College schedule | X | X | X |
| • Program brochures | X | X | X |
| • NICC web site | X | X | X |
| • NICC Xpress web portal | | X | |

| Activity | P | C | A |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Events** | | | |
| • Welcome Wednesday | X | | |
| • Student orientation | | X | |
| • Community events | X | X | X |
| • Career and job fairs | X | X | X |
| • Alternative high school graduation | X | X | |
| • GED graduation | X | X | |
| • Fall and spring graduation | | X | X |
| • Nursing pinning | | X | X |
| • Foundation banquets | | | X |
| • Foundation events on campus | | | X |
| **Regular Contacts with Faculty and Staff** | | | |
| • Contact with faculty in and out of the classroom | | X | |
| • Academic advising | | X | |
| • Counseling | | X | |
| • Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center | | X | |
| • Academic Alert program | | X | |
| • Learning Center | | X | |
| • Writing Center | | X | |
| • Employment and Career Services | | X | X |
| • Financial Aid | | X | |
| • Student Activities | | X | |
| • Honor societies | | X | |
| • Student clubs | | X | |
| • College work study program | | X | |
| **Leadership Opportunities** | | | |
| • Student Senate | | X | |
| • Legislative Day | | X | |
| • Student Ambassadors | | X | |
| • College committees | | X | |
| • Program advisory boards | X | X | X |
| • Focus groups | X | X | X |
| • Participation in workshops/ conferences | X | X | X |
| • National, regional, and state competitions | X | X | |

### 3P3  Identification and Analysis of Stakeholder Needs

Students are our primary stakeholders, but we have many other internal and external stakeholders. Just like with students, we use a variety of ways of assessing their needs.

#### INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

*Board Meetings and Retreats* – The NICC Board of Trustees meets monthly to make decisions for the College. The board also uses two annual retreats to discuss issues and determine the direction of the College.

*Individual Meetings* – Employees meet with their supervisor on a regular basis. Some of these meetings are informal; others are more formal in nature. During their scheduled performance review, employees set new goals and express what they need in terms of support from their supervisor. For instance, they may ask for additional training or a change in responsibilities.

**Department and Division Meetings** – Departments and divisions hold regular meetings to share information and participate in annual planning. These meetings provide an opportunity for faculty and staff to identify needs and bring them to the attention of their supervisor. As part of the planning process, departments submit proposals for consideration by three college-wide committees. These committees rank and prioritize them for funding.

**Committee Meetings** – NICC has several committees with members from all levels of the institution. They include the Strategic Planning Committee, College Vision Committee, Budget Committee, Campus Council, Educational Services Administration, Curriculum Committee, and a Faculty Development Committee on each campus. We find that committees are a good way to identify needs shared by several employee groups. We also learn about needs through ad hoc committees organized to deal with specific issues.

**All-College Day** – All NICC employees gather for a full day of planning and learning once a year. This is a good opportunity to identify and document college-wide needs.

**Program Reviews** – Each of our vocational-technical programs goes through a regular program review. This includes assessing needs, documenting processes and outcomes, and establishing goals and objectives for the future. Program reviews provide an excellent opportunity for faculty to express their needs regarding program direction.

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

**Family Members** – We welcome parents and spouses on campus and encourage them to express their needs when they visit. Parents and spouses are invited to attend *Welcome Wednesday* with their child or significant other to learn about our programs and services. We recently established a parent/spouse orientation to run concurrently with our new student orientation. These sessions provide a nice opportunity for parents and significant others to ask questions and express their needs.

**Community Members** – We identify the needs of community members through the President's 50/50 Club. The President meets with 50 community leaders from the northern end of the district and 50 from the southern end to share information about the college and identify community needs. She gains input from community leaders from the district's small towns at community breakfast meetings dubbed *Perking with Penny*.

We also receive information about community needs through the NICC Centers. Each center serves a specific community, and community members are very comfortable expressing their needs to our staff. We learn about other community needs when community coalitions approach us to start a new center or expand our educational programs in their community.

**Educational Institutions** – The school districts in our region are important collaborators. Our President attends a monthly meeting of all superintendents in the region. Our High School Relations Coordinator, Tech-Prep Coordinator, and Career Outreach Coordinators work more directly with principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and students to facilitate the transition from high school to college.

**Business and Industry** – One of the most important ways that we connect with business and industry is through our Economic Development division. We attend Chamber of Commerce and economic development meetings throughout the region. We collaborate with business and industry to provide job training to more than 1,000 individuals each year through our 260E and 260F agreements. We also collect information about business and industry needs through our advisory boards.

**Legislators** – We stay in close contact with our state and federal legislators. Our state legislators visit our campuses on a regular basis to hear community concerns. Our President travels to Washington, D.C., twice a year to meet with our Congressional delegation and advocate for the needs of the community college. She maintains ongoing contact with legislators through phone calls and e-mails.

**Accreditation and Licensing Boards** – We learn about the needs of accrediting and licensing boards through direct mail, e-mail, and phone conversations with staff. They inform us about changes in regulations or licensing and reporting requirements.

**3P4  Relationships with Stakeholders**
We are very deliberate about building and maintaining relationships with our stakeholders. All employees are ambassadors for the college, and they maintain regular contact with one or more of our stakeholder groups.  They know that every contact provides an opportunity to build and strengthen the relationship.

Table 3-4 shows some of our primary strategies for building these relationships.

*Table 3-4  Building Relationships with Stakeholders*

| Stakeholder | Activity/Event |
|---|---|
| Board | • Personal contacts<br>• Board meetings and retreats |
| Employees | • All-College Day<br>• New faculty orientation<br>• Faculty mentoring program<br>• Recognition of milestones<br>• Graduation ceremonies<br>• Campus wellness initiatives<br>• *Communiqué* internal newsletter |
| District residents | • Direct mail to households<br>• 50/50 Club (citizen advisory board)<br>• Community breakfasts<br>• Community events<br>• Community services (cosmetology, massage, auto repairs, computer repair) |
| Family members | • Direct mail<br>• Parent/spouse orientation |
| Business and Industry | • Chamber of Commerce and economic development meetings<br>• Advisory board meetings |
| Educational Institutions | • Regular contact with school administrators, teachers, and students<br>• Shared faculty (high school teachers teaching college classes as part of their load)<br>• District superintendent meetings<br>• Charter school |
| Legislators | • Legislative Day<br>• Meetings with state and federal legislators |
| Accrediting and Licensing Agencies | • Regular communication through phone and e-mail<br>• Meetings and conferences<br>• Site visits<br>• Reports |

**3P5  Determination of New Stakeholders**
We plan to continue working with the student and stakeholder groups identified in Tables 3-1 and 3-2.  At the same time we know that some of the subgroups will change.  We identify new groups in the following manner:

• All employees are responsible for environmental scanning.  They identify new stakeholder groups and identify opportunities for new programs and services.

• Our new Director of Institutional Research tracks enrollment data and district demographic changes to identify emerging groups of stakeholders.  For instance, the number of individuals over 65 in the district is growing.  The "over 65" population could easily be identified as a new prospective student group.

• Our Economic Development staff take the pulse of business and industry and survey the workforce trend data provided by Iowa Workforce Development.  They also help identify opportunities for contract training.

• Faculty work closely with their advisory boards to meet the changing needs of the local workforce.  Advisory board members keep us abreast of demographic changes, changes in equipment and technology, and new skills needed in the workplace.

• Our Admissions, High School Relations, Tech-Prep, and Career Connections staff listen carefully to the needs of our high school colleagues and prospective students.

**3P6  Collection of Complaint Information**
NICC makes a concerted effort to understand the needs of students and other stakeholders. This includes being open, sensitive, and responsive to complaints.  Each office at NICC maintains a file of documented interactions involving complaints.

*Course Evaluations* – Course evaluations serve as a mechanism for collecting student complaints.  At the end of each semester, students fill out a course evaluation form.  The forms are compiled by a secretary and given to the Dean supervising the instructor.  The Dean reviews the evaluation summary and hands it back to the instructor, making note of any complaints.  If there is a pattern over time, the Dean will address this with the instructor and try to find ways to remedy the problem.

**Course Complaints** - If students are unhappy about a course, they first talk to the instructor. If not satisfied, they take their concern to the Dean supervising the instructor. The Dean reviews the course syllabus, including assignments and expectations, to see if the student has a case, then determines a course of action. If dissatisfied, students can take their concern to the Provost and, after that, to the President.

**Grade Challenges** – If a student wishes to contest a grade, the Dean refers the case to an ad hoc Grade Review Committee. This committee consists of a Provost, Dean, Counselor, and several faculty members appointed by the Provost. They review the course guide, syllabus, grading criteria, and student scores before determining if the grade is appropriate or needs to be revised. Decisions are forwarded to the student and the instructor.

**Sexual Harassment Charges** – All employees, at the time of hiring, sign a form promising that they will not engage in any form of harassment. The same expectations are listed in the Student Conduct Code published in the NICC College Catalog. Board policies state that sexual harassment is prohibited and that offenders will be subject to disciplinary action. The Director of Human Resources investigates complaints against employees, and the Provost investigates cases involving students.

**Sexual Abuse Charges** – Board policies affirm that sexual abuse is a crime that is subject to criminal investigation and disciplinary action. The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services investigates complaints involving employees, and a Dean investigates sexual abuse complaints involving students.

**Support Staff Grievances** – The Director of Human Resources meets regularly with support staff on both campuses to encourage open communication and listen to concerns. Support staff are encouraged to resolve disputes with their immediate supervisor or the parties involved. If this is not possible, they can file a grievance citing a violation of their contract. This can also be done if there is a dispute involving the application or interpretation of the contract. The first step is to present an oral complaint to the immediate supervisor. The supervisor must give an oral response within 10 days. If dissatisfied, the employee can file a written grievance with their supervisor within five

days, and the supervisor is required to respond within five days. The next steps are to take the complaint to the Director of Human Resources and finally to arbitration. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on both parties.

**Faculty Grievances** – We also encourage faculty to resolve disputes with their supervisor or any other parties before resorting to filing a complaint. Faculty can file a grievance if they believe there is violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of the provisions in their contract. The first step is to present an informal oral complaint to the immediate supervisor, with the purpose of resolving the matter informally. If dissatisfied, the faculty member can move to the formal grievance stage. This involves filing a written grievance with the immediate supervisor. The supervisor must respond within five days. The next steps are to take the complaint to the Director of Human Resources and finally to arbitration. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on both parties.

**Administrative Staff** – Administrative staff are encouraged to resolve disputes with their immediate supervisor or the parties involved. If this is not possible, the employee can appeal to the immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor must respond within 10 days. The next step is to take the complaint and all accompanying materials to the appropriate Vice President, who has 10 days to respond. The final step is to appeal to the President, who will make a final determination within 10 days.

**Citizen Complaints** – Board Policy 822 specifies that citizens can complain about an employee's actions to the employee's supervisor. If not satisfied, the citizen can appeal to an administrator in the line of responsibility and then to the President. If still not satisfied, the citizen can take the complaint to the Board of Trustees. At this level, the complaint must be submitted in writing.

**3P7  Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction**
We determine student satisfaction in a variety of ways. They include:

- Meetings with high school students, teachers, and administrators
- Student course evaluations
- Student forums
- Student Senate meetings

- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Individual meetings with students
- Open-door policy encouraging students to drop in and talk to faculty and staff

We collect and analyze several measures of student satisfaction. Student course evaluations provide direct feedback to instructors about student satisfaction. Surveys provide "hard data" that we can use to improve student satisfaction. For more detail about student satisfaction, please refer to 3R1 and 6R1.

We use a number of techniques to determine the satisfaction of other stakeholders. They include:

- Board meetings
- All-College Day
- Open-door policy encouraging faculty and staff to drop in and talk to administrators
- Program reviews
- Employee forums
- Faculty and staff workshops days
- Department meetings
- Provost and Dean meetings
- Educational Services Administration Meetings
- Campus Council meetings
- Strategic Planning Committee meetings
- College Vision Committee meetings
- Budget Committee meetings
- NICC Foundation Board meetings
- Advisory board meetings
- Graduate Outcomes Surveys
- Employer Surveys
- Community forums

The most helpful information comes from those sources that ask direct questions about stakeholder satisfaction. For instance, our *Graduate Outcomes Survey* asks alumni to give feedback on their program and how well it prepared them for the workplace or further education. The *Employer Survey* asks if employers have hired any of our graduates. If so, they rate them on knowledge and skills.

## RESULTS (R)

### 3R1  Results for Student Satisfaction
NICC puts great emphasis on student satisfaction. Surveys show that students are generally satisfied with their experience at NICC.

*ACT College Outcomes Survey* - The ACT College Outcomes Survey was last conducted with 408 students in 2004. According to the survey, about 75% of students reported that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with NICC and that NICC made a "very great" or "great" contribution to their intellectual growth. Table 3-5 shows the areas respondents rated highest in terms of satisfaction.

*Table 3-5 Top 10 Areas of Students Satisfaction*

1. Class size
2. College in general
3. Access to computer facilities and services
4. Quality of program of study
5. Library/learning resource center services
6. College response to non-traditional students
7. Faculty respect for students
8. Developmental, remedial, and tutorial services
9. Availability of faculty for office appointments
10. Variety of courses offered

For more detail about student satisfaction with specific services, please see 6R1.

*District High School Yield Rate* – The NICC district high school yield rate increased slightly over the last two years. In fall 2004, 497 of the district's 3,059 high school seniors, or 16.2%, enrolled at NICC. In fall 2005, 482 of 2,822, or 17.1% of the district's high school seniors enrolled at NICC. The total number of high school seniors dropped by 237, and this trend is predicted to continue for the next decade. Adult and minority recruitment efforts are expected to increase due to this trend.

### 3R2  Results for Student Relationships
Enrollment is one way to gauge our results for building relationships with students.

*Credit Enrollment* – Credit enrollment has risen tremendously over the last five years. It is now leveling off, in fact even dropping slightly. This is partially due to a shrinking high school population and a strong economy.

*Table 3-6 Credit Enrollment*

|  | Head Count FT | Head Count PT | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| FY 2002 | 1,966 | 1,655 | 3,621 |
| FY 2003 | 2,025 | 2,127 | 4,152 |
| FY 2004 | 2,196 | 2,528 | 4,724 |
| FY 2005 | 2,554 | 2,304 | 4,858 |
| FY 2006 | 2,162 | 2,672 | 4,833 |

Our greatest area of growth over the last five years has been in high school enrollment. This year we added several new positions to assist in meeting the needs of our high school constituents, including a Tech-Prep Coordinator and two Career Outreach Coordinators. Table 3-7 shows the five-year growth trends in high school enrollment at NICC.

*Table 3-7 High School Enrollment*

| Head Count | |
| --- | --- |
| FY 2002 | 591 |
| FY 2003 | 940 |
| FY 2004 | 1,318 |
| FY 2005 | 1,298 |
| FY 2006 | 1,517 |

***Non-Credit Enrollment*** - The trend looks similar in our non-credit sector, with enrollment increasing at a steady rate. Table 3-8 shows our enrollment in continuing education offerings.

*Table 3-8 Continuing Education Enrollment*

| Head count | |
| --- | --- |
| 2004 | 46,422 |
| 2005 | 47,312 |

**3R3  Results for Stakeholder Satisfaction**
NICC has many external stakeholders. We have the following results for their satisfaction with our performance:

***Transfer Institutions*** - We receive academic performance reports annually from the three Iowa Regent institutions: Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa. These reports demonstrate that students transferring from NICC succeed academically at a rate equal to transfer students from other Iowa community colleges. They also do well compared to these institutions' "native" students. For more detail, please refer to 1R4.

**3R4  Results for Building Stakeholder Relationships**

***Family Members*** – Parents and spouses are very important in helping our students succeed. In 2004, we implemented a parent/spouse orientation as part of our new student orientation. The attendance at these sessions has grown from two in our first session to approximately 50 in our most recent session.

***Transfer Institutions*** – NICC has partnered with a number of four-year institutions to develop joint admission agreements. This is a win-win situation for both our students and the collaborating colleges. In order to facilitate relationships with other colleges, we provide access to office space for representatives from nearby colleges. They spend time on our campuses each week or month, working with students intending to transfer to their institution.

***Business/Industry*** – Every vocational-technical program has an advisory board comprised of local business leaders. NICC has a total of 36 advisory boards. We hold memberships in 15 local Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations. Our Economic Development office surveys business and industry to determine training needs and deliver training specifically designed to meet those needs. NICC enters into contracts for workforce training with an average of 30 companies per year. On an annual basis, these contracts bring in almost $5 million in training assistance for business and industry.

***Communities*** – We are constantly engaged in collaborative ventures that meet the needs of our communities. Examples include:

- Our Peosta campus recently collaborated with the City of Peosta to build a recreational facility. As part of the agreement, NICC students and employees get to use the center to promote wellness and intramural activities.

- Our Town Clock Center for Professional Development in Dubuque hosts the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Northeast Iowa Business Accelerator. It also provides numerous training opportunities for local businesses.

- Allamakee County residents recently passed a bond referendum to construct an NICC Center in Waukon. We will collaborate with local schools, business, and industry to bring education and training to this location.

- The Cresco Center is a strong example of the synergistic relationship NICC has with the community of Cresco. The center was funded by the Cresco community and is located next to the local high school. Nearly 80% of high school seniors and 60% of high school juniors are taking college-level classes at this facility.

**3R5  Comparison to Other Institutions**

We have limited data available to determine how NICC compares with other institutions regarding student and stakeholder satisfaction.

We implemented our first CCSSE survey in April 2006.  Once we receive the results, we will be able to gauge our success against that of other community colleges in Iowa and the nation.

We also implemented our first round of Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), a companion survey for faculty.  This, too, will allow us to determine how we compare with other community colleges.  It will also help us identify differences in student and faculty perceptions of student engagement.  This will help us set a direction for bringing the two perceptions closer together.

One issue that has captured our attention is changes in enrollment patterns at NICC and other community colleges in Iowa.  Table 3-9 shows how our enrollment pattern compares to statewide averages.  The numbers come from the Iowa Community Colleges Fall 2005 Credit Student Enrollment Report published by the Iowa Department of Education.

*Table 3-9 Comparison of Enrollment Trends*

| Change in Credit Enrollment | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | **NICC** | **Iowa CCs** |
| Fall 2004 to Fall 2005 | -0.93% | 0.85 |
| **Change in Credit Hours** | | |
|  | **NICC** | **Iowa CCs** |
| Fall 2004 to Fall 2005 | -6.71% | -0.39% |

We are acutely aware of the need to address these changes in enrollment patterns and have developed specific strategies to stabilize or reverse this trend.  Our initiatives include developing a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, starting the development of an Educational Master Plan, and taking steps to enhance student life both on and off campus.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

**3I1  Methods of Improvement**

AQIP has given us a strong focus on continuous improvement.  One of the areas we are improving is data collection and analysis.  In the past, data collection and analysis were disjointed and sporadic, in part due to an antiquated administrative data processing system.  The fact that we had no central research department meant that staff often duplicated efforts to locate and analyze data.

We are making important improvements in this area.  We are in the process of converting all data to Datatel.  We have established an Office of Institutional Research and hired a Director of Institutional Research.  These steps will help us collect and monitor data related to student and stakeholder needs.  They will also tell us if we are successful in meeting those needs.

In addition, we are reviewing existing programs to see if they meet business and industry needs.  We are also pursuing new programs in response to local employment trends.  For instance, we are developing a Gas Utility Construction and Service Program at Peosta.  We are also exploring several biotechnology programs.

**3I2  Targets for Improvement**

Targets for improvement in identifying student and other stakeholder needs include:

- Converting all data to Datatel.
- Coordinating all reports through the Office of Institutional Research.
- Analyzing results of CCSSE and CCFSSE.
- Locating funding for a district environmental scan.
- Completing needs assessment of regional employment patterns and developing new programs that match those needs.

We will use the following channels to communicate our results and improvement priorities to students and other stakeholders:

- News releases
- NICC web site
- Board of Trustees meetings
- Advisory board meetings
- Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Economic development meetings
- *Communiqué* internal newsletter
- All-College Day
- Department and division meetings

# Category 4:  Valuing People

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 4C1  Organization of Environment, Activities, and Jobs

At NICC, we have structured our work environment and activities to focus on student learning and development.  This means looking at them from the perspective of a student coming to NICC for the first time.  We continually ask ourselves:  How can we make it easy and convenient for a student to enter the college?

In order to accomplish this goal, we have located some important offices in close proximity on both campuses.  They include Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Central Advising, and the Book Store.  A new student can complete all the essential steps in signing up for college in one location.  This one-stop format makes it easy for students to "come on board."  For students who are unable to come on campus, we offer many of these services online.

We structure our physical environment to make it convenient for students to attend classes as well.  Deans' offices are centrally located so that students can feel welcome to stop in and ask questions and address any concerns they may have.  Faculty offices are located near classrooms for the convenience of both faculty and students.  Faculty post their office hours so that students know when they can find them.  In general, faculty keep an "open door" policy, encouraging students to stop in and visit about their courses, assignments, or life.

We structure classes to promote student learning and development.  We offer classes in a variety of formats, based on student need.  Core academic classes are offered several times each day, including mornings, afternoons, and evenings.  We also offer many core classes in a distance learning format.

We keep class sizes small to support student learning.  Class sizes range from 10 to 30 students, with the average class having 15.5 students.  Our students often make positive comments about class sizes, saying that a smaller class allows them to have a voice in the classroom and get to know their instructor and other students better.

Most of our support services for student learning are located close together.  In fact, both campuses have an area dedicated to support services, including the Library, Learning Center, Writing Center, and Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center.

Finally, we maintain a cluster of activities focused on engaging students in campus and community life.  The cafeteria is a daily gathering place for students, faculty, and staff on both campuses.  It also serves as a site for special events.  Student Activities is located close by, offering recreational and student leadership activities on and off campus.  Employment and Career Services is located down the hall, offering students assistance in finding internships and jobs, both before and after graduation.

When we organize our work environment and activities, we keep students at the forefront.  We use the same principle when we determine how to classify jobs.  We balance full-time and part-time employees to provide service to students where and when they need it.  We also provide faculty, administrators, and support staff who are student-centered and well prepared to meet student needs.

Another way that we use job classifications to promote student learning is by inviting students to join our workforce.  Many students hold part-time or work study jobs on campus.  Some complete an internship in one of our offices.

### 4C2  Institutional and Geographic Factors

Like many rural community colleges, NICC covers a large geographical area.  The district spans 4,991 square miles, and it takes almost three hours to travel from the far north end of the district to the far south.  The size of the district creates a challenge in terms of making education accessible to students throughout the district.

Most of our educational activities take place on our Calmar and Peosta campuses.  The Calmar campus is centrally located in the northern end of the district in a traditional rural area with small towns and farms.  The Peosta campus is conveniently located for students living in the

southern part of the district. It is 10 miles west of Dubuque, population 57,686. This campus tends to draw a more diverse student population, including both rural and urban students. Due to these differences, each campus maintains a unique "campus identity."

One of our biggest challenges is to create a one-college system. In daily life it is easy to think of the two campuses as separate entities. In order to overcome this tendency, we are working hard to create a common identity, a sense of working together as a big team.

We have taken several steps to promote a one-college system. One of the most important is to make sure that our top administrative positions cover the whole district. The positions listed in Table 4-1 are district-wide. With the exception of the Assistant to the President for Resource Development, the individuals serving in these positions are part of the President's Cabinet. In any given week, most of them spend time on both campuses. This makes them accessible to students and employees, and exposes them to the unique culture on each campus.

*Table 4-1 District-Wide Administrative Positions*

| Position | Base |
| --- | --- |
| President | Calmar |
| Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services | Calmar |
| Vice President of Academic Affairs | Peosta |
| Vice President of Economic Development | Calmar |
| Dean of Student Services | Peosta |
| Director of Marketing, News, and Publications | Calmar |
| Director of Human Resources | Calmar |
| Secretary to the President and Board | Calmar |
| Assistant to the President for Resource Development | Peosta |

Also included on the President's Cabinet are the Calmar and Peosta Provosts. This, again, helps ensure that both campuses have a voice in key decisions and that campus concerns can be brought directly to the top. Cabinet meets three times per month, including once on each campus and once by phone.

In addition to having top administrators cover the whole district, we maintain a full set of administrators, faculty, and support staff on each campus. For a listing of duplicated administrative positions, see 6P3.

A unique aspect of NICC is the reliance on satellite centers to bring education to people in their home community. We currently maintain six NICC Centers, including two in Dubuque and one in Cresco, Oelwein, New Hampton, and Manchester. We are in the process of building a seventh center in Waukon.

Due to their small size, the NICC centers operate differently than the two campuses. Our Center Coordinators wear many hats. They take care of all functions related to admissions, registration, advising, academic and continuing education offerings, facility upkeep, and community relations. Some, but not all, have support staff to help them in this task.

The centers are a wonderful strength for the College. They give us a visible presence throughout the district, and they come with great community support. The challenge, of course, is to create a common identity in such a decentralized system.

Geography is clearly a factor in how we classify jobs, but we also look at time needed to fulfill job duties. Like other community colleges, we rely on a blend of full-time and part-time employees. We currently employ 545 individuals in regular, non-temporary positions. Of these, 62% are full-time positions, and 38% are part-time positions.

NICC uses part-time employees in the same way that most community colleges do. Part-time employees participate in all key functions of the college, including teaching and activities supporting teaching.

We currently have 126 full-time faculty and 57 part-time regular faculty. Full-time faculty comprise 69% of this total, and part-time regular faculty make up the remaining 31%. We classify instructors as part-time regular faculty if they teach at least 9 credit hours per term for two out of three academic terms annually. They are also classified as part-time regular faculty if they teach at least 144 contact hours each fall and spring or 144 contact hours in the spring and 112 contact hours in the summer.

In addition to part-time regular faculty, we employ 144 adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty often teach one or two courses per semester, and most of them maintain another job to support themselves. Although high in number,

our adjunct faculty teach less than 45% of our total number of credit hours.

Part-time employees play a vital role at NICC, and we make a sincere effort to reward them for their efforts. Part-time regular and adjunct faculty are encouraged to participate in committee work and meetings. When they do, we pay them an hourly meeting rate, which is typically half of their hourly teaching rate.

### 4C3 Demographic Trends

As we try to anticipate our workforce needs over the next decade, we analyze both external and internal demographic trends.

### External Trends

Demographic changes in our district have the potential to affect our workforce needs. The size of our workforce is closely tied to enrollment. When enrollment is up, we expand; when enrollment is down, we contract. NICC has experienced a long period of enrollment growth – until now. For the first time in five years, enrollment has taken a slight downward turn. We have fewer students and fewer credit hours. For more detail, please see 3R1, 3R2, and 3R5.

We are currently working on a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that will assist us in planning for our workforce needs. In addition, our new Director of Institutional Research is analyzing enrollment data and exploring an environmental scan so that we can prepare for any changes we need to make in our workforce.

We expect to have to respond to the following trends:

- A decreasing population of high school graduates, creating a potential for fewer traditional-age students.

- An all-time low unemployment rate in the region, creating a potential for a drop in enrollment.

- An increasing number of part-time students, creating a need to schedule courses outside the normal work day.

- Growing diversity in the region, creating a need to diversify our faculty and staff.

The district's demographic changes are subtle, but significant. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 show the ethnic composition of two of the counties we serve: Dubuque and Winneshiek. The Peosta campus is located in Dubuque County, and the Calmar campus is located in Winneshiek County. At a glance, the two counties appear to be very homogenous.

*Table 4-2 Ethnicity in Dubuque and Winneshiek Counties*

| U.S. Census 2000 | Dubuque | Winneshiek |
|---|---|---|
| White | 97.1% | 97.9% |
| Black or African-American | .9% | .5% |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | .1% | .1% |
| Asian | .6% | .8% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | .1% | - |
| Some other race | .5% | .2% |
| Two or more races | .7% | .5% |
| TOTAL | 100.0% | 100.0% |

*Table 4-3 Hispanic/Latino Population in Dubuque and Winneshiek Counties*

| U.S. Census 2000 | Dubuque | Winneshiek |
|---|---|---|
| White, not of Latino origin | 96.5% | 97.4% |
| Hispanic/Latino origin | 1.2% | .8% |

However, while the population at large is quite homogenous, we have pockets of great diversity within our district. For instance, the town of Postville (population 2,273) is located 20 miles from our Calmar campus. Postville has a large population of Latinos as well as first-generation immigrants from 25 countries, many of whom are primed to come to college or send their children to college. Tables 4-4 and 4-5 show the diversity of Postville.

*Table 4-4 Ethnicity in Postville*

| U.S. Census 2000 | Postville |
|---|---|
| White | 79.6% |
| Black or African-American | - |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | .6% |
| Asian | .7% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | - |
| Some other race | 17.0% |
| Two or more races | 2.1% |

*Table 4-5 Hispanic/Latino Population in Postville*

| U.S. Census 2000 | Postville |
|---|---|
| White, not of Hispanic/Latino origin | 79.4% |
| Hispanic/Latino origin | 20.6% |

The diverse environment in Postville is indicative of a changing demographic environment in all of northeast Iowa. We expect to continue to see a growing population of Latinos in the region, and we wish to welcome them by having faculty and staff who can relate to their experience.

### *Internal Trends*

We are also looking internally to anticipate some upcoming workforce changes. We are anticipating three trends that will impact the composition of our workforce. They include a number of employees nearing retirement age, a possible change in early retirement benefits, and an institutional goal of having our workforce match the demographic composition of our student body.

The first factor is, quite simply, that our employees are getting older. Currently, the average age of full-time faculty is 49.6. The average age of Cabinet members is 48.3. Full-time administrators have an average age of 44.8, and full-time support staff have an average age of 44.6.

NICC still has employees who came on board when the institution started in 1965. Like other community colleges, we are facing a wave of retirements as these early employees conclude their careers. These retirements are likely to lead to a "generational shift" in our workforce.

Another factor impacting our workforce is a possible change in our early retirement policy. Since 1996, the Board of Trustees has offered an early retirement bonus to employees ages 55 to 62. Until now, this option has only attracted a small number of employees. In fact, only 10% of those eligible have taken the offer each year.

However, this situation may change. Due to recent court rulings in Iowa, the Board of Trustees is debating whether to continue the early retirement benefit. If the board reduces or eliminates the early retirement benefit, we may see a significant number of employees requesting early retirement. A "rush" of early retirements has the potential to create more openings than in a normal period.

The third factor influencing our workforce is an institutional goal to have our workforce mirror the student body and the communities we serve in terms of demographics. We are particularly interested in gender and ethnicity.

Currently, we have more women than men in all employee groups. Women comprise 85% of administrators and 65% of Cabinet. They also make up 55% of full-time faculty and 80% of full-time support staff.

Our goal is not to have an absolutely equal ratio of men and women working at NICC. We are more interested in having gender diversity at all levels of the institution. We are especially pleased when we have the opportunity to employ people in non-traditional gender roles. This gives students a living example of men and women stepping out of traditional gender roles and pursuing interesting careers. For instance, we are pleased to have a male nurse and a female electrician on our instructional staff.

Currently the ethnic composition of our workforce closely resembles that of the student body. In fact, 98% of our employees are non-Hispanic Whites. Table 4-6 shows the composition of our student body, although it must be noted that a large percentage of students did not report ethnicity. If we exclude non-reporting students, the percentage of non-Hispanic Whites would be 96.5%.

*Table 4-6 Student Ethnicity*

| Fall 2005 Enrollment | |
|---|---|
| White | 89.8% |
| Black or African-American | .9% |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | .1% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | .6% |
| Hispanic/Latino | .8% |
| Unknown or multiple races | .8% |
| Didn't report | 7.0% |

While we have been able to maintain a close match between our employees and students, we anticipate that our student population will become more diverse in the next 10 years. In our strategic plan, we have formulated specific goals for recruiting and hiring individuals who can respond to a diverse population. We are especially aware of the need to serve first and second generation Latino immigrants. In order to do so, we need employees who understand immigration issues, can work with English language learners, and can build a comfortable environment for Latino students.

### 4C4 Training Initiatives

Recent training initiatives have focused on technology and faculty certification.

*Technology*
NICC recently converted all data to Datatel and launched a web portal called NICC Xpress built on the CampusCruiser framework. As part of this process, we provided training to all employees appropriate to their needs to interact with the new system.

- We collaborated with three other colleges to provide Datatel training to employees involved in implementing the financial, human resources, and student modules of Datatel.

- Next we invited Datatel consultants to come on campus to work one-on-one with administrators and support staff to master the system.

- Finally, we provided training to faculty in how to use NICC Xpress to search for courses, register students, and report attendance and grades.

The past year also gave us an opportunity to focus on instructional technology. Some faculty took courses in how to teach on the ICN. Others learned how to design and implement an online course using WebCT. In addition, our Director of Distance Learning worked one-on-one with a number of faculty to help them make their online courses user-friendly for students.

*Faculty Certification*
Our other major training initiative emerged from the NICC Quality Faculty Plan. The plan requires faculty who have not previously taken similar courses to complete two of the following three courses:

- History of the Community College
- Diverse Learners
- Teaching Methods and Assessments

In the past, faculty traveled to other colleges and universities to complete these courses. Since fall 2004, we have tried to ease this burden by offering these courses online through our Continuing Education division. We offer the courses for certification, undergraduate, and graduate credit, and make them available to community college instructors nationwide. The courses are taught by a recently retired and highly respected instructor with a Ph.D. in education and years of experience with both traditional and online instruction in the community college setting.

*Future Plans*
In order to move to the next phase of faculty and staff training, we plan to administer a faculty needs assessment in the fall of 2006. We will conduct similar surveys for administrators and support staff. Our plan is to use these needs assessments to develop a comprehensive faculty and staff development program.

## PROCESSES

### 4P1  Identification of Requirements
NICC sets clear and consistent expectations for employees regarding credentials, skills, and values. We use the hiring process to ensure that our employees meet our expectations in these areas.

**Faculty** – NICC has unique requirements for new and continuing faculty. In 2002 the Iowa Legislature eliminated the community college licensure program and created legislation requiring each community college to design a Quality Faculty Plan. A district-wide committee worked together to design the NICC Quality Faculty Plan. Table 4-7 shows our expectations for new and continuing faculty.

*Table 4-7 Faculty Requirements*

| New Faculty |
| --- |
| Complete in the first three years of teaching: |
| • New Teacher Workshop |
| • Choice of two of the following: <br> - Diverse Learners <br> - History of the Community College <br> - Teaching Methods and Assessment |
| • *Arts and Science faculty* <br> Master's degree in assigned area or Master's degree plus 12 credit hours in assigned area |
| • *Vocational and Technical faculty* <br> Baccalaureate or graduate degree in assigned or related area OR special training and at least 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in assigned area |

| Continuing Faculty |
| --- |
| Current licenses will be recognized until one year past their normal expiration date. At that time continuing faculty must meet the requirements for recertification. |
| • *Arts and Science Faculty* – See above. |
| • *Vocational and Technical Faculty* – See above. |
| • *All Faculty* <br> 4 credit hours or 6.0 CEUs (60 clock hours) of continuing education in field every five years |

*Administrators* – NICC also sets high expectations for administrators, including specific requirements for education and work experience. Search committees hiring for administrative positions carefully screen the academic preparation and pertinent experience of all candidates. Those hired must meet the requisite criteria for the position.

Once hired, administrators are expected to remain current in their field. They budget for professional development activities and receive professional development leave to attend training each year. Several administrators and supervisors participate in Leadership Institute for a New Century (LINC) and Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC). For more details about these programs, please see 4P4.

*Support Staff* – Support staff play a critical role in our daily work, and we have clear expectations for them as well. Search committees look for pertinent experience and education. They also look at the results of pre-interview skills tests. These tests are required for all service, secretarial, and clerical support staff positions.

### 4P2  Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Employees

### Recruitment and Hiring
We recruit employees as appropriate to each position. We advertise all positions on the NICC web site and in national, state, or local media. We encourage employees to apply for positions that will help them advance, but we also actively recruit applicants from outside. We maintain strong ties with leaders in education, business, and industry, and we are often successful in attracting candidates who have the type of "real-life" experience our students value.

For top administrative positions, we advertise nationally and regionally. If the position is district-wide, we establish a search committee comprised of employees from throughout the district. After screening the initial pool of applicants, the search committee invites the top candidates to spend a full day on each campus. The candidates participate in formal interviews and informal meetings. We also hold open forums on each campus so that faculty and staff can meet the candidates and ask questions.

They then have the opportunity to give feedback to the search committee.

For supervisors, faculty, and staff, we advertise in regional and local media. We use a search committee comprised of the immediate supervisor and faculty or staff from the same or closely related departments. The search committee interviews the candidates and makes a recommendation to the immediate supervisor who makes a final decision.

For support staff positions, we first advertise internally. This meets the requirements of our collective bargaining agreement with the NICC Support Staff Association. After five days, we advertise the position externally by placing ads in local newspapers and on our web site. The immediate supervisor and individuals from the department review and screen applications. After skills testing, the committee invites the top candidates for an interview and makes a decision about whom to hire.

### Orientation
New employees meet with their supervisor to learn about their job and the responsibilities that go along with it. They meet with the Director of Human Resources to go over the benefit plan.

We invite new adjunct and part-time regular faculty to attend an orientation session before the start of each semester. The orientation covers a wide range of topics, including pay and benefits, certification under the Quality Faculty Plan, policies and procedures, student services, and course and classroom management tips.

We are in the process of creating a similar orientation for new supervisors. We hope to have the supervisor orientation ready for implementation in the fall of 2006.

Another way that we orient faculty is through faculty mentoring. In FY 2005, we piloted a formal faculty mentoring program with all new full-time faculty. They met with their mentor on a regular basis throughout the year. At the end of the year, they said they appreciated the opportunity to have a mentor. They also suggested making the program more informal. Based on this advice, we have continued to provide informal mentoring opportunities with help from the Dean in each academic department.

### *Retention*

So far we have not experienced major problems with employee retention. NICC is an attractive place to work, and we tend to have a very stable and loyal workforce. Table 4-8 shows the average tenure of various employee groups.

*Table 4-8 Longevity by Position Type*

| Position Type | Average Longevity |
|---|---|
| **Full-Time** | |
| Administrative Staff | 9.4 years |
| Faculty | 11.9 years |
| Support/Service Staff | 10.8 years |
| **Part-Time** | |
| Administrative Staff | 3.4 years |
| Faculty | 3.5 years |
| Support/Service Staff | 3.3 years |

Not surprisingly, we only encounter retention issues with one employee group – adjunct faculty. Adjuncts tend to feel less connected to the college than other employees. They only come on campus a few times each week. Their hours change every semester. They often have other jobs that pull them away from the college. It is no wonder that they often move on after a few years of teaching.

Despite these challenges, we try to promote retention among adjuncts. For instance, we invite all adjunct faculty to attend an orientation session before the start of each term. We offer meeting pay, allowing adjunct faculty to receive compensation for participating in college meetings and events. Finally, we encourage adjuncts to get to know our full-time faculty and use them as a resource.

### 4P3  Contribution of Processes and Activities to Setting High Standards

Communication and cooperation are perennial issues due to the size of the district and the number of employees. We use several techniques to promote communication and collaboration within the college.

- Faculty come together during our annual faculty development days.

- Support staff gather with their colleagues for development activities twice a year.

- District-wide committees find creative ways to meet on a regular basis. For instance,

rather than having some committee members drive the two hours required to reach the other campus, most committees meet at the half-way point in Elkader. Committees also use the ICN and conference calls to cut down on travel time and to enhance communication and collaboration.

Perhaps the most important time that we build communication and collaboration is during our College Day in April. We use this day to bring together all NICC members for a full day of learning about the college, building new skills, sharing innovations, and setting a common direction for the future.

The focus of our 2005 All-College Day was strategic planning and data-driven decision making. We heard a keynote address on community college trends. Afterwards, our President linked these trends to NICC and guided us through a newly completed draft of V7, the college strategic plan. At the end of the day employees participated in lively discussion at their tables as they brainstormed creative ways to implement the plan.

The theme for 2006 was entrepreneurship. Participants heard a keynote on bringing entrepreneurial thinking into all aspects of the community college, from recruitment to educational programs to community partnerships. After the keynote, a panel of entrepreneurs shared the nuts and bolts of thinking like an entrepreneur. Again, participants gathered at their tables to discuss how to "catch" the entrepreneurial spirit. Like the previous year, participants came up with creative ways to move the college forward by linking all their ideas to the strategic plan.

### 4P4  Training and Development

### *Professional Development*

Because our employees tend to stay with us for a long time, we have ample opportunity to help them develop and contribute throughout their careers. We promote and model the value of lifelong learning in a variety of ways.

- We encourage and provide opportunities for professional development.

- The Faculty Development Committee on each campus plans professional development activities for faculty, including an annual faculty workshop day.  The committee also makes funding available to faculty who wish to attend regional and national conferences.

- Support staff on each campus have a committee that plans professional development activities twice a year.  In addition, supervisors encourage support staff to attend trainings that will help them in their jobs.  They receive release time to attend these activities.

- All regular employees may take both credit and non-credit classes at NICC tuition-free.  This benefit provides an opportunity for many employees, especially support staff, to complete a two-year degree or make progress towards a four-year degree while working at NICC.

Another way that we show our commitment to education is by rewarding faculty and staff who complete a degree.

For instance, NICC provides salary advancement for faculty completing degrees, ranging from associate to doctoral degrees.  The annual contract includes a matrix with different salary lanes for faculty.  Faculty can make lane changes and increase their annual salary by completing a degree or a specific number of credit hours.

We also offer salary advancement to administrators and non-teaching staff who complete advanced degrees.  Administrative and non-teaching staff who attain an advanced degree increase their salary by the highest of $3,000 or 5% of their current salary.

We use the scheduled performance evaluation to reinforce professional development.  Our current evaluation process meets our contractual obligations, but we would like to make it more meaningful.  Our hope is to support our employees in ongoing development that helps them grow personally and professionally and encourages them to contribute to the college throughout their careers.

### *Leadership Opportunities*
An important aspect of helping our employees contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers is to provide opportunities for advancement and special projects

We offer several avenues for employees to build leadership capacity.  Every year we send selected administrators to the Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC) for training and networking with colleagues from other community colleges.  We send selected Deans and senior faculty to Leadership Institute for a New Century (LINC).  This program provides information, skills training, and networking opportunities.

Finally, we recently launched an internal leadership program.  Called *Leading from Within*, this program matches four or five faculty or professional staff with the President, a Vice President, or a Provost for one or two semesters.  During this time, participants complete a leadership project that ties in with the college strategic plan.  For instance, one *Leading From Within* participant is currently working with our President to explore how to bring learning communities to NICC.

### 4P5  Determination of Training Needs
We determine training needs in the following ways:

- Individuals meet with their supervisor as part of their scheduled evaluation.  During the evaluation process, they work together to determine training needs.

- Our faculty and support staff committees discuss training needs with their respective groups and use these discussions as a basis for planning annual development activities.

- Cabinet determines institutional training needs related to major changes in operations.  Datatel training is a good example of this type of institutional need.

Our next step is to center more of our trainings on the strategic plan.  This is part of our effort to create a culture of continuous improvement.  In order to effectively implement our strategic plan, we need to develop capacity in each major area covered by the strategic plan.  They include:

- Student access and success
- Teaching excellence and innovation
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Planning and continuous improvement
- College environment and diversity
- Fiscal management and resource development
- Instructional and institutional technology

In order to create a comprehensive employee development plan, we plan to conduct needs assessments in the near future.  We will use the results to design training initiatives and budget for these initiatives so that they can reach employees at all levels of the institution.

**4P6  Personnel Evaluation System**
NICC uses a separate evaluation system for each group of employees.

Administrative and support staff members are evaluated by their immediate supervisor through an annual review.  These reviews focus on how well the employee is doing in meeting his or her job duties.

Faculty evaluation is dictated by the collective bargaining process.  Currently the contract states that new full-time and part-time regular faculty are to be evaluated twice each year for three years and every three years thereafter.  Adjunct faculty are evaluated as appropriate.

Faculty evaluation consists of a self-assessment citing accomplishments, challenges, and goals for the upcoming year.  The supervising Dean observes a teaching session and takes notes to share with faculty.  The Dean also fills out a written assessment.  The two then meet for a conference to review these assessments, come to a common understanding, and discuss any issues of concern.  Both parties sign the evaluations, and they are placed in the faculty member's personnel file.

A task force is currently working on revising the administrative and support staff evaluation process.  Part of the reason for reviewing and revising the process is to refocus our evaluations on our primary mission – helping students learn – and on the goals of our strategic plan.  In the future, our evaluations may include specific performance goals for administrators and support staff.

This may inspire changes in how we evaluate faculty as well.  Because faculty evaluations are covered by the collective bargaining process, we must use this process to negotiate any changes.

**4P7  Recognition, Reward, and Compensation Systems**
NICC maintains a strong system of recognition and rewards.  The system includes the following:

- The monthly internal newsletter, *Communiqué*, highlights individual and team accomplishments.  These may include degrees, awards, successful projects, and successful evaluations.

- At the end of each school year, we hold a recognition assembly for faculty and staff on each campus.

- The assembly honors employees with "years of service" pins, beginning with five years of continuous service and continuing upward at five-year intervals.  This tradition reinforces loyalty as employees applaud those who have served five, 10, 15, 20, 25, and sometimes 30 or more years.

- The assembly also includes a *Milestones* recognition celebrating those who have completed a degree or received an award or recognition.

- The assembly concludes with the revelation of the *Extra Effort Award.*  This award goes to an individual on each campus who has gone over and beyond the call of duty and made a significant contribution to the College in terms of time and energy.  All college employees have the opportunity to nominate one of their peers for the award.  The final selection is made by a committee of the three most recent award recipients.  The *Extra Effort Award* is a fun way to end the assembly because it is surrounded by great secrecy and speculation and presented with great fanfare to the usually unsuspecting recipient.

- Each year a faculty member on each campus is nominated for the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) award and gets to participate in the annual NISOD conference.

- Each year an administrator, faculty member, and support staff member are nominated for the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees awards.

- Faculty are honored each year with a special faculty lunch served by administrators.

- Support staff are honored each year with a special support staff brunch served by faculty and administrators.

- Supervisors show appreciation to faculty and staff as often as they can – through a pat on the back, a thank you, a note, or recognition of events important to the employee.  These are small, but vital steps, in creating a workplace that celebrates the contributions of each individual.

We also try to reward our employees by providing good compensation.  The Board of Trustees sets the compensation range for professional, non-bargaining staff.  The collective bargaining process governs all other salaries, including those of faculty and support staff.

We are currently reviewing our job classifications to make sure that we compensate employees fairly.  We have created an RFP to solicit proposals from qualified consultants for a compensation and classification study.  If funded through the annual strategic planning process, this study will help us review how we classify specific professional and support staff positions.  The study will give us an opportunity to make changes to our current system.

In addition to salary, NICC provides a generous benefit package.  The benefit package for full-time employees includes:

- Family or single health insurance
- Family or single dental coverage
- Term life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Retirement contribution
- Tuition-exempt classes for employees
- Tuition reimbursement program for dependents

Because of the bargaining process, NICC is unable to reward individual faculty and support staff with merit raises.  However, as described under 4P4, faculty and staff have the opportunity to advance their salaries by completing additional education.

NICC also offers other, more subtle opportunities for rewards.  They include:

- Opportunities for faculty to teach beyond what is specified in their contract, including Winterim classes, May term classes, summer classes, and "overload" classes during the fall and spring terms.

- Opportunities for administrators and support staff to teach credit courses.

- Opportunities for faculty, administrators, and support staff to teach non-credit courses in an area of interest.

- Release time for faculty engaging in special projects.

- A $1,000 bonus or 40-hour release time for employees participating in *Leading from Within*.

**4P8  Key Issues of Motivation**
NICC uses a variety of communication tools to gauge motivation.

The 2002 AQIP Constellation Survey gave us a sense of what our employees see as strengths.  In fact, the survey assigned specific "strength scores" to areas that are important and done well in the eyes of our employees.  We rated high in the following areas:

- NICC trusts faculty, staff, and administration to do their jobs effectively.

- Faculty, staff, and administration have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to improve NICC's effectiveness in the future.

While there is a general sense of trust and confidence at NICC, it is nevertheless important to continually gauge and nurture motivation.

All employees are encouraged to communicate openly with their supervisor.  They are invited to share concerns about their position or the institution at large.  This is a very effective way to gauge individual motivation.

In order to test the pulse of the community, our President holds frequent conversation sessions on each campus.  The purpose of these sessions is to give faculty and staff an opportunity to raise issues of concern.  Occasionally, we arrange a conversation session to discuss a specific area of concern, such as benefit changes or dropping enrollment.

The collective bargaining process provides another way to gauge motivation.  Through this process, administrators, faculty, and support staff share proposals regarding work life, compensation, and benefits.  The process serves to illuminate key issues of concern.  It gives faculty and support staff an opportunity to bring up what is most important to them in the negotiation process.

Over the next two years, NICC will shift to using interest-based bargaining instead of traditional bargaining process.  Interest-based bargaining works on the principle of achieving consensus on key areas of interest and working through brainstorming, conversation, and compromise to achieve mutual agreement.

**4P9  Employee Satisfaction, Health and Safety, and Well-Being**
NICC strives to be a safe, caring workplace.  Individual supervisors are charged with direct communication with individuals under their supervision and with maintaining a healthy, safe environment.

In recent years NICC has taken many steps to promote health on campus.  They include:

- Smoke-free buildings
- Designated outside smoking areas
- Annual influenza vaccines on campus, offered free to high-risk individuals and at low cost to everyone else
- Annual employee health screenings
- Health brochures and information
- Referral to mental health and substance abuse services
- Access to the Peosta Recreation Center for Peosta employees
- Initiation of a Weight Watchers group at Calmar

NICC also supports employee health and well-being by providing a comprehensive health plan for employees and their families.

An ongoing challenge is rising health care costs.  In order to address this issue, we formed a Premium Equivalent Committee (PEC) to oversee NICC's self-funded health plan and come up with ideas to maximize benefits while keeping costs in line.

Last year the Board of Trustees asked the PEC to study options for savings.  Working with local health and wellness experts and personnel from the health fund's third-party administrator, the committee collected data, debated possible changes, and crafted a plan.

Both bargaining groups included the PEC-developed plan for change in their proposals, and all but one of the seven proposed changes were approved during the bargaining process.  The changes are estimated to save the College almost $250,000 in health plan expenditures, and the fully-paid premium benefits for single and family coverage were preserved.

Personal safety is very important at NICC.  We provide campus security at all facilities during evenings and weekends.

We have also taken steps to prepare for human and natural emergencies.  In the past year, we have formed a Building Emergency Response Team (BERT), updated our emergency plan, and conducted regular training exercises.

In 2005 seven employees attended training in Maryland to learn the basics of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).  One of the components is the Incident Command System (ICS).  This sets up a hierarchy of people who maintain safety during an emergency.  Each campus now has three employees appointed to each position in the ICS hierarchy.

**4P10  Measures of Valuing People**
We have limited experience in collecting data related to valuing people.  Some of the measures we collect include:

- Salary and benefit data
- Degree attainment
- Average longevity for each employee group
- Ratio of faculty to students
- Participation in and evaluation of new faculty orientation program and mentoring program

## RESULTS (R)

### 4R1  Results for Valuing People
We have several results related to valuing people:

- Since fall 2003, we have provided orientation to 30 full‑time and 50 part‑time faculty.

- Since fall 2004, we have matched 10 new faculty with a mentor.

- We continue to have a low ratio of students to faculty.  If we convert all faculty to full‑time equivalents, we have one full‑time faculty member per 19.7 students.

- We have strong tenure among full‑time employees, including an average of 11.9 years for faculty, 10.8 years for support staff, and 9.4 years for administrators.

### 4R2  Results in Processes Associated with Valuing People
One of our AQIP Action Projects is entitled Enhancing Staff Excellence and ties directly to AQIP Criterion 4: Valuing People.  Over the last three years, we have improved our processes for valuing people by:

- Establishing a Quality Faculty Plan.
- Offering certification courses online.
- Creating faculty orientation and mentoring programs.
- Establishing *Leading from Within*.
- Starting the process of reviewing our annual performance evaluations.

### 4R3  Productivity and Effectiveness
We have not yet started measuring the productivity and effectiveness of our employees in helping us achieve our goals.  This will be addressed when we start collecting performance measures for our strategic plan.

### 4R4  Comparison to Other Institutions
One way to compare NICC to other colleges is to look at average faculty salaries.  According to the Integrated Post‑Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the salary for full‑time faculty at NICC (equated to 9‑month contracts) is $39,854.  This means that NICC ranks number 10 out of 15 community colleges in Iowa in faculty salaries.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

### 4I1  Methods of Improvement
When we joined AQIP, we made a commitment to the AQIP principles and criteria.  We strengthened this commitment when we chose to focus one of our initial action projects on valuing people.  While we have made significant improvements in valuing people, we still have more to do.

We will involve a variety of groups in our effort to improve our processes and systems for valuing people.  They include the following:

- NICC Higher Education Association
- NICC Support Staff Association
- Quality Faculty Plan Committee
- Faculty Development Committees
- Premium Equivalent Committee
- Performance Evaluation Task Force

### 4I2  Targets for Improvement
In the next three years, we would like to achieve the following results related to valuing people:

- Complete a compensation and classification study and make necessary changes.

- Move to interest‑based bargaining to promote a more collaborative process of negotiating pay and benefits.

- Conduct regular needs assessments of faculty, administrators, and support staff to determine professional development needs.

- Design and implement a comprehensive staff development program.

# Category 5:  Leading and Communicating

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 5C1  Leadership and Communication
The leadership and communication systems at NICC are changing.  Until two years ago, we operated with a traditional hierarchy and a fairly closed communication system.  This started changing when our new President, Dr. Penny Wills, came on board in July 2004.

Over the past two years, the President has promoted two important values: shared decision making and open communication.

The President chose to maintain a traditional hierarchy at the top of the organization.  At the same time she introduced elements of shared governance by involving employees from every level in key decisions.

Graph 5-1 shows the hierarchy at the top of the organization, including the Board of Trustees, President, and members of the Executive Team and Cabinet.  Members of the Executive Team are shaded in gray.

*Trustees* - The Board of Trustees has ultimate authority over all decisions at NICC.  This includes setting a direction for the future, making policy decisions, and approving the annual budget.  The board has nine members, each elected by voters for a three-year term.

*President* – The President is responsible for all decisions at NICC and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees.  She relies on two primary groups of decision makers:  the Executive Team and Cabinet.

*Executive Team* – In addition to the President, the Executive Team includes the three Vice Presidents.   They convene as needed to make college-wide decisions.

*Cabinet* - Cabinet includes key administrators in Graph 5-1.  The President uses Cabinet as the primary vehicle for making institutional decisions.  The group meets three times per month to discuss and make decisions about institutional issues, such as enrollment, services, facilities, and budget.

*Graph 5-1 – Leaders Involved in Key Decisions*
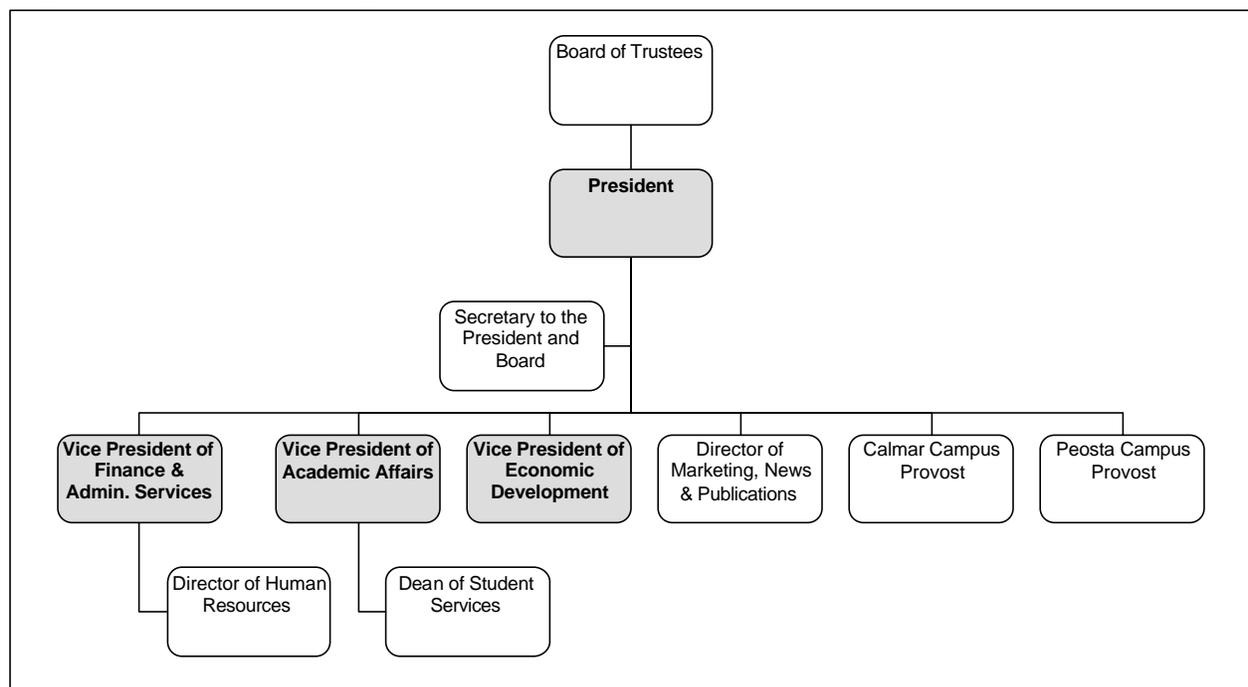
The President strongly believes in having every member of the team engaged in making decisions. In order to accomplish this, she has designed an annual planning cycle that works from the bottom up. It starts with departments developing action plans and passing them on to three district-wide committees with representation from all levels of the College.

Table 5-2 shows the three committees and their responsibilities. A Vice President serves on each committee, but is not a voting member. Instead, the Vice President is there to provide administrative support and facilitate communication with Cabinet.

*Table 5-2 Key Decision-Making Committees*

| Committee | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Strategic Planning Committee | This committee is responsible for the overall implementation and continued development of the strategic plan. Committee charges include: <br>• Develop and guide the planning process of the College in regards to strategic planning. <br>• Monitor the work of the College's departments as the current plan is implemented. <br>• Engage the College community in revising the strategic plan to reflect the dynamic mission, values, and goals of NICC in future years. <br>The Vice President of Economic Development provides administrative support. |
| College Vision Committee | This committee is responsible for engaging members of the College community in integrating individual department plans with a strong sense of continuous quality improvement. Responsibilities include: <br>• Communicate the College's vision, mission, and goals by soliciting annual department and division action plans and budgeting needs. <br>• Assign subcommittees/work groups to address particular strategic initiatives for which there is no existing committee or work group. <br>• Make recommendations to the President or Cabinet as necessary. <br>• Use the AQIP model as an integral guide to continuous quality improvement. <br>The Vice President of Academic Affairs provides administrative support for this team. |
| Budget Committee | This committee is charged with ensuring that the College's budget reflects the mission and goals of the strategic plan. |

Specifically this committee will:

• Be knowledgeable about the College budget.
• Review all budget components of recommended proposals for College planning.
• Recommend to Cabinet re-allocation of budget dollars to fund specific initiatives and/or the need for additional streams of revenue.
• Ensure that the funding of the goals of the strategic plan is foremost in the budgeting process.

The Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services provides support for this committee.

The President designed the new committee structure in part to facilitate shared decision making, and in part to open the channels of communication.

NICC uses a variety of communication channels. Our committee structure serves to link our employees vertically and horizontally. Other channels of communication include:

• An open-door policy, inviting employees to visit with the President one-on-one
• College-wide e-mails
• Announcements on NICC Xpress
• *Communiqué* internal newsletter
• Campus meetings and forums
• All-College Day
• Workshop days
• Department meetings
• Cabinet meetings
• Campus Council meetings
• Educational Services Administration meetings
• Board meetings

**5C2 Alignment of Leadership System with Views of Board and Senior Leaders**
The goal of our new leadership system is to create clear and consistent decisions throughout the institution. At the same time the new system ensures that all decisions align with the views and practices of the Board of Trustees and the President. We do so by taking the following steps:

*1. Communicating the views and practices of the Board of Trustees to all employees.*
The President communicates the views and practices of the Board of Trustees by sending e-mails explaining board decisions and offering

clear directions about what the board is looking for. Following each board meeting, she meets with Campus Council to go over decision made by the board. Board agendas and minutes are posted in each building, and a news release goes out to all local media. While employees may not meet board members face to face, they have a clear sense of what they value.

Recently the Board of Trustees implemented a new practice. After each meeting, board members visit a specific department or division to gain familiarity with facilities and interact with students, faculty, and staff.

### 2. Keeping all decisions to a common standard.

NICC's mission, vision, and strategic plan serve as a common reference point for all decisions. All employees participated in developing ideas for the strategic plan, and a small group completed the plan. The Board of Trustees approved the college mission, vision, and strategic plan in June 2005. Updates will be presented to the board on an annual basis.

### 3. Involving all employees in decision making, but relying on the Board of Trustees as the final and ultimate authority in all decisions.

Starting in 2006, all employees began participating in an annual planning process tied to our vision, mission, and strategic plan. Individuals met with their departments to develop action plans. They submitted these plans to the College Vision Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Budget Committee. The committees screened and prioritized the plans and passed them on to Cabinet. The next step will be for Cabinet to assign resources to the plans as part of the annual budget presented to the Board of Trustees. Trustees will have final authority to approve or reject the annual budget and action plan.

### 5C3  Institutional Values and Expectations

NICC maintains a strong set of institutional values. They are clearly stated in the college vision statement. In fact, the vision statement reads that the educational community at NICC will "live" the values of service, excellence, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity. The values are not just ideals; they are integrated into the way we operate.

Ethics and equity are very important values at NICC. The two values are embedded into our policies and practices. All policies are reviewed to make sure they meet legal standards and promote ethics and equity.

First of all, NICC keeps an open door. No student is denied access based on race, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or prior academic record. The same openness extends to hiring. We follow the Equal Opportunity Act and do not discriminate based on race, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

We promote equity by offering accommodations to individuals who need it. We abide by the American with Disabilities Act. This means offering reasonable accommodations to help students succeed in their studies and employees succeed in their jobs.

NICC promotes ethics by setting professional standards for all employees. An example is confidentiality of records. We protect the privacy of students by following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. FERPA clearly outlines what information can be shared with whom and under what circumstances.

Social responsibility is another important value at NICC, and it is embedded into our policies and practices. We are committed to open access. We are committed to providing for the educational needs of the district, including training and retraining of employees. Finally, we are committed to preparing students for working in an increasingly complex society. We try to meet our social responsibility by promoting respect for diversity. When our students graduate, we want them to be prepared to interact with individuals who think and act differently than they do.

A final value for NICC is community involvement. We promote community involvement by being actively involved in partnerships with schools, colleges, businesses, and industries throughout the district. Many of our educational programs incorporate service to the community. For instance, some programs use service learning, combining community service with academic learning and personal reflection. Others provide direct service to the community. For instance, our Automotive

Technology programs provide car repairs at cost. Our Cosmetology program offers cosmetology services at a low fee. Our Computer Analyst and Computer Technician programs help create web sites or repair computers for local non-profit agencies. Our Human Services program organizes a large fundraising event every year for Habitat for Humanity. The list goes on, with many other links between our programs and the community.

## PROCESSES

### 5P1  Alignment with Mission

Our new process of making decisions ensures that NICC's vision, mission, and values are at the center of all decisions. The values are embedded into the strategic plan, and the strategic plan guides all planning.

Another advantage of the new planning system is that it creates a system of "checks and balances." For instance, NICC's leaders make daily decisions about the budget. The Budget Committee serves as a counterbalance. It reviews the budget and determines if it supports the vision, mission, and strategic plan. The committee may recommend reallocation of funds to help advance the strategic plan.

Most of all, the new planning system is designed to get individuals at all levels engaged in decision making. Employees have a voice, and they are invited to use it. They can do so by participating in departmental action planning or by serving on one of the three committees.

The idea of the new system is to promote engagement. This, in turn, promotes high performance by giving individuals an opportunity to step beyond their role and contribute to moving the institution forward. It promotes individual development by helping employees build knowledge and skills. It rewards innovation by creating an environment that welcomes new ideas. Finally, it creates an ideal environment for organizational learning as employees learn about the organization and become proficient, as a team, in moving it in a strategic direction.

The decision-making process does a good job of engaging internal stakeholders.

We are hoping to involve other stakeholders as well, especially students. One way to gauge their needs is through surveys. When we get the results of our recently completed Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE), we will have a clearer sense of what students need. We are also considering the possibility of adding students to some of our decision-making teams to give them a stronger voice in the process.

### 5P2  Leadership and Guidance

NICC has been in a period of great growth. This growth is now leveling off, giving us time to "catch up" and focus on quality.

When it came time to find a new President, the Board deliberately looked for someone who could weave quality into the fabric of the institution.

When she arrived, our new President immediately focused on quality improvement. One of her first steps was to initiate a strategic plan. Another was to align activities to fit the strategic plan. A third was to insist that the most important activities of the college are to teach and train, and to always keep that in the forefront when looking for future opportunities.

Our leaders stay abreast of trends in higher education and opportunities at the local, state, and national level. They are involved in many collaborative activities. At the local level they work closely with schools, colleges, businesses, and industries. Because of this active engagement, they are often called on when there is an opportunity to collaborate. Examples of recent opportunities include participating in the creation of a charter school in the small town of Maynard and serving as host for a small business incubator in Dubuque.

NICC leaders also participate in many activities at the state level. The President participates in the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents. Several administrators, supervisors, and faculty participate in Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC) and Leadership for a New Century (LINC). All three of these groups focus on providing information, skills, and networking opportunities.

Finally, NICC leaders are active at the national level. The President travels to Washington, D.C.

twice each year to meet with our Congressional delegation to advocate for future opportunities for community colleges in Iowa.

Opportunities arise from these collaborations, and NICC is primed to respond when they match our vision, mission, and strategic plan.

**5P3  Decision Making**

In a large organization, decisions happen at many levels.  The President, Executive Team, and Cabinet make daily or weekly decisions about big issues affecting the whole college, such as programs, facilities, and budget.

Cabinet members either serve as department heads or supervise one or more department heads.  Department heads manage a budget, supervise faculty or staff, and ensure that the department is fulfilling its goals and operating smoothly.

Two Cabinet members play a particularly important role in daily decision-making – the Provosts.  Several years ago, the College turned to site-based management.  The Provost on each campus supervises all site-specific programs, including academic services, support services, and daily operations.

As mentioned before, the President and Cabinet rely on a number of committees to guide and participate in decision making.  The College Vision Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Budget Committee play a special role in making sure we move forward with a clear focus on the strategic plan. However, there are many other teams and committees with more specific, but equally important roles.

Table 5-3 shows the most important standing committees and their purposes.

*Table 5-3   District-Wide Standing Committees*

| Committee | Membership and Purpose |
|---|---|
| *Educational Services Administration* | Members of this group include all department leaders involved in providing educational services.  The committee meets monthly.  The purpose is to:<br><br>• Recommend and make decisions about credit and non-credit programs, graduation requirements, class sizes, and other educational issues. |
| *Curriculum Committee* | This committee involves the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Provosts, Deans, and faculty.  The committee meets monthly to:<br><br>• Monitor all course revisions, new course implementation, and annual course review.<br><br>• Verify that all courses and degrees comply with state and local standards, that courses have department or discipline approval, and that issues regarding program and degree content are addressed by the appropriate parties.<br><br>• Lead local efforts in identifying areas of curriculum and instruction that should be developed. |
| *General Education Subcommittee* | This committee involves Deans and general education faculty from throughout the district.  The committee meets twice each year to:<br><br>• Provide leadership in developing, assessing, and evaluating NICC's general education core as it relates to student academic achievement.<br><br>• Serve as a forum for addressing issues in general education.<br><br>• Provide greater visibility of general education.<br><br>• Address issues concerning the coordination and coherence of NICC's general education core.<br><br>• Promote ongoing faculty conversation regarding general education and its integration into all NICC curricula.<br><br>• Create cross-discipline awareness of general education initiatives and activities.<br><br>• Identify and recommend general education initiatives.<br><br>• Recommend new courses for approval. |
| *Faculty Development Committees* | This currently consists of two campus-based committees.  Each committee has faculty representatives from all academic divisions.  The campus committees meet monthly and hold occasional shared meetings to promote consistency.  The purpose of these committees is to:<br><br>• Provide assistance in planning professional growth activities for faculty.<br><br>• Plan the fall faculty development workshop activities. |

| | • Function as a hearing committee when a supervisor denies Continuing Education Units, and a faculty member wishes to challenge that decision. |
|---|---|

## 5P4  Decision-Making Process

Our process of making decisions is new and evolving.  We are still in the middle of the first cycle of decision making involving all members of NICC.  As we complete the first cycle and move on to the second, we will make adjustments to the process.

One of the primary tasks will be to incorporate data into the decision-making process.  Our goal is to use data to document needs, processes, and outcomes.

We have taken several steps to improve our ability to use data in decision making.  We have hired a Director of Institutional Research to collect and analyze data and generate reports for decision-making groups.  We have spent the last two years implementing Datatel, priming us to work more intensively with data.  Finally, we are awaiting results of the CCSSE survey so that we can make decisions about how to serve our students better.

## 5P5  Communication

The President has made open communication one of the most important items on her agenda.  She is acutely aware of the need for communication to flow easily both vertically and horizontally.

In a large institution, it is essential to have ways to reach everyone with the same information.  The primary way to share information is to send a college-wide e-mail or post an announcement on NICC Xpress, the college web portal.  All employees make frequent use of these channels of communication.

The Department of Marketing, News, and Publications plays a key role in college-wide communication.  The department publishes an annual report, available to all employees.  It posts news releases on the NICC web site.  It also produces *Communiqué,* a college-wide internal newsletter posted online.  This publication highlights internal news, such as board decisions, new programs, new

collaborations, new employees, and success stories involving alumni, students, employees, and departments.

In addition to using written and electronic outlets, leaders also share information face-to-face.  This happens on All-College Day and at the start of each semester.  Leaders also provide campus forums throughout the year to address pressing issues.

Several district-wide committees also have the purpose of promoting communication between institutional levels.  Table 5-4 shows these committees and their role.

*Table 5-4  Committees Promoting Communication*

| Committee | Purpose |
|---|---|
| *Campus Council* | This campus-based committee consists of department leaders of all essential functions on each campus.  The committee meets monthly.  The purpose is to:<br><br>• Communicate board and administrative decisions to all departments.<br><br>• Coordinate services and functions within the College. |
| *Educational Services Administration* | This group includes all department leaders involved in providing educational services.  The committee meets monthly.  In addition to making decisions, the group seeks to:<br><br>• Communicate board and administrative decisions regarding educational programs.<br><br>• Coordinate educational services within the College. |

The College is working on creating a new channel of communication between the President and faculty and staff.  We recently eliminated a committee called Meet and Confer because it had become ineffective.  To replace it, the President is working with faculty and staff leaders to develop a College Senate.

In addition to creating channels for vertical communication, NICC also promotes horizontal communication.  For instance, the Deans on each campus meet once a week, and all Deans meet once a month.  The Deans hold division and department meetings, sometimes involving faculty on both campuses.  Faculty also connect directly with their colleagues on both campuses.

**5P6  Communication of Mission, Vision, Values, and Performance Expectations**

Our administrators seek to provide clear and consistent messages about our mission, vision, and values.  In fact, they share the mission and vision as often as they can.  The mission and vision are printed in the college catalog and employee handbook.  They are listed on the NICC web site.  In addition, all employees have received a CD-Rom containing the college vision, mission, and strategic plan.

Administrators also refer to the mission and vision in direct communication with employees.  For instance, the President shared the mission and vision with employees at our All-College Days in 2005 and 2006.  Other administrators use the mission and vision as a starting point for conversation with individuals and groups.  The first step in department-level planning is always to review the college mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Fortunately, our strategic plan sets clear and high expectations for individuals and the institution as a whole.  The strategic plan has specific goals related to equity, access, success, learning, partnerships, and continuous improvement.  As employees enter into the annual planning process, they will hear the same messages again and again.

**5P7  Leadership**

NICC encourages everyone in the organization to be a leader by promoting a culture of excellence and innovation.  We help employees build leadership skills in several ways:

- Faculty can apply for funds to attend national and regional conferences to expose them to best practices and innovative ideas.

- Faculty have the opportunity to apply for a semester-long sabbatical to help them pursue professional growth opportunities in business, industry, or education.

- Faculty and staff may enroll in credit and non-credit classes free of charge.  Many take advantage of this opportunity to build new skills, pursue special interests, or work towards a degree.

- Deans and senior faculty participate in LINC to build information, skills, and relationships.

- Administrators attend national and state leadership conferences.  Some also participate in CLIC to gain information and network with colleagues at other community colleges.

NICC provides many opportunities for individual skill development.  Unfortunately, there is limited opportunity to share these skills and practices with others.  Some information is shared through the President's annual address in the fall and All-College Day in the spring.  Workshop days provide other opportunities for sharing skills.

Currently the most effective way for us to share leadership skills and practices is through online publications.  The College distributes *Innovation Abstracts* to all employees online.  This monthly publication offers information about innovations in higher education.  The College also subscribes to *Chronicle of Higher Education* and makes it available online to all employees.

**5P8  Leadership Succession**

We recognize the importance of continuity during times of transition.  When there is a change in leadership, it is essential to pass on the NICC mission, vision, and values.  The values are embedded into the vision, thus highlighting their importance.  When a new leader comes on board, a board member or the President sits down with that person and goes over these important elements, explaining how they have been implemented in the past.

NICC does not have a formal leadership succession plan.  However, we are in the early stages of developing initiatives that specifically address the issue of leadership succession.

One issue we are addressing is:  How can we groom individuals within the institution to take on future leadership roles – both within the college and at other institutions?

One way is to offer leaders the opportunity for lateral transfer.  Department heads sometimes move to another department to continue their professional development.

We kicked off a new program called *Leading from Within* in January 2006.  The intent of this program is to promote college engagement and leadership development by bringing out the talents and creativity of employees.  Every year

four to five full-time employees are chosen for participation. Each one of them has the opportunity to work on a special project with a Cabinet member. *Leading from Within* is an exciting project that has the potential to make a lasting impact on the institution and on the individuals participating.

### 5P9  Measures of Leading and Communicating
We do not collect measures related to leadership and communication on a regular basis.

## RESULTS (R)

### 5R1  Results for Leading and Communicating
The 2002 AQIP Constellation Survey provides a good baseline of measures for leading and communicating. In the survey, employees identified leadership and communication as being very important, but not being done as well as they could at the time. The survey showed that the following areas, if addressed, could have a significant impact on NICC:

- Communication occurs effectively up, down, and across different units of the organization.

- The faculty and staff feel they are in partnership with administrators.

- Faculty, staff, and administration share a vision of what NICC will be like in the next 5-10 years.

Since the Constellation Survey, we have taken steps to address these areas of opportunity. We have accomplished the following results:

- Adopted a revised mission and vision statement and shared it with all employees.

- Completed a strategic plan and shared it with all employees.

- Established three district-wide committees with members from all levels of the institution to participate in communication and leadership. The committees are charged with overseeing the annual planning process and making sure it matches the strategic plan.

- Engaged individuals in all departments in the annual planning process.

### 5R2  Comparison to Other Institutions
We have not yet completed a comparison with other institutions.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

### 5I1  Methods of Improvement
Before we can improve our current processes and systems, we need to complete and assess the first planning cycle – both in terms of decision making and communication.

We have discussed several ways to improve our leadership and communication processes. They include:

- Implementing a 360-degree leadership satisfaction survey. This type of survey would allow employees to give anonymous feedback to the President and other administrators.

- Establishing a College Senate to provide a direct channel of communication between the President and faculty and staff.

- Involving Student Senate in providing input into the strategic plan and the annual planning process.

### 5I2  Targets for Improvement
When we complete our first planning cycle, we will assess the process, communicate results to internal and external stakeholders, and set specific targets for improvement.

# Category 6:  Supporting Institutional Operations

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 6C1  Student and Administrative Support Service Processes

One of NICC's highest goals is to provide strong student and administrative support services.  We have organized our institutional operations around key processes.  Some of these are designed to support students; others are designed to support NICC employees and the business side of operations.

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Table 6-1 shows our student support services.

**Table 6-1 Student Support Services**

| Department | Service |
|---|---|
| High School Relations | • Coordination of college courses for high school students<br>• Recruitment |
| Tech-Prep | • Coordination of vocational programs for high school students<br>• Recruitment |
| Career Connection | • Seamless transition from high school to college to careers |
| Testing Center | • ACCUPLACER testing |
| Admissions | • Recruitment<br>• Admissions |
| Financial Aid | • Financial aid<br>• Scholarships<br>• Student employment |
| Central Advising | • Advising<br>• Enrollment |
| Registrar | • Transcripts<br>• Graduation requirements<br>• Transfers |
| Business Services | • Student invoicing<br>• Tuition and fee payments |
| Distance Learning | • Coordination of distance learning opportunities<br>• Assistance with courses |
| Libraries | • Reference materials, books, periodicals, and electronic resources<br>• Assistance in locating and using resources |
| Learning Center | • Accommodations<br>• Tutoring |
| Writing Center | • Tutoring on writing projects |
| Counseling | • Academic, career, and personal counseling<br>• Referral |

| Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center | • College and career counseling<br>• Referral |
|---|---|
| Student Activities | • Student leadership<br>• Student government<br>• Student newspaper<br>• Recreational activities<br>• Clubs and organizations |
| Employment and Career Services | • Career assessment<br>• Job referrals<br>• Resume and interview preparation |
| Continuing Education | • Lifelong learning opportunities |

We organize our student support services so that they are easy for students to access.  Each department links to the next.  Likewise, each process links to the next.  The goal is to provide a seamless support service system that helps students have a positive college experience.

*High School Relations* – Our High School Relations Coordinator travels to area high schools to assess student needs and arrange college-level courses for high school students.  By maintaining a regular presence at area high schools, the High School Relations Coordinator is able to share information about our degrees, certificates, and diplomas, thus assisting in recruitment as well.

*Tech-Prep* – Our Tech-Prep Coordinator also spends significant time at area high schools, focusing on creating vocational opportunities for high school students, such as computer and automotive academies.  The Tech-Prep Coordinator also assists in recruiting for our vocational programs.

*Career Connection* – Career Connection is a partnership between NICC and Iowa Workforce Development to link business, education, and workforce programs.  It is unique in the state of Iowa.  The program seeks to facilitate a smooth transition from high school to college to careers in the district.

*Testing Centers* – Our Learning Centers serve as ACCUPLACER testing centers.  They invite prospective students to come in and take the ACCUPLACER test.  If students are not happy with their score, they can retake the test two

times, with the highest score being honored. After taking the first test, they must wait at least two weeks to take the second test and at least six weeks to take the third test.

**Admissions** – Our Admissions staff welcome prospective students on campus, provide campus tours, and help students apply for admission. Once a month, we sponsor a *Welcome Wednesday* event for prospective students and their families. During this event, participants learn about NICC, visit with faculty, tour the campus, and learn about how to apply for admission and financial aid. Students also have the opportunity to take the ACCUPLACER test at this time.

**Financial Aid** – Our Financial Aid staff help students explore options for financial aid. They assist students in completing FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms and in navigating FastWeb, a searchable database of more than 275,000 private sector scholarships, grants, and loans. They share information about NICC scholarships, jobs, and work-study opportunities. Finally, they refer students to outside agencies providing funding for specific groups of students, such as veterans, displaced workers, and individuals with disabilities.

**Central Advising** – Central Advising staff assist new students by discussing academic and career goals. They review what each major requires. They also discuss ACCUPLACER test results and help students enroll in appropriate courses. After their first semester, students are assigned to a permanent advisor. This may be a central advisor or a faculty advisor in their program of study.

**Registrar** – Our Registrars monitor program and course enrollment. They grant credit for college courses from other institutions and monitor transfers in and out of NICC. Another function is to provide official transcripts. Finally, the Registrars process graduation applications and complete graduation audits for all students.

**Business Services** – Business Services sends invoices, including tuition, fees, and financial aid awards to students. The office accepts tuition and fee payments. Students have the option of using the FACTS Tuition Management Plan, an online automatic payment service.

**Distance Learning** – The Distance Learning Office coordinates all distance education, including Iowa Communications Network (ICN) courses, telecourses, and online courses. Knowledgeable staff are available to help students address technical problems related to online courses, including how to log on, participate in message board or chat room discussions, and submit assignments.

**Libraries** – Our libraries at Calmar and Peosta provide students access to a substantial collection of reference, fiction, non-fiction, audio-visual, and periodical materials. Our reference librarians are eager to help students with reference questions and research. With the increasing reliance on computers, our libraries offer a growing collection of online resources. They include subscriber databases, electronic books, online access to the library catalog, and an online "Ask a Librarian" function.

**Learning Centers** – Our Learning Centers allow students to work in an environment where they have access to teaching staff who can help them when they need it. The Learning Centers also provide peer tutoring. In addition, they offer mini courses in study skills, time management, test taking, and computer skills.

The Learning Centers also oversee accommodations. They provide a range of options for students with documented disabilities, including interpreters, note takers, peer tutors, and adaptive equipment. They also coordinate services with public and private agencies that can assist with accommodations.

**Writing Centers** – Because NICC maintains a focus on writing across the curriculum, we offer Writing Centers on both campuses. Writing Center staff are available to help generate ideas, read drafts, proofread final copies, and work with students to address persistent problems in their writing. Students benefit greatly from this service and often gain new confidence in writing.

**Counseling** – Counseling Services are available on both campuses. Counselors meet one-on-one with students to address personal, academic, and career concerns. Not surprisingly, they often find that the three areas blend. They offer as much support to students as they can and, if needed, refer them to community resources for additional help.

***Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Centers*** – Our Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Centers provide support to adult students. They offer career counseling, educational support, personal growth activities, and referral to community resources.

***Student Activities*** – Our Student Activities offices coordinate all extracurricular activities.

Student Senate provides an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills and contribute positively to NICC. Members use parliamentarian procedures and represent the student body, both internally and externally. Every year they travel to Des Moines to meet with state legislators on Legislative Day.

Our student newspaper, *Northeastern Press*, is written and edited by students. We are experimenting with providing both print and online versions of the paper. The student newspaper provides an opportunity to build communication skills and contribute to campus awareness of issues and events.

Student Activities staff also offer many other activities on and off campus. They sponsor intramural activities, such as softball, volleyball, basketball, bowling, and golf. They arrange lectures, performances, activities, and theme weeks to keep students engaged. From time to time, they line up field trips and city tours to give students the opportunity to see a national art or science exhibit or attend a musical or play.

Finally, Student Activities staff support students in getting involved in campus clubs and organizations. They include:

- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
- Alpha Beta Gamma Honor Society
- SkillsUSA
- Business Professionals of America
- Entrepreneurs Club
- Health Occupation Students of America
- National and Iowa Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
- American Association of Respiratory Care
- Iowa Society for Respiratory Care
- Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
- Post-Secondary Agriculture Students Assn.
- NICC Arboriculture League
- NICC Dairy Science Club

***Employment and Career Services*** – Our Employment and Career Services staff are available to help students prepare to enter the job market. They maintain regional job listings and application forms. They offer assistance with resume writing and interview preparation. Staff also offer learning opportunities on each campus, ranging from "dress for success" events to mini courses on dining etiquette.

***Continuing Education*** – As students graduate and move on to a job or additional education, we remind them that we are available as a resource for lifelong learning. Continuing Education offers many opportunities that respond to the needs and interests of people in our district. Every year, we count more than 50,000 enrollments in our continuing education offerings.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Table 6-2 shows our key administrative support services.

*Table 6-2 Administrative Support Services*

| Department | Service |
|---|---|
| Business and Finance | • Budget<br>• Accounts receivable<br>• Purchasing<br>• Inventory<br>• College fleet<br>• Payroll<br>• Benefit administration |
| Human Resources | • Employee recruitment<br>• Application and hiring<br>• Faculty credentialing, orientation, and mentoring<br>• Professional development<br>• Benefit questions |
| Marketing, News, and Publications | • Marketing<br>• News<br>• Publications<br>• NICC web site<br>• NICC Xpress |
| Resource Development | • NICC Foundation<br>• Major donors |
| Institutional Research | • Data collection, storage, and analysis |
| Computer Information Systems | • Upgrade and maintenance of information technology<br>• Help desk |
| Print Shop | • Printing of educational materials |
| Book Store | • Sale of textbooks and supplies |
| Cafeteria | • Meals and snacks |
| Child Development Center | • Child care for children of students, employees, and community members |

| Maintenance | • Physical upkeep of facilities and grounds |
| | • Custodial services |
| Campus Security | • Campus security |

**Business Services** – If it's a question of money, Business Services is the place to go.  Business Services oversees all budget and finance functions at NICC.  This includes monitoring the budget and making sure all legal requirements are met.  The office manages payroll, benefits, and insurance.  It is also in charge of accounts receivable, purchasing, and inventory.  Business Services also oversees the college fleet.

**Human Resources** – The Human Resources Office is located on the Calmar campus.  This office is in charge of recruiting new employees and overseeing the application and hiring process.  Human Resources staff offer a wide range of support services for faculty and staff.  They coordinate an orientation program and a mentoring program for new faculty.  They are available to answer questions about pay, benefits, and credentialing under the NICC Quality Faculty Plan.  They also monitor faculty credentialing and provide professional development opportunities for all employees.  Human Resources maintains all personnel records, including applications, credentialing records, and performance reviews.

**Marketing, News, and Publications** – Marketing is responsible for NICC publications, including student catalogs and planners, viewbooks, brochures, annual reports, direct mail pieces, and other materials. It is also responsible for advertising and public relations efforts, including newspaper, radio and television advertising, news releases, and special events.  Finally, this office maintains the NICC web site.

**Resource Development** – Our Resource Development office is located in Peosta.  The primary function of this office is to work with the NICC Foundation and major contributors to raise funds for NICC programs and students.

**Institutional Research** – The Office of Institutional Research is located on the Calmar campus.  The Director of Institutional Research collects data and generates reports to help in decision making.

**Computer Information Systems** – Computer Information Systems works behind the scenes to keep all our technology running smoothly.  Staff maintain and upgrade all computers, printers, scanners, and instructional equipment.  They maintain the college network, with its many student and employee accounts.  One of the most important administrative support functions is Help Desk.  A qualified technician is available to help employees solve problems, ranging from managing e-mail to dealing with hard-drive crashes and other serious problems.

**Print Shops** – The Print Shop on each campus provides administrative support to faculty, staff, and administrators by copying and compiling big quantities of materials.

**Book Stores** – Both Calmar and Peosta maintain an NICC Book Store.  The book stores sell textbooks, reference books, school supplies, computer supplies, clothing, and other items with NICC insignia.  They do not purchase used books from students, but bring in an outside company for "book buy-back" events.  The book stores bring in significant income for the college, thus contributing positively to the budget.

**Cafeterias** – The Cafeteria on each campus provides breakfast, lunch, and snacks at a reasonable cost.  It is also available as a place to gather, both formally and informally.  Staff provide catering services for special events.  At Peosta, the service is locally managed.  On the Calmar campus, it is managed by an outside company called Consolidated Management.

**Child Development Centers** – Both Calmar and Peosta have a new Child Development Center, available to children ages 0-6.  Since many students and employees are parents, the centers offer a convenient way for them to care for their children.  They can rest assured that while they work, their children receive warm and nurturing care in a stimulating environment.

**Maintenance** – Our Maintenance staff maintain and upgrade facilities.  They take care of grounds, including lawn maintenance and snow removal.  Employees fill out work order requests, and supervisors prioritize them before passing them on to maintenance staff.

Custodial staff clean facilities daily in order to provide a clean and welcoming environment for students, employees, and visitors.

*Campus Security* – An important administrative support service is keeping our campuses safe during evenings and weekends. At Calmar our Security Officer patrols the buildings and grounds after standard work hours. At Peosta, this service is provided by an outside agency.

**6C2 Support Service Reinforcement**
Following a period of expansion, NICC is now focusing inward. The focus is on quality, not quantity. This includes taking a careful look at all student and administrative support processes and aligning them with our vision, mission, and strategic plan.

At present our key processes are loosely organized to support the strategic plan. This means that they also align with AQIP. Table 6-3 shows how our support services align with AQIP Categories 1 and 2.

*Table 6-3 Alignment of AQIP and Support Services*

| Category 1: Helping Students Learn |
|---|
| • Learning Center |
| • Writing Center |
| • Libraries |
| • Central Advising |
| • Counseling |
| • Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center |
| • Distance Learning |
| • Continuing Education |
| **Category 2: Other Distinctive Objectives** |
| **Student Access** |
| • High School Relations |
| • Tech-Prep |
| • Career Connection |
| • Testing Center |
| • Admissions |
| • Financial Aid |
| • Distance Learning |
| • Learning Center |
| • Writing Center |
| • Counseling |
| • Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center |
| **Student Leadership and Engagement** |
| • Student Activities |
| • Employment and Career Services |
| • Career Connection |
| **Civic Involvement** |
| • Instruction (internships and service learning) |
| • Student Activities |
| **Diversity Education** |
| • Libraries |
| • Diversity Committees |
| **Community Partnerships** |
| • High School Relations |

• Tech-Prep
• Career Connection
• Learning Center
• Counseling
• Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center
• Resource Development
• Institutional Research
• Economic Development
• Continuing Education

**Facilities**
• Business Services
• Maintenance
• Campus Security
• Cafeteria
• Book Store
• Print Shop
• Child Development Center
• Computer Information Systems
• Distance Education

**PROCESSES**

**6P1 Identification of Student Support Service Needs**
We use a variety of methods to assess student support service needs. They include:

• Meetings with high school students, teachers, and administrators
• ACCUPLACER test scores, showing us the need for developmental courses
• Documented student accommodation needs
• Learning Center requests
• Writing Center requests
• Open-door policy encouraging students to drop in and talk to faculty and staff
• Student forums
• Student Senate meetings
• Student club meetings
• Honor society meetings
• Student newspaper articles
• ACT College Outcomes Survey
• Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

In addition, the following also contribute to our understanding of student support service needs:

• Board of Trustees meetings
• Executive Team meetings
• Cabinet meetings
• Educational Services Administration meetings
• Campus Council meetings

- Provost and Dean meetings
- Department meetings
- Strategic Planning Committee meetings
- College Vision Committee meetings
- Budget Committee meetings
- NICC Foundation Board meetings
- Institutional research reports
- Program evaluations

**6P2  Identification of Administrative Support Service Needs**

NICC also places high priority on identifying the administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders. We use the following methods:

- All-College Day
- Internal surveys (example: AQIP Constellation Survey)
- Open-door policy encouraging faculty and staff to drop in and talk to administrators
- Institutional research reports
- Program evaluations
- Employee forums
- Faculty and staff workshops days
- Department meetings
- Provost and Dean meetings
- Educational Services Administration meetings
- Campus Council meetings
- Emergency Management Team meetings
- College Vision Committee meetings
- Strategic Planning Committee meetings
- Budget Committee meetings
- NICC Foundation Board meetings
- Cabinet meetings
- Executive Team meetings
- Board of Trustees meetings
- Advisory board meetings
- Graduate surveys
- Community forums (example: President's 50/50 Club)

**6P3  Management and Documentation of Support Service Processes**

NICC covers a large geographical district and, as mentioned before, this poses a challenge in terms of daily management.  We have addressed this challenge by:

- Making top administrative positions district-wide.

- Establishing site-based management of our two campuses.
- Duplicating key student and administrative support service positions on both campuses.
- Using site-based management at NICC Centers.

Table 6-4 shows our top administrative positions involved in daily management of student and administrative support services.

*Table 6-4 District-Wide Administrative Positions*

| Position | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| President | • Reports to Board of Trustees<br>• Oversees:<br>Vice Presidents<br>Provosts<br>Marketing, News and Publications<br>Resource Development |
| Vice President of Academic Affairs | • Reports to President<br>• Oversees:<br>High School Relations<br>Tech-Prep<br>Institutional Research<br>Curriculum<br>Accreditation<br>Program evaluation<br>New program development<br>• Provides administrative support to College Vision Committee |
| Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services | • Reports to President<br>• Oversees:<br>Business Services<br>Student Services<br>Human Resources<br>Information Technology<br>• Provides administrative support to Budget Committee |
| Vice President of Economic Development | • Reports to President<br>• Oversees:<br>Continuing Education<br>Workforce Development<br>Alternative High Schools<br>ABE/GED/ESL<br>NICC Centers<br>Northeast Iowa Business Accelerator<br>• Provides administrative support to Strategic Planning Committee |
| Dean of Student Services | • Reports to Vice President of Academic Affairs<br>• Oversees:<br>Admissions<br>Financial Aid<br>Central Advising<br>Registrar<br>Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center |
|  | Counseling |

| | Student Activities<br>Career Connection<br>Employment and Career Services<br>TRiO-Upward Bound |
| --- | --- |
| | • Coordinates enrollment management |
| | • Serves as co-leader for Datatel<br>implementation with Director of<br>Information Technology |

Table 6-5 shows the responsibilities of our Provosts. The Provosts are in charge of site management at the Calmar and Peosta campuses.

*Table 6-5 Campus Administrative Positions*

| Position | Responsibilities |
| --- | --- |
| Campus Provosts<br><br>***In addition:***<br>The Calmar Provost also oversees the Northeast Iowa Community-Based Dairy Center.<br><br>The Peosta Provost oversees the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety. | • Report to President<br>• Oversee:<br>  Academic Deans<br>  Faculty<br>  Learning Resources<br>    - Library<br>    - Learning Center<br>    - Writing Center<br>    - Print Shop<br>  Book Store<br>  Cafeteria<br>  Child Development Center<br>  Maintenance/Custodial<br>  Campus Security<br>  Buildings and grounds |

One of our goals is to provide full access to support services on both campuses. In order to achieve this goal, we maintain a full set of administrators on each campus. Duplicated administrative positions are shown in Table 6-6.

*Table 6-6 Duplicated Administrative Positions*

| Calmar | Peosta |
| --- | --- |
| Registrar | Registrar |
| Student Enrollment Manager | Student Enrollment Manager |
| Central Advisors | Central Advisors |
| Coordinator of Learning Resources | Coordinator of Learning Resources |
| Coordinator of Developmental Education | Coordinator of Developmental Education |
| Counselor | Counselor |
| Adult Re-Entry Coordinator | Adult Re-Entry Coordinator |
| Student Activities Director | Student Activities Director |
| Employment and Career Services Manager | Employment and Career Services Manager |
| Continuing Education Director | Continuing Education Director |
| Plant Services Director | Auxilliary Services Manager |
| Child Development Center Co-Directors | Child Development Center Director |

Finally, our Center Coordinators serve as site managers for the six NICC Centers. In that role, they fill many student and administrative support service functions. For instance, they help students with admission, placement testing, registration, and advising. They are in charge of security and maintenance of buildings and grounds. They also oversee workforce development initiatives.

All administrators and supervisors document their services. They share their successes and challenges with their colleagues in a variety of settings. This encourages innovation and empowers administrators and supervisors to do better, both individually and as a team. Opportunities for knowledge sharing and common problem solving include:

• Executive Team meetings
• Cabinet meetings
• Educational Services Administration meetings
• Campus Council meetings
• Provost and Dean meetings
• Center Coordinator meetings

**6P4  Use of Information to Improve Services**
Historically, NICC has collected a lot of data on student and administrative support services. However, we have only used this data in a limited way.

Our goal is to use data for decision making in all areas of the college. We are now poised to start collecting, storing, and analyzing data more effectively. We have taken the following steps to prepare to use information to improve our student and administrative support services:

• Adopting AQIP and engaging in a comprehensive self-assessment.

• Writing a strategic plan.

• Creating an annual planning process that uses data for decision making.

• Hiring a Director of Institutional Research.

• Exploring funding for an environmental scan.

• Implementing Datatel and creating a Datatel Support Specialist position.

- Creating a Master Facilities Plan.

- Developing a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

- Starting the process of drafting an Educational Master Plan.

**6P5  Measurement of Support Service Processes**

We collect a variety of measures to document our student and administrative support services. Our next step is to use these for analysis and decision making.  Table 6-7 shows some of the support service measures we collect on a regular basis.

*Table 6-7 Measures Documenting Support Services*

| Service Processes | Measures |
|---|---|
| High School Relations, Tech-Prep, and Career Connection | • High school yield reports |
| Student Services | • Number of students and parents/spouses participating in new student orientation<br>• New student orientation survey |
| Admissions | • Enrollment reports<br>• Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey and CCSSE) |
| Financial aid | • Financial aid awarded<br>• Scholarships awarded<br>• Student employment and work-study records<br>• Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey and CCSSE) |
| Placement | • ACCUPLACER test scores |
| Advising | • Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey and CCSSE) |
| Registrar | • Enrollment reports<br>• Attrition reports<br>• Graduation reports<br>• Transfer reports<br>• Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey and CCSSE) |
| Libraries | • Number and type of holdings<br>• Number and type of electronic resources<br>• Circulation counts<br>• Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey and CCSSE) |
| Learning Center and Writing Center | • Number of students requiring accommodations<br>• Number of students served<br>• Number of contact hours |
| Counseling | • Number of students served and/or contact hours |
| Adult Re-Entry | • Number of students served |

| | |
|---|---|
| Center | |
| Business Services | • Budget records<br>• Annual audit report<br>• Lack of federal and state violations<br>• Compliance with bid requirements |
| Security | • Campus crime report |
| Maintenance | • Stakeholder feedback on buildings and grounds |
| Computer Information Systems | • Number of computers, printers, and other hardware maintained<br>• Number of help desk calls |
| Institutional Research | • Various institutional data |
| Resource development | • NICC Foundation income and expenses |

# RESULTS (R)

**6R1  Results for Student Support Service Processes**

We have a variety of ways to gauge the results of our student support service processes

### High School Yield Rate

An important measure of how well we provide services to high school students is the percentage of high school seniors enrolling at NICC.  In FY 2004, the rate was 16.2%.  In FY 2005, it went up to 17.1%.

### New Student Orientations

Our new student orientations help us welcome students to NICC and inform them about important support services.  We explain our academic programs, financial aid, technology services, learning resources, and academic support services, such as the Learning Center and Writing Center.  Table 6-8 shows attendance at our new student orientations.

*Table 6-8  New Student Orientation Attendance*

| | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| **FY 2004** | | |
| Fall | 198 | 302 |
| Spring | 20 | 65 |
| **FY 2005** | | |
| Fall | 206 | 310 |
| Spring | 19 | N/A |
| **FY 2006** | | |
| Fall | 143 | 303 |
| Spring | 18 | 53 |

We recently instituted an orientation session for parents and spouses as well.  Table 6-9 shows attendance at these sessions.

***Table 6-9  Parent/Spouse Orientation Attendance***

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| **FY 2005** | | |
| Fall | 70 | 52 |
| Spring | 0 | N/A |
| **FY 2006** | | |
| Fall | 70 | 42 |
| Spring | 0 | 2 |

Evaluations from the student and parent/spouse orientations show a high degree of satisfaction. On both campuses, 95% of participants rated the sessions either "excellent" or "good," stating that they received valuable information.

### Placement Scores

Placement scores are an important indicator of our students' need for developmental courses and student support services. We see a significant number of students scoring in the developmental range, and we respond by referring them to our support services and creating enough developmental courses to meet their needs.

Table 6-10 shows a significant percentage of students needing support based on their ACCUPLACER scores. We will continue to track these scores to verify needs for developmental courses and other support services.

***Table 6-10  Percentage of Students Needing Developmental Services***

| | District | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **% Scoring in Developmental Range** | | |
| **ACCUPLACER** | **Writing** | **Reading** | **Math** |
| FY 2005 | 51% | 40% | 47% |

### Accommodations

NICC serves a significant number of students with physical, mental, and learning disabilities. Most of these students need and receive special support in and out of the classroom. Some of them arrive with an already identified disability. Others seek help for the first time and are referred to experts who can verify a need for accommodations. Table 6-11 shows the number of students requesting accommodations for disabilities.

***Table 6-11 Students Requesting Accommodations***

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2002 | 70 | 112 |
| FY 2003 | 104 | 275 |
| FY 2004 | 82 | 329 |
| FY 2005 * | 251 | 365 |

*\* The jump in numbers is due to inclusion of students referred by Vocational Rehabilitation. Some, but not all, of these students request accommodations.*

### Learning and Writing Center Usage

Our Learning and Writing Centers are in great demand. Usage data are an indirect indicator of student satisfaction with these very important student support services. Table 6-12 shows the number of contact hours documented by each center. However, according to coordinators, they do not fully document Learning and Writing Center usage as students come and go, and some students do not sign in.

***Table 6-12  Learning and Writing Center Contact Hours***

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2002 | 11,399 | 15,174 |
| FY 2003 | 9,861 | 14,574 |
| FY 2004 | 9,499 | 13,493 |
| FY 2005 | 11,159 | 14,407 |

### Library Usage

We continue to expand our learning resources for students. Again, usage data are an indirect measure of how much students rely on our libraries. Table 6-13 shows circulation counts on each campus.

***Table 6-13  Learning Resources Circulation Counts***

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2002 | N/A | 6,647 |
| FY 2003 | 8,051 | 7,407 |
| FY 2004 | 6,387 | 7,673 |
| FY 2005 | 7,093 | 7,577 |

Data from Wilder Learning Resources at Calmar shows that daily attendance has increased from 385 in FY 2004 to 428 in FY 2005.

### Distance Learning

Distance Learning had a very busy year, starting with the hiring of a new Director of Distance Learning. The office also accomplished many other tasks, including transferring hosting of WebCT from Kirkwood Community College to NICC and overseeing the transfer of all online courses to the new server. The office added 20 new online courses over the past year. In addition, staff trained several instructors in distance education delivery and started the

process of developing faculty and student handbooks.

Distance learning is a significant method of course delivery at NICC. In the spring of 2005, distance learning courses comprised 15% of all credit hours. This remained fairly steady at 14% in spring 2006. During spring 2006 we provided 81 online sections to 1,418 students and 26 ICN sections to 672 students, showing a high demand for distance education courses.

### Counseling Data
A number of students use our Counseling Services. Each department keeps data differently, but Table 6-14 still provides insight into usage patterns.

*Table 6-14  Students Receiving Counseling*

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| **FY 2006, 9 months** | | |
| Personal | 46 students | 199 sessions |
| Academic | 121 students | 163 sessions |

Both Counselors indicate that they are only hitting the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of personal counseling. They point to a need for alcohol and other drug prevention and treatment. Another emerging issue is the growing number of individuals with mental illness enrolling at NICC and other community colleges. Finally, we are seeing a growing number of veterans returning from Iraq. Some of them show difficulties adjusting and need additional personal and academic support to succeed in college.

### Adult Re-Entry Data
We are especially concerned about serving our adult students well. Many of them have been out of school for years and have faced additional issues related to being displaced workers, displaced homemakers, or recently released criminal offenders. For many of these students, our Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center serves as a lifeline. Table 6-15 shows the number of adult students seeking support from this office. The growth in numbers attests to the need for this important service.

*Table 6-15  Students Receiving Adult Re-Entry Support*

|  | District |
|---|---|
| FY 2001 | 633 |
| FY 2002 | 650 |
| FY 2003 | 683 |
| FY 2004 | 755 |
| FY 2005 | 857 |

### Satisfaction with Various Support Services
Student satisfaction is very important to us, and we are constantly looking for ways to measure it. We administered CCSSE in April 2006 and look forward to receiving the results. Meanwhile, we rely on the results of our most recent ACT College Outcomes Survey conducted with 408 students in October 2004. Table 6-16 shows student satisfaction with our support services.

*Table 6-16 Student Satisfaction with Support Services*

| Student Support Service | ACT College Outcomes Survey Question | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Services | New student orientation services | 20% | 39% | 24% |
| Placement | Placement in reading, writing, and math courses | 18% | 35% | 22% |
| Financial Aid | Financial aid services | 22% | 39% | 15% |
| Libraries | Library/learning resources center services | 29% | 41% | 17% |
| Learning Centers and Writing Centers | Developmental, remedial, and tutorial services | 26% | 31% | 20% |
|  | College response to students with special needs | 18% | 30% | 17% |
| Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Centers | College response to non-traditional students | 27% | 32% | 16% |
| Student Activities | College social activities | 16% | 36% | 24% |
|  | Opportunities for involvement in campus activities | 21% | 35% | 26% |
|  | Recreational and intramural programs | 14% | 23% | 27% |
| Counseling | Personal counseling services | 12% | 25% | 23% |
| Information Technology | Student access to computer facilities and services | 31% | 42% | 15% |
| Employment and Career Services | Career planning services | 13% | 35% | 29% |
|  | Job placement services | 11% | 27% | 28% |

While it is clear that most students are satisfied with our student support services, a large percentage of students claim to be neutral. We are interested in learning more about this group

and what we can do to increase their awareness of and satisfaction with our services.

## 6R2  Results of Administrative Support Service Processes
NICC places great importance on our administrative support services because they help our employees serve students better.

### *Business Services*
Business Services performs a vital function for the college by overseeing the budget.

- Hacker, Nelson & Co, PC conducts our annual audit.  The audit report is a good

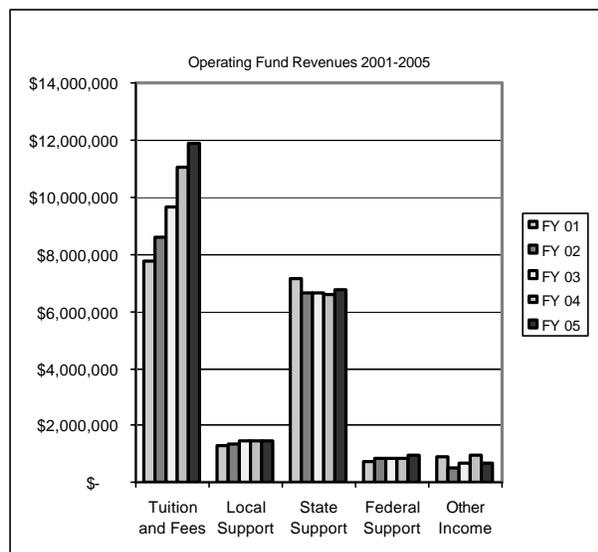indicator of our financial status.  It is available to any stakeholder who wishes to see it.

- We have no federal and state violations.

- We show compliance with all bid requirements.

When it comes to the budget, NICC faces the same challenge as other community colleges in Iowa – a drop in state aid and an increasing reliance on tuition and fees.  Table 6-17 and Graph 6-18 show our Operating Fund revenues for the past five years.  It is worth noting that almost the entire increase in our operating fund comes from tuition and fees.

**Table 6-17  Operating Fund Revenues  – Actual Amounts**

|  | FY  2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tuition and fees | $  7,735,533 | $  8,598,461 | $  9,662,669 | $  11,079,821 | $  11,884,881 |
| Local support | 1,305,898 | 1,353,778 | 1,456,466 | 1,462,981 | 1,449,495 |
| State support | 7,151,069 | 6,612,638 | 6,660,157 | 6,575,574 | 6,725,727 |
| Federal support | 714,646 | 841,342 | 837,248 | 816,218 | 929,153 |
| Other income | 892,877 | 518,429 | 680,793 | 954,823 | 685,339 |
| **TOTAL** | **$17,800,023** | **$17,924,738** | **$19,297,333** | **$20,889,417** | **$21,674,595** |

**Graph 6-18  Operating Fund Revenues**



how the composition of our operating budget has changed over the last 10 years.

**Table 6-19  Operating Fund Revenues by Category**

|  | FY 1995 | FY 2005 |
|---|---|---|
| Tuition and Fees | 39% | 55% |
| Local | 9% | 7% |
| State | 45% | 31% |
| Federal | 3% | 4% |
| Other | 4% | 3% |

In order to meet our expenses, we rely heavily on tuition and fees.  This makes us vulnerable to fluctuations in enrollment.  Our hope is that we can reduce our reliance on tuition and fees by increasing other revenue sources.

One issue we face immediately is that we are undercharging for our services to high school students.  Most of our enrollment increase over the last five years has come from high school students.  While these students are important constituents, we still need to acknowledge that we have provided service to them at a reduced rate.  Our official tuition rate is $105/credit while our negotiated rate for PSEO students is

As indicated above, our operating budget is based on five major components:  tuition and fees, local support, state support, federal support, and other income.  Table 6-19 shows

$50/course plus instructional expenses.  We hope to address this issue in the near future.

### Human Resources

Human Resources provides many administrative support functions.  Recent accomplishments include:

- Creating a Quality Faculty Plan with input from a district-wide committee.

- Completing an Employee Handbook and starting the process of writing a Faculty Handbook.

- Designing a New Faculty Orientation and delivering it to about 30 full-time and 50 part-time new faculty members.

- Piloting a Faculty Mentoring Program matching 10 new faculty with seasoned faculty.  Feedback from the initial round of mentoring shows a strong interest in continuing the program in some form.

- Establishing *Leading From Within*, a leadership development project for faculty.  Currently four faculty members are working with a top administrator on a special project to explore innovation and best practices.

### Marketing, News, and Publications

Over the past three years, Marketing has received National Advertising Admissions awards for a television ad campaign, a billboard design, and two direct mail pieces.  Last year, the department conducted focus groups and other market research to develop a new marketing campaign and tagline for the college that would be attractive to varying student populations and demographics.  The tagline is "Student Driven – Community Focused."  Each new piece that is developed carries the same look and tagline for a strong brand identity.

The department is currently leading the effort to overhaul the NICC web site and integrate it with NICC Xpress. This will allow for real-time access to online information, such as course schedules, grades, and financial aid.

Other recent efforts include production of a college video on CD for admissions staff and several targeted mailings and other pieces for promotion of specific programs that have led to increased enrollment in those areas.

### Computer Information Systems

Our CIS Department has been working overtime to accomplish some significant goals over the last two years.  They include:

- Implementing Datatel.

- Establishing NICC Xpress web portal.

- Establishing wireless networks on our Calmar and Peosta campuses.

In addition, our CIS staff provide hardware support to all departments.  They oversee the functioning of 38 computer labs of various sizes.  They are in charge of maintenance and upgrade of the following equipment:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Computers** | **1,442** |
| Lab desktop PCs | 865 |
| Office desktop PCs | 391 |
| Notebooks | 186 |
| **Printers** | **313** |
| **Scanners** | **24** |

One way to measure the CIS administrative support service function is to examine the number of Help Desk calls.  According to Table 6-19, the numbers are impressive, indicating that Help Desk is a needed and wanted service.

*Table 6-19  Help Desk Calls*

| | Calls |
|---|---|
| FY 2004 | 4,256 |
| FY 2005 | 5,109 |
| FY 2006 – 6 months | 2,878 |

### Facilities

Stakeholder feedback shows a need to improve and update our aging buildings and grounds.

As a preliminary step Peosta employees have organized an ad hoc "beautification" committee to brainstorm ideas to make the Peosta campus more attractive to students, employees, and visitors.

However, it will take more resources to address the facilities issue.  At their March 2006 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a $1.3 million loan for infrastructure improvements.  The

money will go towards maintenance and repair of buildings on both campuses.

With our new Master Facilities Plan, we hope to prepare the public to vote on a bond referendum to sponsor additional construction and remodeling later this year.

On the positive side, we have already taken some important steps to improve our facilities.

The Child Development Center at Calmar is our most recent construction project. We completed Phase One of the project in time to open our doors for children last fall. Since then, we have started Phase Two, construction of additional space for children and classrooms and office space for our Early Childhood program.

The City of Waukon recently passed a bond referendum to build an NICC Center in Waukon. Construction has started, and the center is scheduled to open in August 2007.

### *Campus Security*
Campus Crime Reports indicate no reportable campus crimes over the past five years.

### 6R3  Comparison to Other Institutions
We have limited data to show how NICC compares to other institutions when it comes to student support services. We expect that the CCSSE survey will give us some excellent indicators regarding student engagement with the College at all levels.

All community colleges in Iowa face similar budget concerns, including the need to rely less on tuition and fees. However, NICC currently maintains the highest tuition rate of the 15 community colleges in the state. We are aware of the need to curb tuition costs and are hoping to broaden our funding sources to make this possible.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

### 6I1  Methods of Improvement
We are constantly looking for ways to improve our student and administrative support service processes. Some of the steps we will be taking to improve these processes include:

- Using CCSSE results to improve our educational practices and student support services.

- Modifying the NICC web site and NICC Xpress web portal to better meet student and employee needs.

- Reviewing our Learning Center processes.

- Managing enrollment, with renewed emphasis on attracting adult students and full-time students.

- Reviewing and revising our tuition and fee structure for PSEO courses.

- Updating our facilities.

- Completing implementation of Datatel.

- Using data to drive decision making about student and administrative support services.

### 6I2  Targets for Improvement
We have not yet established specific targets for improvement of our student and administrative support services. Several committees are working on setting targets. They include our Strategic Enrollment Management Team, Datatel Implementation Team, and Learning Center Task Force.

When we are ready to share current results and improvement priorities, we will use the following communication tools:

- All-College Day
- Faculty and staff workshops
- Advisor meetings
- Department and division meetings
- Cabinet meetings
- Educational Services Administration meetings
- Campus Council meetings
- NICC web site
- NICC Xpress announcements
- News releases and direct mail to constituents
- Letters to students
- Student and parent/spouse orientations

# Category 7:  Measuring Effectiveness

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 7C1  Collection of Information and Data

In the past, much of our data collection and storage was decentralized.  Each department collected data for specific purposes.  Some departments collected data for external reports to funding and licensing agencies.  Others collected data to help with internal planning.

We continue to collect data at all levels of the institution.  However, over the last two years, the College has made an effort to centralize data storage.  The purpose is to make data readily available to those who need it.  Instead of searching for data in various departments, decision makers will soon be able to find it in one central location.

Over the last two years, NICC has taken several steps to improve data storage and access:

- We have implemented Datatel and assigned a staff member to serve as Datatel Support Specialist.

- We have established an Office of Institutional Research and hired a Director of Institutional Research.

- We have hired an Allied Health Program Evaluation/Accreditation Specialist.

### *Datatel*

Our first step was to adopt Datatel as our primary data collection and storage system.  We use Datatel Colleague Release 17.

Over the last two years, we have gradually transferred all records to this system.  All institutional data collected either electronically or in hard copy is now entered and stored in Datatel, with the exception of student surveys.

NICC makes data accessible to employees based on need and training level.  Employees who have access to retrieve data from Datatel are designated as Level One or Level Two users.  Level One users can create and save queries.  Level Two users can only access and run queries already stored on the system.  They are not able to create their own queries.

Currently there is at least one Level One user and two Level Two users in each of the following departments:

- Student Services
- Admissions
- Human Resources
- Financial Aid
- Budget and Finance
- Institutional Research
- Information Technology

Level One and Level Two users retrieve data from Datatel, then manipulate the data using Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Safari Reporting, or Monarch software.  When they complete their reports, they send copies to administrators.  They also save select reports to a hard drive on the college network so that they can be seen by all employees.

Datatel is much more complex than our previous data storage systems.  In order to assist our employees in using the system effectively, we recently created a full-time position in Information Technology.  The Datatel Support Specialist is able to help Datatel users retrieve data from the system.  The Datatel Support Specialist is also available to retrieve data for employees not yet trained in Datatel.

The Datatel Support Specialist is currently experimenting with the SAFARI OLAP data manipulation software to determine if it will meet the needs of the district.  This software can be used to create versatile "cubes" of data through the mining and retrieval of raw data which can then be distributed to and manipulated by select viewers.  If we determine that this software will meet our needs, the Datatel Support Specialist and Director of Institutional Research will provide training to other employees.

Our goal is to make increasing amounts of data accessible to end users and involve all staff in the analysis and use of institutional data.  This initiative supports the goal of creating a "learning community" at NICC and decentralizing access to institutional data.  Although the retrieval of data will continue to require advanced skills in information technology, there will be a dramatic increase in the accessibility of data.

*Institutional Research*
One of our goals is to expand our use of data in decision making. In order to do this, we need quick and easy access to relevant data.

In June 2005, the Board of Trustees approved establishing an Office of Institutional Research and hiring a Director of Institutional Research.

Our new Director of Institutional Research is already making progress towards coordinating data collection and storage. For instance, the Director is compiling a Report Catalog Index to be used as a district-wide reference. The index will list all reports generated by NICC employees for either internal or external use. It will also list where they are stored and what types of data they include. All employees will have access to the index. The hope is that this will prevent some duplication of efforts when it comes to data collection.

The Director of Institutional Research also has created a preliminary report of enrollment trends. The report is very revealing. It clearly points out that the number of students enrolling full-time is dropping while the number of students enrolling part-time is growing. This coincides with an explosion in the number of high school students taking college classes. While head count is still strong, there is a drop in the number of credit hours taken.

Following implementation of the Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Director of Institutional Research will analyze the data and generate reports that will help the college set a direction for recruitment and retention efforts.

*Allied Health Evaluation*
Some of NICC's biggest programs are in the health field. They include Nursing, Radiology Technology, Respiratory Care, and Dental Assistance. All of these programs have high standards for accreditation and evaluation.

In order to meet this need, NICC hired an Allied Health Program Evaluation/Accreditation Specialist last fall. This person works part-time to collect data, generate reports, and work on program evaluation and accreditation.

**7C2  Measures for Tracking Effectiveness**
NICC is moving towards a more coordinated method of tracking effectiveness. Our goal is to use key institutional measures to track effectiveness. Table 7-1 shows our key institutional measures in the framework of our strategic plan.

*Table 7-1 – Key Institutional Measures*

| **Student Access and Success** |
| --- |
| • Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE) |
| • Student course completion rates |
| • Student retention rates |
| • Student graduation rates |
| • Student scores on board exams |
| • Graduate placement rates (transfer and employment) |
| • Employer surveys rating graduates on technical knowledge and job skills |
| • Transfer student performance |
| **Teaching Excellence and Innovation** |
| • Average class size |
| • Ratio of faculty to students |
| • Faculty certified under Quality Faculty Plan |
| • Student engagement (CCSSE) |
| **Partnerships and Collaborations** |
| • Articulation agreements with high schools |
| • Joint admission agreements with colleges and universities |
| • 260E and 260F agreements with business and industry for training |
| **Planning and Continuous Improvement** |
| • AQIP accreditation |
| • Program accreditation, licensing, and certification |
| • Program reviews |
| • Department annual planning proposals |
| **College Environment and Diversity** |
| • Student engagement (CCSSE) |
| • Student demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, and nationality |
| • Employee demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, and nationality |
| • Number of ESL students and their success in language acquisition and college courses |
| • Number of complaints and grievances regarding discrimination and harassment |
| • Campus crime report |
| **Fiscal Management and Resource Development** |
| • Annual revenue sources and ratios |
| • Annual expenditures |
| • Tuition and fee rates |
| • Annual fund balance |
| • Foundation holdings and distributions |
| • Funded grant proposals |
| **Instructional and Institutional Technology** |
| • Number and ratio of computers to students |
| • Number and ratio of computers to employees |
| • Number of courses on WebCT |
| • Number of courses on ICN |
| • Datatel conversion |
| • NICC Xpress usage |

## PROCESSES

### 7P1  Use of Information

We are still in the early stages of using data for decision making.  This is an exciting area for us.  We look forward to being fully operational in this area - not just collecting the "right" data, but managing and using it to make decisions to further our strategic plan.

The strategic plan aligns nicely with AQIP.  Table 7-2 shows how the strategic goals match the AQIP categories.  This means that when we collect data for our strategic plan, we will automatically collect data documenting progress on the AQIP categories.

*Table 7-2 Alignment of AQIP and Strategic Plan*

| Strategic Plan | AQIP Category |
|---|---|
| Student Access and Success | 1 - Helping Students Learn<br>3 - Student and Stakeholder Needs |
| Teaching Excellence and Innovation | 1 - Helping Students Learn<br>4 - Valuing People |
| Partnerships and Collaborations | 3 - Student and Stakeholder Needs<br>9 - Building Collaborative Relationships |
| Planning and Continuous Improvement | 2 - Other Distinctive Objectives<br>7 - Measuring Effectiveness<br>8 - Planning Continuous Improvement |
| College Environment and Diversity | 1 - Helping Students Learn<br>4 - Valuing People<br>5 - Leading and Communicating |
| Fiscal Management and Resource Development | 6 - Supporting Institutional Operations |
| Instructional and Institutional Technology | 1 - Helping Students Learn<br>6 - Supporting Institutional Operations |

Once we start "mapping" our data to coincide with our strategic plan, it will be much simpler to measure progress, both towards our strategic plan and AQIP.

Currently we use data in the following ways:

- We review quantitative research from the Community College Research Center, the Lumina Foundation, and the Teacher College Record Journal to stay abreast of national trends and how they may apply to NICC.

- Our Director of Institutional Research collaborates with other community college

institutional researchers in Iowa to identify pertinent issues regarding the generation, reliability, and interpretation of data and to promote continued research and reflection.

- We pull out quantitative data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC) to see how we compare to other institutions.

- We recently created a Strategic Enrollment Management Team to set goals for and monitor student enrollment.  This leadership team will use data to set goals and create a vision for student enrollment. It will help us come up with new strategies and identify important issues related to both qualitative and quantitative improvements, ensure compliance with the strategic plan, and establish a procedure by which to measure progress toward goals.

- We conduct program reviews of our vocational-technical programs at least every five years to assess performance and determine if the programs are meeting the needs of the district.

- We review institutional data to identify possible changes to our curriculum.  This includes the need to add or drop courses.  It also includes adding prerequisites to a course to improve completion and success rates.

### 7P2  Needs of Departments and Units

We are emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision making at all levels of the institution.  This means, of course, that we must make data available to departments and assist them in using data both in planning and reporting.

We recently implemented a new process of annual planning that starts at the department-level.  This process is detailed in 8P1.  We have instructed departments to use data in their annual planning.  If they have a Datatel Level One user, they can create new queries to access data. If they have a Datatel Level Two user, they can use already established queries. If they have neither, they can seek help from the Datatel Support Specialist who is ready and available to help with data queries.

For instance, as part of their annual planning, departments may review enrollment trends, placement scores, completion trends, graduate surveys, and employment trends.

This will naturally lead to a more thorough program evaluation process. As departments become familiar with available data, they will be able to conduct much more effective program reviews that use data to determine processes and outcomes.

**7P3  Comparative Information and Data**
We are in frequent communication with outside organizations about comparative data. Our Director of Institutional Research relies on the National Association of Institutional Research (AIR), Association of Institutional Research Upper Midwest (AIRUM), and Iowa Community College Association of Institutional Research (IACCAIR) for assistance in choosing and prioritizing data.

When determining the needs and priorities for comparative information and data, we always ask ourselves, "Is it most helpful to compare us to ourselves or to other institutions?"

Every area of the strategic plan has measures that lend themselves well to comparisons with other institutions. When choosing sources of comparative data, we first determine if it is a reliable source. Next we determine if the source allows us to extract information about appropriate comparison groups.

For instance, IPEDS is a powerful tool in creating comparative data. We can compare ourselves to all community colleges in Iowa, or focus on those of similar size. We can also compare ourselves to a national group whose institutional characteristics are similar to our own. When we create a comparison group, we typically look at size, geographic location, and type of institution.

We are particularly interested in comparing enrollment, retention, student demographics, completion rates, persistence rates, and graduation rates. Table 7-3 shows some of the sources we use to extract comparison data.

*Table 7-3 Comparative Data Sources*

| Source | Name of Report/Database | Types of Data | College | State | Nation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iowa Department of Education | Student Credit Enrollment Report | • Student enrollment<br>• Student demographics | X | X | |
| | Tuition and Fees Report | • Regent universities tuition and fees<br>• National community college tuition and fees | X | X | X |
| | Certified Budget Report | • Revenues and expenses | X | X | |
| | Status Report on Community College Funding | • Revenues and expenses<br>• Tuition and fees<br>• Financial aid<br>• State general aid<br>• Property tax revenue | X | X | |
| Iowa Department of Education | Iowa' Adult Literacy Program | • Basic literacy skills<br>• English language acquisition<br>• GED testing<br>• Enrollment in post-secondary program<br>• Employment and job retention | X | X | |
| | Condition of Iowa Community Colleges Report | • Community college programs<br>• Credit enrollment and awards<br>• Non-credit enrollment<br>• Success of community college students<br>• Adult literary<br>• Economic development<br>• Human resources<br>• Financial status<br>• Tuition and fees<br>• Financial aid | X | X | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics | Various Reports | • Household and per capita income<br>• Poverty rate<br>• Unemployment claims<br>• Mass layoffs<br>• Employment trends<br>• Employment by occupation<br>• Wages and benefits | X | X | X |
| Community College Leadership Program | Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Community College Faculty Survey on Student Engagement (CCFSSE) | • Active and collaborative learning<br>• Student effort<br>• Academic challenge<br>• Student-faculty interaction<br>• Support for learners | X | X | X |
| Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System | Various database reports | • Institutional characteristics<br>• Student tuition and fees<br>• Enrollment<br>• Completions<br>• Graduation rates<br>• Student financial aid<br>• Faculty salaries<br>• Full- and part-time faculty and staff | X | X | X |
| American Association of Community Colleges | State-by-State Profile of Community Colleges<br><br>National Profile of Community Colleges, Trends, and Statistics | • Student enrollment<br>• Student demographics<br>• Degrees and certificates granted<br>• Employment data<br>• Faculty and staff demographics<br>• Faculty and staff salaries<br>• Services provided<br>• College expenses<br>• College revenues<br>• Tuition and fees | | X | X |

## 7P4  Analysis of Information

Our Director of Institutional Research is the lead administrator working on data analysis.  The Director generates student profile fact sheets, trend studies, and comparative data to help in decision-making.  She presents the reports to Cabinet and assists in interpreting the data.

Because of its size, the allied health programs have special assistance in data analysis from the Allied Health Program Evaluation/ Accreditation Specialist.

After review by Cabinet, data reports are placed on the NICC network.  All employees can access these reports and use them as part of their annual departmental planning process.

## 7P5  Alignment with Goals

We continue to strengthen the way we use information and data throughout the organization.  Our goal is to use information and data for decision making at all levels of the institution.  We do this in the following ways:

- All department planning starts with reviewing the NICC mission, vision, and strategic plan.

- Departments use data to identify needs and gaps.

- Datatel Level One users assist departments by creating new queries.

- Datatel Level Two users assist departments by extracting already existing data reports from Datatel.

- The Datatel Support Specialist is available to assist departments in identifying available data and extracting needed data from Datatel.

- The Director of Institutional Research helps Cabinet and division and department heads by providing data and reports.

- All department proposals must relate to one or more strategic plan goals and objectives and to one or more AQIP categories.

- The new Strategic Enrollment Management Team will review and monitor department initiatives, verify the existence of measurable outcomes, and ensure that improvement plans align with the strategic plan and AQIP.

### 7P6  Effectiveness
NICC places great value on our information systems and institutional technology.

Last fall, our President invited Campusworks, Inc, a computer consulting firm, to review our college-wide computing services.  The consultants spent two days on campus, reviewing our systems and processes and talking to CIS staff and other employees.  They then presented a 2005 Technology Report to Cabinet and CIS staff.  The report included several recommendations, including:

- Development of a computing strategic plan focusing on both computer infrastructure and instructional and administrative computing

- An in-depth review of computer infrastructure to identify possible single points of failure

- Additional training for Datatel users

In response to these recommendations, we are moving forward with the following steps:

*Information Technology Strategic Plan* - CIS staff have contacted their colleagues at other community colleges to gather their information technology strategic plans.  These plans will serve as a resource for a college-wide task force charged with designing a plan for NICC.

*Study of Infrastructure -* We are seeking a consultant to assess our information technology infrastructure, both in terms of design and robustness.

*Additional Datatel Support -* We have reorganized our CIS department to give more attention to Datatel users.  The new Datatel Support Specialist is responsible for training and supporting Datatel users and assisting others in accessing data.

### 7P7  Measures of Effectiveness
NICC has many systems and processes in place to ensure accessibility, reliability, timeliness, and

user-friendliness of data.  However, we still need to determine how helpful our data generation is in measuring institutional effectiveness.

## RESULTS (R)

### 7R1  Results for Measuring Effectiveness
We adopted a revised mission, vision, and strategic plan in June 2005.  We have identified measures that support the goals in the plan.  These are listed in Table 7-1.  Once we start collecting and analyzing these measures, we will have a better sense of how effective they are in measuring progress towards our strategic plan goals and objectives.

### 7R2  Comparison to Other Institutions
We do not currently have results on how effective we are in collecting and analyzing data compared to other community colleges and educational institutions.

NICC is committed to professional development in institutional research.  By attending annual conferences of the National Association of Institutional Research (AIR) and Iowa Community College Association of Institutional Research (IACCAIR), we hope to stay informed about the procedures and techniques used by other institutions, and to compare them to our own.  This is perhaps the most effective way to stay abreast of the rapidly changing field of institutional research.

We will also continue to fine-tune our information management systems.  One way to do this is to work closely with other colleges using Datatel.  Datatel has user groups at both the national and state level.  By being active in the Midwest Datatel Users' Group, we hope to share our experience with other institutions and learn from their experience.  Over time we will be able to compare our systems for collecting and managing data as well as our specific results.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

### 7I1  Methods of Improvement
We are implementing several initiatives to improve the way we collect, store, and use data.  Key participants include our CIS Director, Datatel Support Specialist, and Director of Institutional Research.

We are considering joining the National Community College Benchmark Project. This is an institutional IPEDS-like survey designed to take into account the unique aspects of community colleges, thereby rendering the results more meaningful and thus more useful for the purpose of longterm planning.

In addition, we are exploring using the Clarus Corporation to perform a comprehensive environmental scan of the district. An environmental scan will help determine if we are meeting the needs of our institution and of our constituents.

### 7I2  Targets for Improvement

The newly formed Strategic Enrollment Management Team will be reviewing departmental targets for improvement to ensure compliance with the strategic plan. The team will also verify the existence of measurable outcomes.

We expect to continue to improve our systems for measuring effectiveness. This includes updating our infrastructure, but also the way we collect, store, analyze, and use data for decision making.

In the next three years, we hope to meet the following targets for improvements:

- Finalize which data will be used to document progress towards the strategic plan.

- Set up consistent data collection processes throughout the College.

- Transform most data collection processes to an electronic format.

- Complete implementation of Datatel.

- Continue training Datatel users in accessing data and creating reports.

- Make reports available to all employees on the NICC network.

- Offer training and consultation to all departments in how to use data in planning and decision making.

- Design and start implementing the NICC Information Technology Strategic Plan.

We communicate our results and priorities to members of NICC using the following communication tools:

- President's e-mails
- Announcements on NICC Xpress
- CIS bulletins
- Technology meetings
- Training of Datatel users
- Technical assistance to departments in the annual planning process

# Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 8C1 Vision

NICC has an exciting vision for the future. In June 2005, the Board of Trustees approved a revised mission and vision for NICC. These are listed under 02 in the Organizational Overview.

At the same time the Board adopted a new strategic plan. The strategic plan offers a clear vision of where we are headed in the next 5-10 years. It targets seven areas for improvement and offers a tangible vision for each. Not surprisingly, the plan is called V7, or Vision 7.

*V7 Vision Statements*

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**1. Student Access and Success**

NICC values access and success for all students. The College reduces barriers to education and provides student-centered support services. The College maintains an effective strategic enrollment plan and promotes student success and the building of a foundation for lifelong learning by helping students identify goals and by supporting them in achieving those goals.

**2. Teaching Excellence and Innovation**

NICC provides an educational environment that values teaching excellence and innovation. The College has an educational master plan that continues the College tradition of excellence in education and offers opportunities for ongoing improvement. The College promotes teaching innovations and links to the local and global communities.

**3. Partnerships and Collaborations**

NICC values its existing community, business, and educational partnerships and strives to establish new partnerships that are mutually beneficial for students, College employees, partners, and communities.

**4. Planning and Continuous Improvement**

NICC engages in ongoing planning and assessment aimed at the continued excellence of educational and training programs and support services. College employees share a common goal of maintaining a one-college focus.

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**5. College Environment and Diversity**

NICC encourages an environment that promotes collaboration and a culture that is open, inquisitive, positive, and focused on success in all endeavors. NICC accepts fully the responsibilities inherent in global citizenship by focusing on diversity throughout the College.

**6. Fiscal Management and Resource Development**

NICC maximizes the use of revenue from all available sources to support College programs and services. The College maintains fiscal integrity through effective management of resources and the use of sound budget processes and standard accounting practices. The College provides opportunities for broad participation in setting spending priorities.

**7. Instructional and Institutional Technology**

NICC provides a robust and responsive system of technology that supports all aspects of the institution for its students, College employees, and communities. Technology is used appropriately to educate students and to enhance communication across the College and throughout the district.

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### 8C2 Strategies Aligned with Mission

With a new strategic plan, we have a clear direction for the future. The strategic plan clearly spells out goals tied to the college vision and the V7 vision statements. These goals are long-term strategies that are expected to be accomplished in the next five years.

*V7 Goals*

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**Student Access and Success**

*Goal 1* – Reduce barriers that prevent current and prospective students from pursuing a college education.

*Goal 2* – Develop and implement a strategic enrollment management plan.

*Goal 3* – Increase access to support services for all students.

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*Goal 4* – Support students in achieving their educational goals and building a foundation for lifelong learning.

*Goal 5* - Provide a seamless transition for students entering the College, transferring to other institutions, and/or entering the workforce after graduation.

**Teaching Excellence and Innovation**

*Goal 1* – Ensure the relevance of current programs and the timely and appropriate creation of new programs.

*Goal 2* - Enhance curricula and learning resources to respond to student needs.

*Goal 3* – Encourage and support teaching innovations and use of best practices.

**Partnerships and Collaborations**

*Goal 1* – Support existing and seek new educational partnerships.

*Goal 2* - Increase collaboration with business and industry in the NICC district through innovative partnerships.

*Goal 3* - Increase NICC's role as a resource and partner in community development efforts.

**Planning and Continuous Improvements**

*Goal 1* – Create a shared focus on continuous improvement, using the College strategic plan as a guide.

*Goal 2* - Coordinate institutional research and utilize findings in college decision making.

*Goal 3* - Involve members from throughout the college in an ongoing planning that integrates planning, assessment, and budgeting.

*Goal 4* - Evaluate programs and processes and engage in continuous improvement efforts.

**College Environment and Diversity**

*Goal 1* – Focus on strong internal communications and opportunities for shared governance of the College.

*Goal 2* - Educate students, employees, and communities about the responsibilities of global citizenship.

*Goal 3* - Expand diversity efforts across the College and throughout the district.

*Goal 4* - Enhance facilities and surroundings to promote positive college life.

*Goal 5* - Enhance activities and programming to promote positive college life.

*Goal 6* - Enable College employees the ability to contribute at maximum potential and the opportunity to pursue satisfying personal lives.

*Goal 7* - Provide relevant opportunities for personal and professional development.

**Fiscal Management and Resource Development**

*Goal 1* – Link resource allocation to strategic planning.

*Goal 2* - Maintain fiscal integrity through effective management of resources.

*Goal 3* - Expand and diversify college resources.

**Instructional and Institutional Technology**

*Goal 1* – Ensure adequate planning and budgeting for staying current with emerging technology.

*Goal 2* - Provide a reliable infrastructure that enhances the work of the College and is accessible to students, employees, and other constituents.

*Goal 3* - Provide a reliable instructional technology system that enhances and complements learning.

*Goal 4* - Provide a reliable institutional technology system that enhances productivity and information access.

*Goal 5* - Provide comprehensive and user-friendly online services and web site functionality.

Each goal in V7 has one or more objectives. When departments complete their annual planning, they must fit their action plan into one or more of the V7 goals and objectives. These action plans are combined into a college-wide

plan. It is this annual plan that spells out our short-term strategies.

## PROCESSES

### 8P1 Planning Process
NICC is moving towards a cycle of continuous planning and improvement.

The process started when we joined AQIP in 2003. This meant moving from external to internal assessment. We needed to look in the mirror and find our strengths and weaknesses to help us chart a direction for the future.

Upon her arrival, our new President initiated the development of a strategic plan based, in part, on the needs identified through the AQIP process. Her most important concern was to complete the work that had already been done and put it to use for the benefit of the College. She clearly expressed that she did not want the strategic plan to gather dust on a shelf; she wanted it to be used.

Along with developing a new strategic plan, the President and her team assessed the existing committee structure. There were a number of strong committees, but they did not fit neatly into a process of continuous planning. The President kept the College Vision Committee and created two new committees. One was the Strategic Planning Committee; the other was the Budget Committee.

The three committees play an important role in the annual planning process. The annual planning process uses the following steps:

- Each department conducts a needs assessment. This involves complete documentation of needs, using data. As part of this process, the department links the needs to goals in the strategic plan and to one or more AQIP categories.

- Departments forward their proposals to the College Vision Committee. This committee reviews all proposals and ensures that they support the NICC mission and vision.

- The proposals then go to the Strategic Planning Committee for a thorough review. This committee determines if the proposals

match the strategic plan and support the AQIP process.

- Next the proposals are forwarded to the Budget Committee. This committee assesses the financial feasibility of each proposal and makes recommendations for funding.

- Finally, the proposals reach Cabinet. Cabinet members consider the recommendations of the three committees. They balance these recommendations with other considerations related to the annual budget planning process.

We are completing the first cycle of the new annual planning process. We have not yet seen the results of the process. When we do, we will make adjustments to ensure that our employees are engaged in a process of continuous planning – and reaping the benefits of thinking ahead, using data, and supporting both the strategic plan and the AQIP process.

### 8P2 Selection of Strategies
V7, our strategic plan, guides our selection of strategies. Long-term strategies are clearly spelled out in the goals and objectives of the plan. We use the process outlined in 8P1 to generate short-term strategies.

### 8P3 Development of Action Plans
We develop action plans to support our institutional strategies by following the process outlined in 8P1. Departments develop annual action plans. They present their plans to the College Vision Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Budget Committee. These committees review and prioritize the plans and pass them on to Cabinet for review.

We also rely on the program evaluation process to help us in developing action plans. Every year, 20% of the vocational-technical programs complete a program review. Based on the program review, each program develops an action plan to address areas needing improvement.

Currently, the program review and annual planning processes are independent. Over time, we would like to align them. We would like to have programs accomplish two goals when they complete their program review. One is to meet

licensing and certification requirements. The other is to develop an action plan that fits into the college strategic plan.

## 8P4  Alignment with Institutional Levels

Our new planning process engages members at all institutional levels. It starts at the grassroots level, with departments developing action plans, and moves up to the three district-wide committees for review and recommendation. The district-wide committees include members from all institutional levels.

## 8P5  Measures and Performance Projections

Our strategic plan is general in nature; it does not specify performance indicators. This means that we still need to come up with measures to track progress and outcomes.

Our new Director of Institutional Research will help improve access to data, both for reporting and decision making. Another important role will be to collect performance indicators to document progress towards goals.

The Student Enrollment Management Team will also play a key role in establishing measures for department-level action plans.

## 8P6  Resource Needs

Budgeting is an integral part of our new planning process. The Budget Committee receives prioritized proposals from the Strategic Planning Committee and College Vision Committee. The committee aligns the list with available resources. This may mean reallocating resources within the existing budget to allow for important projects to be funded here and now. It also means giving Cabinet a list of priority projects to fund in the next budget cycle.

## 8P7  Developing and Nurturing Capabilities

The new focus on continuous improvement is more than just implementing a new planning process. It also means creating a culture of continuous improvement.

One of our goals is to make sure that all administrators, faculty, and staff embrace continuous improvement. We want them to strive to make this great institution even better.

When we joined AQIP in 2003, we started the process of creating a culture of continuous improvement. Key administrators, faculty, and staff received training in continuous improvement and how to serve as facilitators in institutional planning. Another group received training in conducting focus groups.

At our All-College Day in April 2005, we provided training to all employees in how to identify and react to emerging trends in community colleges. This training helped raise awareness of issues and trends and helped departments see how they could address these trends in their annual planning.

Finally, an ad hoc committee developed a Planning Toolkit for use in the annual planning process. The toolkit is available online, and committee members are ready to provide training and consultation to any group or department that requests it.

## 8P8 Measures of Effectiveness of Planning

It is extremely important to assess the effectiveness of the planning process itself. As we complete the first annual planning cycle, we will collect measures to determine how effective the process was. We will use this information to revise the process.

Measures of effectiveness of the planning process include:

- Percentage of departments completing the annual planning process
- Percentage of departments using data
- Percentage of proposals linked to the college mission, vision, and strategic plan
- Percentage of projects funded and implemented
- Percentage of projects meeting performance benchmarks and outcomes

## RESULTS (R)

## 8R1  Results for Accomplishing Institutional Strategies and Action Plans

We are still in the early stages of using continuous planning. However, even at this stage of the process, we can report some important results:

- We have adopted a new mission, vision, and strategic plan.

- We have implemented three district-wide committees to engage employees at all levels in decision making.

- We have hired a Director of Institutional Research to provide data for planning and decision making.

- We have hired a Vice President of Academic Affairs to set high standards for our educational programs.

- We have developed a Facilities Master Plan with input from all college employees.

- We have developed and implemented a Quality Faculty Plan, an orientation for new faculty, and a faculty mentoring program.

- We have created NICC Xpress, a college web portal.

- We have placed most of our data on Datatel.

**8R2  Projections of Performance**
In the next three years, we expect to refine our planning process and implement a number of improvement projects.  Following are a few examples of what we would like to achieve:

- Review and update the strategic plan on an annual basis.

- Use data in all decision-making processes.

- Have all faculty certified or working towards certification under the Quality Faculty Plan.

- Secure funding for our Facilities Master Plan and be fully engaged in renovation and new construction.

- Implement our Enrollment Management Plan and start the process of setting new targets.

- Use our Educational Master Plan to guide all educational and training programs.

**8R3  Comparison to Other Institutions**
We do not have comparison data from other institutions.

**8R4 Evidence of Effectiveness**
We have no hard evidence that our continuous improvement process is effective.  However, even as we complete the first cycle, we have a strong sense that the process is working.  College employees at all levels are engaged in the planning and decision-making process.  We have already accomplished several short-term goals, as outlined in 8R1.

## IMPROVEMENT (I)

**8I1  Methods of Improvement**
We are focusing on helping our employees build skills in continuous quality improvement.  In order to do so, we have developed a Planning Toolkit.  The toolkit includes information about continuous quality improvement and the need for data-based decision making.  It refers to the NICC vision, mission, and strategic plan – and also brings in the AQIP categories.  Finally, it offers a number of specific planning tools and instructions for how to use them.

We have placed the Planning Toolkit on the College network and distributed a copy to all department heads.  They have also received information about the annual planning process. It outlines how to develop a proposal, how to document needs, and how to submit a proposal for review by the College Vision Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Budget Committee.  By having all departments follow the same procedures, we can ensure adherence to the strategic plan and strategic initiatives.

**8I2  Targets for Improvement**
We have not yet established targets for improvement of our planning process.  When we do, we will use the following channels to communicate them to members of NICC:

- All-College Day
- President's annual address
- President's e-mails
- Communiqué newsletter
- College Vision Committee meetings
- Strategic Planning Committee meetings
- Budget Committee meetings
- Department and committee meetings

# Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

## CONTEXT FOR ANALYSIS (C)

### 9C1  Key Collaborative Relationships

As a rural community college, we know the importance of collaboration.  When we pool our resources with others, we can accomplish so much more than when working alone.  Therefore, we are constantly looking for opportunities to engage in collaborative opportunities with other entities.

Our key collaborative relationships include:

- **Educational partnerships** with schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities

- **Business partnerships** with business, industry, and economic development groups

- **Administrative and legislative partnerships** with accrediting, certifying, and licensing agencies and state and federal legislators

- **Resource development partnerships** with friends and funders of NICC

- **Other partnerships** with agencies supporting our students in pursuing an education

Table 9-1 shows our most important collaborators in each category.  These collaborations are constantly expanding so, by nature, this is only a partial list.

*Table 9-1 Key Collaborative Relationships*

| Type | Collaborators |
|---|---|
| **Educational Partnerships** | |
| K-12 school districts | • 26 K-12 school districts |
| Community colleges | • 14 Iowa community colleges<br>• Iowa Association of Community College Trustees<br>• Iowa Association of Community College Presidents |
| Colleges and universities | • Iowa State University<br>• University of Iowa<br>• University of Northern Iowa<br>• Loras College<br>• Clarke College<br>• University of Dubuque<br>• Upper Iowa University<br>• Luther College<br>• VESTA partners |

| | |
|---|---|
| Other training institutions | • National Safety Council<br>• Northeast Iowa School of Music |
| **Business Partnerships** | |
| Chambers and economic development groups | • 15 Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations<br>• Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation |
| Business and industry | • John Deere<br>• 114 industries with 260E agreements<br>• 42 industries with 260F agreements |
| **Administrative and Legislative Partnerships** | |
| Administrative | • Higher Learning Commission<br>• AQIP<br>• U.S. Department of Agriculture<br>• U.S. Department of Education<br>• Iowa Department of Education<br>• Iowa Board of Nursing<br>• Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs<br>• Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care<br>• Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology<br>• Keystone Area Education Agency |
| Legislative | • State Senators and Representatives<br>• U.S. Senators and Representatives |
| **Resource Development Partnerships** | |
| Funders | • NICC Foundation<br>• Major funders |
| **Other Partnerships** | |
| Public and private agencies | • Iowa Workforce Development<br>• Vocational Rehabilitation<br>• Promise Jobs<br>• Dislocated Worker Program<br>• Veterans Administration<br>• Workforce Investment Act<br>• Coordinated Service Providers |

## Educational Partnerships

### K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

NICC maintains educational partnerships with all K-12 school districts in the district.

***TRiO-Upward Bound*** – We maintain TRiO-Upward Bound programs on our Calmar and Peosta campuses.

TRiO-Upward Bound allows us to work closely with specific school districts to identify, select, and serve students who may not otherwise be college-bound. Some of these students come from low-income families; others come from families without a tradition of going to college.

For each program, we have a set of high school partners. The Calmar program works with Allamakee, Eastern Allamakee, Oelwein, and Riceville school districts. The Peosta program works with Dubuque and Western Dubuque school districts, and even extends into the East Dubuque school district in Illinois.

During the school year, our TRiO-Upward Bound staff make frequent visits to participating schools. They provide tutoring, academic advising, study skill development, career and college planning assistance, and cultural activities for participating students.

During the summer, students from both programs come together in a central location for six weeks. They take core courses along with college preparatory courses. They also build life skills and participate in fellowship and fun.

***Alternative High Schools*** – NICC collaborates with 13 high schools in the district to offer alternative high schools. The alternative high schools are located in Calmar, Peosta, Elkader, and Oelwein.

Our alternative high schools target students who are struggling to succeed in the traditional high school setting. They provide a supportive environment for these students to complete their high school requirements while preparing for lifelong learning.

***Testing*** – One of our entrance requirements is an ACCUPLACER placement test. We offer free online testing to all high school students in our district, regardless of whether they enroll at NICC. Students can take the test at their high school, thus eliminating the need to travel.

***College Courses*** – Depending on their score on ACCUPLACER, students can enroll in college-level courses while still in high school. These courses take a variety of forms:

- We offer some contracted courses directly at the high schools, using high school faculty.

- We offer other courses over the Iowa Communications Network (ICN). The ICN allows us to stream courses directly into area high schools, using closed circuit television.

- We allow high school students to enroll in courses offered at the NICC Centers.

- We also invite high school students to travel to our main campuses to attend courses. This is only feasible for students attending high schools within close range of our campuses.

- We provide high school students the opportunity to enroll in online courses. When they enroll, we emphasize the importance of being self-directed, organized, and assertive in asking questions.

***Academies*** – Because of the importance of career education, we are working with several high schools to provide career academies. NICC is the regional academy for 10 high school CISCO academies. We also provide auto technology academies.

***Health Occupations Consortia*** – NICC has joined with a number of high schools to create health occupations consortia. The purpose is to prepare high school students for health occupations by providing them with a series of health education classes. One consortium serves high school students at Valley of Elgin, Sumner, West Central, Tripoli, Clarksville, and Greene high schools. Another targets students at Eastern Allamakee and MFL-MarMac high schools. A third serves students at Edgewood-Colesburg, Maquoketa Valley, Starmont, and Clayton Ridge high schools.

***Charter School*** – One of our most exciting collaborative projects is the Northeast Iowa Charter School in Maynard. The charter school serves high school juniors and seniors, with the intent of putting them on a fast track to completing a college education. We provide advanced math, science, and writing courses on site. Without the charter school, many of these courses would not be available to students at a small, rural high school.

***Other Efforts*** – We work with area high schools in many other ways. We collaborate with to provide continuing education programs throughout the district. We provide transition services to special needs students. We share

faculty costs and resources for some college-level courses.  We collaborate to meet the mandates and guidelines of the Iowa Department of Education.  Finally, we work together to proactively address future programming and funding needs.

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Our educational partnerships include other community colleges in Iowa.

*Health Degree Partnerships* – We collaborate with three neighboring community colleges to offer health degrees and diplomas.

- We maintain agreements with Eastern Iowa Community College (EICC) to provide Electroneurodiagnostic Technology and Respiratory Technology degrees.  For the former, students take their general education courses at NICC and complete the rest at EICC.  For the latter, students can take all their courses at NICC.

- We maintain a Surgical Technology agreement with Kirkwood Community College.  Under this agreement, students take some courses at NICC and complete the rest by taking ICN courses delivered by Kirkwood.

- We maintain a Medical Laboratory Technician agreement with Hawkeye Community College.  Under this agreement, students complete two semesters of study at NICC, then a summer term and a semester at Hawkeye, and finally a clinical internship.

*Dairy Degree Partnership* – In response to the growing dairy industry, NICC has started collaborating with Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC).  After taking courses at NCC, students complete several ICN courses through NICC.  Finally, they come to NICC for eight weeks of intensive hands-on training in our state-of-the-art Northeast Iowa Dairy Center.

*Iowa Association of Community College Trustees* – One of the ways that community colleges in Iowa work together is through the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT).  This association seeks to promote community colleges and coordinate educational efforts in the state.  This includes getting involved in legislative initiatives supporting community colleges.

*Iowa Association of Community College Presidents* – The Iowa Association of Community College Presidents (IACCP) brings together presidents from Iowa's 15 community colleges.  The presidents meet at least monthly to coordinate programs and lobbying efforts.

*Community College Leadership Consortium* - IACCT and IACCP collaborate with the Community College Leadership Program at Iowa State University to groom new leaders for Iowa's community colleges.  One of their initiatives is the Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC).  CLIC provides leadership training to current and future administrators.  Participants learn about the latest in management and supervision, discuss current issues in the community college system, and network with their colleagues at other community colleges.

*Leadership Institute for a New Century* – A similar initiative is Leadership Institute for a New Century (LINC).  LINC seeks to build leadership skills among community college supervisors and faculty to encourage advancement in the community college system.  Participants participate in courses, internships, and networking opportunities.

*Faculty Courses* – We also collaborate with other community colleges to offer professional development opportunities for faculty.  All Iowa community colleges have a Quality Faculty Plan outlining the requirements for faculty.  Most community colleges require courses on the history of the community college, diverse learners, and teaching methods and evaluation.  NICC currently makes these courses available online to community college faculty statewide.

*Iowa Community College Training Consortium* – A final example of our collaboration with other community colleges is the Iowa Community College Training Consortium.  In the past, industries needing to train employees in several locations throughout the state had to contract with each community college for training.  Once they negotiated a contract, there was no guarantee that the training would be consistent from one community to the next.

In order to solve this dilemma, Iowa's community colleges created the Iowa Community College Training Consortium.  The consortium launched

*One Source*, a one-stop service for industries to contract for all their statewide training needs. They now pay the same price and receive the same training curriculum, regardless of location.

### COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Some of our most important collaborators are colleges and universities serving as transfer institutions.

***Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract*** – NICC has developed a Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract with several transfer institutions. The contract guarantees our students admission with junior status at the three Regent institutions: University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and University of Northern Iowa. It also guarantees them transfer to private colleges in our district, including Luther College, Upper Iowa University, Loras College, Clarke College, and University of Dubuque.

***Transfer Agreement*** - We have a unique transfer agreement in place with Upper Iowa University, filling a specific need in our communities. Students take two years of industrial technology courses at NICC, then transfer to Upper Iowa to complete two years of teaching courses. They earn a teaching license, preparing them to teach industrial technology in high school.

***Joint Admission Agreements*** – We also maintain joint admission agreements with several colleges and universities.

- One such agreement is with the University of Dubuque. It allows students enrolling at NICC to co-enroll at UD. While at NICC, they work with an academic advisor from UD. We recently developed a similar agreement with Clarke College.

- Another joint admission agreement is with the University of Northern Iowa. This agreement is for students enrolling in the Instructional Strategist/Elementary Education program at UNI. Students take two years at NICC, then two years through UNI. The UNI courses are offered online, over the ICN, or on site at NICC. Once done, students receive an Iowa teaching license and earn an Instructional Strategist I endorsement in special education, allowing them to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities.

- Finally, we maintain a joint admission agreement with Iowa State University in Ames. When students enroll in the dairy science program at NICC, they are jointly admitted to ISU.

***VESTA Partnership*** - One of our most exciting educational ventures is the Viticulture Enology Science and Technology Alliance (VESTA), funded by the National Science Foundation. This collaboration brings together educational institutions, government, and industry to offer programs in viticulture (grape growing) and enology (wine making) to students in several states. Our partners include Southwest Missouri State University, Shawnee Community College in Illinois, state agriculture agencies, and numerous vineyards and wineries. The educational partners offer all the necessary courses for these degrees and certificates online. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in field experiences with area vineyards and wineries, including ones in our own district.

***Transfer Courses*** – Many students at Iowa's four-year colleges and universities return home on winter and summer breaks. NICC offers a series of general education courses to allow these students to continue their education while on break. For instance, we offer 7x7 Winterim courses and 7x7 May term courses. These courses are extremely condensed, running seven hours for seven days. We also offer other condensed courses in the summer, allowing students to take courses while maintaining a job.

***Other Efforts*** – We work closely with our colleagues at colleges and universities to share resources. This includes resources related to students with disabilities, diversity, and library resources. We also sponsor transfer college fairs and joint career days.

### TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

We partner with other training institutions as needed to bring the best possible educational opportunities to our students.

***Agricultural Safety*** - The most prominent example is the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS). In 1994, the National Safety Council piloted a safety course at our Peosta campus. The course was so well received that the Iowa Governor signed

legislation funding the construction of a $1 million farm safety training center at Peosta. The center opened three years later.

NECAS is dedicated to preventing illnesses, injuries, and deaths among farmers and farm workers. The center offers hands-on farm equipment, classrooms, and a library and resource center. Some of the many safety training options include courses on hazardous materials, respiratory protection, tractor roll-over protection, combine safety, confined spaces, and rescue procedures for grain entrapment, trenches, and manure pit rescues.

*Music* – Another collaboration is with the Northeast Iowa School of Music (NISOM) in Dubuque. We partner with NISOM to provide both credit and non-credit music classes, including individual instrument instruction, choir, show choir, and string ensemble.

## Business Partnerships

NICC is involved in numerous collaborative relationships with business and industry.

*Chambers* - We are members of 10 Chambers of Commerce in the district and help them promote business and education in the region.

*Economic Development* - We work closely with economic development organizations throughout the district. It is vital for NICC to keep our local economy vibrant, especially considering the trend towards an aging population, with many youth leaving the state upon graduating from high school or college. We assist economic development groups in attracting new industry and expanding existing industry. For instance, we are currently working with about 25 business partners in Decorah on a plan called "Roadmap to Success" to attract 100 jobs to the region.

*Town Clock Center* – Our Town Clock Center in Dubuque is dedicated to professional development. Staff work closely with area employers to meet the professional development needs of their employees. We offer state-of-the-art conference facilities, assistance with conferences and trainings, custom training, career planning, and computerized ACT testing.

*Business Accelerator* – NICC is partnering with the City of Dubuque and the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation to sponsor the Northeast Iowa Business Accelerator at the Town Clock Center. Funded with a grant from the Iowa Department of Economic Development, the project seeks to help local entrepreneurs start or expand businesses. We provide strategic planning, market research, cash flow analysis, and assistance with issues ranging from information technology to patents.

*Business-Education Partnerships* – NICC maintains educational partnerships with a number of businesses and industries.

- We work closely with John Deere to offer the John Deere program on our Calmar campus. The John Deere Corporation provides state-of-the-art equipment, and John Deere dealers support student costs to attend the program.

- Another partnership is with the Mi-T-M Corporation in Peosta. This corporation manufactures pressure washers for the painting industry. Mi-T-M helps us select and install hardware and software for the AS/400, offers upgrades, provides training, and sponsors internships for students.

- We also maintain a business partnership with CISCO. As part of this partnership, we provide training to high school students, and CISCO contributes part of the equipment cost.

*Other Business Partnerships* – We partner with a number of other entities to enhance college life for our students.

- We partner with the City of Peosta to allow our Peosta students and employees to use the Peosta Recreation Center.

- We recently sold two acres of land to help a Peosta developer build low-income housing and make it available to our students.

- A Peosta entrepreneur recently contracted with our building programs to construct a home in Peosta.

*Advisory Boards* - Business and industry play a vital role in our programs by participating on our advisory boards. Several big employers, including John Deere, support their employees in helping us develop our vocational programs. Many smaller employers also support their employees in serving on our advisory boards.

Because we have many programs in the nursing and allied health fields, we also receive great support from the health care industry. Advisory board members come from hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation facilities, occupational health agencies, and dentists' offices. We see the same commitment from human service agencies and child care centers.

*Internships* - Many of our vocational and technical programs require an internship. Again, our business partners do an outstanding job of providing internship opportunities for our students.

Several businesses have allowed our students to complete occupational experiences in office technology, marketing, and communication. A couple of law firms have provided student internships. Many health care businesses offer preceptor experiences for our nursing students. These are clinical laboratory experiences that allow a nursing student to be paired with a clinical preceptor. Once they have mastered basic nursing skills, the clinical preceptor can help them "put it all together" in a clinical setting.

*Contract Training* - Many businesses contract with our Economic Development division for continuing education and contract training. We work with other community colleges to deliver *One Source*, a standard curriculum for industry training. We also work with the following partners to deliver industry training:

- Center for Industrial Research and Service
- Iowa Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- Institute for Physical Research and Technology
- National Institute for Standards and Technology

**Administrative and Legislative Partnerships**

We maintain close relationships with administrative agencies and legislators.

*Accrediting Agencies* – The Higher Learning Commission and AQIP are at the top of our list because they oversee our institutional accreditation. We also work closely with the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to meet their requirements. We work with the Iowa Department of Education to meet the mandates and guidelines for community colleges in Iowa.

In addition, we work closely with agencies that accredit our programs. We have a shared interest in validating program quality and success. Accrediting agencies include:

- Iowa Board of Nursing
- Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs
- Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care
- Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology

*Keystone Area Education Agency* - Another level of administrative support comes from Keystone Area Education Agency. Accredited by the Iowa Department of Education, this agency offers a variety of support services to help students succeed. We frequently use the Keystone building in Elkader as a meeting site. We also tap into the agency's many learning resources and inter-school mail delivery system.

*Legislators* - We have a positive relationship with our state and federal legislators, and use a variety of channels to maintain communication with them.

- Our President is instrumental in establishing working relationships with state and federal legislators by meeting with them in person and maintaining regular contact through phone and e-mail.

- Legislators attend forums at NICC to discuss issues with students and employees.

- Every spring a group of students travels to Des Moines to represent NICC at Legislative Day. This is a wonderful opportunity for our legislators to hear directly from our students as they talk about their successes and ongoing challenges.

**Resource Development Partnerships**

Our primary vehicle for maintaining relationships with contributors is the NICC Foundation.

*NICC Foundation* – We maintain a close relationship with the NICC Foundation. The foundation is a separate non-profit organization with an independent board of directors. The foundation seeks to support students and educational programs at NICC through charitable giving. It accepts cash, stock, real

estate, and planned and estate gifts. Every year, the foundation supports hundreds of students through scholarships and loans. The foundation also provides funding for graduating high school seniors by contributing to the Dollars for Scholars program.

***Major Contributors*** – A number of businesses provide support to our students by making major donations to the college.

- The Pepsi Distributing Center owners in Peosta approached us about a naming opportunity for the new Child Development Center in Peosta. As a result, our Peosta campus is now designated as a Pepsi campus. In return, Pepsi has committed $95,000 to campus improvements and student scholarships over the next 10 years.

- A local family made a substantial contribution toward the purchase of the Dubuque Center, allowing us to get programs off the ground.

- Several other groups sponsor annual fundraising events for NICC, including Younkers and the Dubuque County Medical Alliance.

**Other Partnerships Supporting Students**

Many students need support to succeed in college. We rely on public and private agencies to give them the support they need.

***Coordinated Service Providers*** – We work closely with a group called Coordinated Service Providers (CSP). CSP coordinates regional services for individuals with special needs, including single parents, families on public assistance, individuals with disabilities, older workers, and youth who have dropped out of high school. The goal is to maximize resources and prevent duplication of services.

***Rapid Response Team*** – NICC is part of a team of public and private agencies assisting business and industry with layoffs and closures. The team provides displaced workers with job placement, skill training, and education. We offer a "Back to School" workshop focusing on making the decision to go to college, school readiness, diploma and degree programs, and financial aid. Last year, we provided this workshop four times in conjunction with business closings and layoffs.

***Workforce Development Partnership*** - One of our strongest partners is Iowa Workforce Development. In fact, NICC employs the local IWD Director. This gives us the perfect opportunity to work together to meet the needs of employers and employees in our district.

IWD devotes special attention to the needs of dislocated workers and individuals transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency. The agency provides them with income and support services while they look for employment or pursue education or training at NICC.

IWD offers many services to prepare our students for employment. Students can go through skills assessment, career counseling, and job search training. They can work with our Career Connection Coordinators to make a smooth transition from college to the workplace. They can receive information about current job openings and the long-term job outlook in the region. They can use Iowa's Job Bank, a computerized search engine helping employers and employees locate each other.

***Government Agency Partnerships -*** Our partnerships with government agencies are especially important since they administer state and federal programs.

- We work with Vocational Rehabilitation to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment.

- We work with the Veterans Administration to enroll veterans in educational programs under the GI Bill.

- We collaborate with Promise Jobs to help individuals on public assistance make the transition to financial independence.

- We work with the Dislocated Worker Program to provide education and training for laid-off workers.

***Adult Re-Entry Advisory Board*** – Many agency representatives serve on our Adult Re-Entry Non-Traditional Career Center Advisory Board. This includes Iowa Workforce Development, Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, Northeast Iowa Community Action, and Promise Jobs. Advisory board meetings give us a chance to share ideas

and coordinate services for some of our populations with special needs.

## 9C2  Reinforcement of Mission

NICC's mission is to provide accessible, affordable, and quality education and training to individuals in our communities.  All our collaborative relationships serve to support this mission in one way or another.

- Our educational partners support our mission to improve access and affordability.  Together we strive to create a seamless transition between high school and NICC, and between NICC and other community colleges, colleges, and universities.  We make education accessible by bringing it to our local communities and by offering distance education.  We also devote significant resources to helping those who would not otherwise pursue a college education.

- Our business partners support our mission by helping us respond to community needs.  We collaborate on economic development efforts, and we provide a rapid response to plant closings and layoffs.  We offer contract training to meet the needs of employers and employees.  Our business partners help make our programs affordable by sponsoring facilities, equipment, and student internships.

- Our administrative partners support our mission to provide quality education and training.  They help us set high standards and give us their stamp of approval by providing accreditation of our college and certification and licensing of our students and programs.

- Our legislative partners support our mission to provide accessible and affordable education and training.  State and federal legislators provide community college funding and create economic development opportunities.

- Our resource development partners support our mission by helping us make education affordable.  They mobilize resources for scholarships and loans for students.

- Our other partners support our mission to provide accessible and affordable opportunities for students.  They offer additional resources for students with special needs, including dislocated workers, veterans,

individuals on public assistance, and individuals with disabilities.

Our collaborators play an important role in changing our institutional direction.  Our mission vision, and strategic plan guide all planning, but our collaborators give the plan shape.  They help us:

- Document needs in our communities.
- Identify gaps in programs.
- Spark innovative programs.
- Identify funding opportunities.
- Provide human or material resources for collaborative projects.
- Build community support.

## PROCESSES

### 9P1  Building External Relationships

*Educational Partnerships*
At NICC, we place high priority on maintaining a good working relationship with our educational partners.  We work closely with high schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities to create an effective secondary and post-secondary education system.

- Our High School Relations Coordinator travels to area high schools to develop opportunities for high school students to take college-level classes, especially in the academic area.

- Our Tech-Prep Coordinator visits high schools to develop opportunities in the vocational area.

- Our Career Connection Coordinators help students by easing the transition to college.

- Our Deans work closely with high schools to coordinate the provision of college-level courses for high school students.

- Our Student Enrollment Coordinators provide marketing materials to area high schools, including the NICC catalog and program-specific brochures.

We also work hard to maintain good communication with transfer colleges and universities.

- We offer colleges space on our campuses to meet with students to discuss joint admission and transfer options. Academic counselors from Loras College, Clarke College, and University of Dubuque spend time on our Peosta campus on a weekly basis. Luther College and Upper Iowa University send admissions counselors to our Calmar campus once a month.

- We work actively with transfer institutions to develop articulation agreements. This includes our Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract, guaranteeing our students that they will be accepted as juniors at transfer institutions. We also maintain a number of joint admission agreements in specific program areas.

- Our faculty and staff maintain collegial relationships with their counterparts at transfer colleges and universities. We share resources, participate in workshops together, and engage in common initiatives that build bridges between our institutions. Examples include sponsoring college fairs and career days together.

We prioritize educational partnerships by how well they match our vision, mission, and strategic plan. Along with that, we assess how well they fit the needs of our communities and how feasible they are in terms of required resources and personnel

### Business Partnerships
We consider it very important to maintain good relationships with our business partners. We work closely with them to build a strong workforce and regional economy.

- Our Vice President for Economic Development attends Chamber and economic development meetings throughout the region. These meetings provide an opportunity to build relationships and work on common initiatives.

- Our Economic Development staff consider themselves consultants and sales people. They work with more than 500 businesses and industries in the district. Although it is a daunting task, they try to visit each one annually to assess their training needs.

- Our Deans and faculty maintain close contact with business and industry through our advisory boards. The advisory boards provide an opportunity for business and industry representatives to help shape our programs to meet business and industry needs. They appreciate having a voice in program design.

- Our John Deere faculty maintain very close communication with our corporate sponsors, the John Deere Corporation and John Deere dealers supporting individual students.

The goals of our business partnerships are to retain and expand jobs in Iowa and to build a strong, qualified workforce. We value all our business relationships, but we place higher priority on some than on others.

The criteria in our state-funded 206E and 206F training contracts drive some of our priorities. We are simply limited by what we can provide in funds. When it comes time to decide, we prioritize by greatest need. We look for where we can have the greatest impact for the greatest good. In some cases, this means helping a struggling company survive.

### Administrative and Legislative Partnerships
It is important to us to maintain relationships with the agencies overseeing and providing funding for our services.

- Our administrators, faculty, and staff attend workshops provided by the Higher Learning Commission, AQIP, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Iowa Department of Education, and other agencies.

- We stay in close contact with accrediting agencies to stay abreast of changes in rules and regulations.

- We submit our applications and reports on time.

- We find it helpful to get to know individuals within each accrediting agency so that we can give and receive feedback as needed.

We prioritize relationships with administrative entities that can help us set high standards in education. We constantly look for new types of certification and licensing that will put a stamp of approval on our programs.

Legislative partnerships are also very important to us. We want to make sure our legislators have a strong sense of the role of the community college and advocate for us at the state and national level.

- Our President maintains contact with legislators through phone calls, e-mail, and meetings.

- We help our legislators build relationships with their constituents. We hold legislative luncheons to share local successes and needs. We hold campus forums, allowing legislators to meet with our employees and students. Finally, we send students to Legislative Day in Des Moines every spring to build relationships with our legislators.

### Resource Development Partnerships
We build most of our resource development partnerships through the NICC Foundation. The foundation does a wonderful job of nurturing relationships with alumni and community members interested in supporting our students. We sponsor two annual golf tournaments and invite donors to an annual banquet.

We value all individuals who support us in building support for our students. Some have the ability to give substantial amounts of money to benefit our programs. For instance, last year a donor gave $400,000 to one of our programs. However, there are many more who give $10 or $100 at a time. We believe it is just as important to nurture the "small" donors as it is to nurture the "big" donors.

### Other Partnerships
We build relationships with community agencies through one-on-one contacts and shared meetings.

We prioritize relationships that help us support those of our students who need outside support to make it in our education and training programs. By pooling our resources, we can maximize their chances of success.

### 9P2  Meeting Needs

### Educational Partnerships
We maintain frequent communication with our educational partners to make sure their needs are met.

- Our High School Relations Coordinator meets regularly with high school principals and guidance counselors to ensure that our courses meet the needs of their students.

- Our Tech-Prep Coordinator meets regularly with high school principals and vocational teachers to determine interest in vocational academies.

- Our Deans meet regularly with high school principals to discuss shared funding of college-level courses. In some cases, this means having high school teachers teach dual credit courses as part of their load.

- High school instructors teaching college-level courses come on campus one evening per year to meet with NICC administrators and faculty. They receive information about curricula, syllabi, assignments, and college resources available to them. This helps them make the leap from teaching high school to teaching college classes in high school.

- Our advisors meet annually with representatives from the Regents institutions and local colleges.

### Business Partnerships
We assess whether we meet the needs of business and industry in several ways.

- Our Economic Development staff participate in economic development efforts throughout the district. They meet with business and industry representatives to assess their employee training needs.

- Our 260E and 260F agreements with business and industry include elaborate evaluations required by the state. We monitor our success in meeting their needs by looking at benchmarks before and after training.

- Students in our business and industry trainings fill out an evaluation, letting us know if we have met their needs. Our staff meet with their employers to determine if we can provide any follow-up training or consultation.

- Business and industry representatives let us know about their needs during program advisory board meetings. They provide feedback about competencies needed for

entry-level jobs and assist in designing program curricula that will meet their needs.

- Our Career and Employment Services assesses the needs of local employers by sending out an *Employer Survey* each year. The survey asks employers about the knowledge and skill level of our graduates and asks them to identify additional needs.

### *Administrative and Legislative Partnerships*
We use several methods to determine if we meet the needs of administrative bodies.

- A successful application for re-accreditation will mean that we have met the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission and AQIP. Their feedback will help us determine how we can continue to improve.

- Accreditation, certification, and licensing of programs reflect that they meet industry standards.

- Timely and accurate reports show that we meet the administrative needs of state and federal agencies.

We also try to meet the goals of our state and federal legislators. They look for us to use state and federal dollars wisely to improve the lives of their constituents.

- Enrollment data and graduation rates show that we are meeting the educational needs of our students, their constituents.

- Our students' success rates at transfer institutions reflect that we are providing a quality education.

- Budget figures show that we are providing a cost-effective education by balancing state and federal dollars with tuition, fees, grants, and other income.

- State reports, such as the Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Colleges, show that we are a good investment that provides multiple levels of return for the district.

### *Resource Development Partnerships*
Our donors are interested in hearing how we spend their money to help students. We send our Foundation Annual Report to all donors.

The report outlines income and expenses, including how we distributed funds to students through scholarships and loans.

### *Other Partnerships*
We make sure we meet the needs of public and private agencies in the following ways.

- We stay abreast of changes in legislation and funding for individuals with special needs.

- We attend conferences and stay current on issues related to veterans, displaced workers, individuals on public assistance, and individuals with disabilities.

- We respect confidentiality rules and use appropriate releases before discussing concerns about their clients.

- Adult Re-Entry staff spend two hours per week at the office of Iowa Workforce Development to meet with clients and ensure that we serve them well.

### 9P3  Building Internal Relationships
At NICC, we consider internal relationships as important as external relationships. They are the glue that holds our institution together. We work hard to build positive relationships among our employees, both formally and informally.

We provide opportunities for new employees to build relationships as soon as they start. We give them a tour of campus and introduce them to their colleagues. Our faculty orientation helps new faculty get to know each other. The orientation is held in a central location so that new faculty members at Calmar and Peosta get off to a common start. Our faculty mentoring program links new faculty with a seasoned instructor from a different department. This gives both parties an opportunity to expand their circle of relationships.

On each campus, we kick off the school year with a common meeting and several workshop days. The President gives an annual address and promotes working together to achieve common goals. The ensuing workshops provide an opportunity to build skills, share ideas, and revive relationships with colleagues.

Other opportunities include All-College Day, faculty and staff workshop days, fall and spring

graduation ceremonies, and our annual employee recognition event.

One of our biggest challenges is that we cover a large geographical area. The 100-mile distance between Calmar and Peosta makes it difficult to build relationships across the college. We address this challenge in several ways:

- We hold many meetings at Keystone Area Education Agency in Elkader. This is the half-way point between the two campuses.

- We use ICN meetings and conference calls.

- We use our new web portal as a district-wide communication tool. The web portal allows us to post announcements, create message boards, use listservs, and send e-mail.

**9P4  Measures of Building Collaboration**
Our immediate challenge is to establish measures for building collaborative relationships and to collect those district-wide. Table 9-2 shows some of the data we collect to measure the success of our collaborations.

*Table 9-2 Measures of Collaboration*

| Partners | Measures |
|---|---|
| Educational | - Number of TRiO-Upward Bound and alternative high school students<br>- High school enrollment data<br>- Number of contracted courses<br>- Number of educational consortia and participants<br>- Number of academies and participants<br>- Number of charter schools and participants<br>- Number of students with Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contracts<br>- Number of students enrolled in joint admissions programs<br>- Student success rates at transfer institutions |
| Business and industry | - Number of Chamber and economic development group memberships and attendance<br>- Number of customized training contracts (260E and 260F)<br>- Customized training enrollment<br>- Training evaluations<br>- Business contributions<br>- Advisory board participation<br>- Employer surveys |
| Administrative and legislative | - College and program accreditation<br>- Program accreditation, licensing, and certification |

| | |
|---|---|
| | - Quarterly and annual reports submitted to administrative agencies<br>- Contacts with state and federal legislators<br>- Annual state and federal contributions |
| Resource development | - Foundation annual report |
| Others | - Number of students who are veterans, criminal offenders, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, single parents, or disabled |

# RESULTS (R)

### 9R1  Results of Collaborative Relationships

#### *Educational Partnerships*
We can report a number of results from our educational partnerships.

Our TRiO-Upward Bound programs show great results in recruiting and retaining students and helping them move on to a college education. Table 9-5 shows our success rate.

*Table 9-5 Upward Bound Enrollment and Success*

| | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| Number of students served | 47 | 50 |
| Percentage of participants who were both low-income and first-generation college students | 74% | 80% |
| Yearly retention rate | 82% | 80% |
| Percentage of participants graduating from high school and enrolling in college | 100% | 100% |

Our high school enrollment has soared over the last few years. Table 9-6 shows high school enrollment.

*Table 9-6 High School Enrollment*

| | Students | Credits |
|---|---|---|
| **FY 2003** | | |
| Fall | 940 | 3,894 |
| Spring | 959 | 3,904 |
| **FY 2004** | | |
| Fall | 1,318 | 5,842 |
| Spring | 1,044 | 4,757 |
| **FY 2005** | | |
| Fall | 1,298 | 5,831 |

While we are proud of our growth in high school enrollment, we realize a need to show caution in this area. The primary reason is that high

school students pay lower tuition and fees than other students, making it financially challenging when high school students take up such a large share of our enrollment.  Table 9-7 shows the percentage of high school students compared to other credit students at NICC.

**Table 9-7 High School Students as Percentage of Total**

|  | Calmar | Peosta |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2003 | 31% | 14% |
| FY 2004 | 33% | 17% |
| FY 2005 | 35% | 19% |

Another measure of our success in building high school relations is the number of students enrolled in special high school programs.  These are listed in Table 9-8.

**Table 9-8 Special High School Program Participants**

| Programs | Students |
|---|---|
| **FY 2006 – Spring** |  |
| Health consortia | 229 |
| CISCO academies | 27 |
| Auto academies | 159 |
| Charter school | 58 |

One of the ways we measure success in our relationships with other colleges is through the number of students enrolled in joint admissions programs.  Several of these programs are new, and we are pleased that they are already attracting students.  Table 9-8 shows the number of students currently enrolled in joint admissions programs.

**Table 9-9 Joint Admissions Programs**

| Institution | Students |
|---|---|
| **FY 2006** |  |
| University of Dubuque | 36 |
| Clarke College | 1 |
| Upper Iowa University (Industrial Tech) | 4 |

Another measure of our relationship with other universities is how well our students fare when they transfer.  Our students generally do well when compared to "native" students at transfer institutions.  For more detail, see 1R2.

### Business Partnerships
We measure our success in business partnerships by participation in workforce development trainings.  Table 9-10 shows the number of participants and contact hours.

**Table 9-10  Workforce Development Trainings**

| FY 2004 | Participants | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Industrial New Training - 260E | 244 | 2,522 |
| Job Training - 260F | 602 | 19,590 |

Some of our business and community relationships are also reflected in continuing education.  These are highlighted in Table 9-11.

**Table 9-11 Continuing Education**

| FY 2004 | Participants | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Continuing Education | 48,968 | 497,598 |

Another way to measure our success in building business partnerships is to pose the question: Are we producing qualified employees for local businesses and industries?  The answer is yes.  A high number of our graduates are employed in their field of study.  The percentages listed in Table 9-12 come from our *Graduate Survey*.

**Table 9-12 Graduate Employment**

|  | Employed in Related Field in District | Employed in Related Field in Iowa |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2001 | 77% | 86% |
| FY 2002 | 72% | 87% |
| FY 2003 | 60% | 84% |

### Administrative and Legislative Partnerships
The results of our administrative relationships are best reflected in our institutional and program accreditations.  We maintain accreditation through NCA and are working on re-accreditation through AQIP.  Tables 9-13 and 9-14 show additional program accreditations and certifications.

**Table 9-13 Program Accreditations**

| Program | Accrediting Agency |
|---|---|
| Associate Degree in Nursing | Iowa Board of Nursing |
| Practical Nursing | Iowa Board of Nursing |
| Medical Transcriptionist | Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs |
| Respiratory Care Therapist | Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care |
| Radiology Technology | Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology |
| Surgical Technology | Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, American College of Surgeons, Association of Surgical Technologists |

*Table 9-14 Certifications*

| Program | Program or Instructor Certification | Name of Certifying Agency |
|---|---|---|
| **Agriculture and Natural Resources** | | |
| John Deere Ag Technology | Hydraulics, Electrical, Service Advisor and AMS Certification | John Deere |
| Arboriculture | INLA Certified Nursery Professional | Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association |
| **Construction** | | |
| Carpentry | American Concrete Institute Certification | American Concrete Institute |
| **Transportation** | | |
| Automotive Technician | Automotive Service Excellence<br>A1-Automotive Engines<br>A2-Automatic Transmissions<br>A3-Manual Drivetrains and Axels<br>A4-Suspension and Steering<br>A5-Brakes<br>A6-Electrical-Electronic Systems<br>A7-Heating and Air<br>A8-Automotive Engines | Automotive Services Excellence |
| **Information Technology** | | |
| Computer Networking<br>Computer Program Specialist Application Technician | CCNA 1-Networking Basics<br>CCNA 2-Routers<br>CCNA 3-Intermediate Routing<br>CCNA 4-CISCO Certified Network Associate | CISCO Academy |
| **Health Services** | | |
| Radiological Technology | Radiologic Technology | American Registry of Radiologic Technologists |
| Dental Assisting | Dental Assisting | Iowa Board of Dental Examiners |
| Respiratory Therapy | Respiratory Care Therapist | National Board of Respiratory Care |
| Health Information Technology | Health Information Technology | American Health Information Management Association |
| Surgical Technology | Surgical Technology | Liaison Council of Certification of the Surgical Technologist |
| Practical Nursing | Practical Nursing | Iowa Board of Nursing/Iowa Board of Educational Examiners |
| Associate Degree Nursing | Associate Degree Nursing | Iowa Board of Nursing/Iowa Board of Educational Examiners |

The results of our legislative partnerships are difficult to quantify. One way to measure our relationship with legislators is by the positive impact we have on their district. We are pleased to be able to report to our legislators that NICC is a good investment. According to the Socio-Economic Benefits Generated by NICC, State of Iowa Summary 2003:

- NICC pays $16.7 million annually in faculty and staff wages and salaries, and accounts for an additional $51 million in wages and salaries off campus.

- Taxpayers see real money "book" return of 5.9% on their annual investments in NICC and recover all investments in 12.4 years.

- Students enjoy an attractive 23% annual return on their investment of time and money. For every $1 the student invests in NICC, he or she will receive a cumulative $7.56 in higher future earnings over the next 30 years.

- The State of Iowa benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment, and crime, saving the public some $2.1 million per year.

***Resource Development Partnerships***
The NICC Foundation has increased the amount of money it raises and gives to students and programs every year. In 2004, the NICC Foundation reached $1.3 million in assets. In FY 2004, the foundation dispersed more than $270,000 in scholarships to NICC students.

A total of $887,275 was given to students and programs.

***Other Partnerships***
It is difficult to document results of our collaborative relationships with other agencies supporting students. One way to measure our success is to look at the number of NICC students that fall into specific categories. Table 9-15 shows the number of students receiving Veterans Administration benefits.

*Table 9-15 Students Receiving VA Benefits*

| | Veterans |
|---|---|
| FY 2004 | 53 |
| FY 2005 | 106 |

Table 9-16 shows the number of students using the services of our Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center. Many of these students also receive support from other agencies.

*Table 9-16 Students Using Adult Re-Entry and Non-Traditional Career Center*

| | Displaced Homemakers | Dislocated Workers | Single Parents | Criminal Offenders | Adult Learners | All Categories |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FY 2001 | 224 | 29 | 47 | 6 | 327 | 633 |
| FY 2002 | 241 | 51 | 85 | 23 | 250 | 650 |
| FY 2003 | 220 | 59 | 127 | 37 | 240 | 683 |
| FY 2004 | 218 | 75 | 126 | 38 | 298 | 755 |
| FY 2005 | 206 | 69 | 134 | 35 | 413 | 857 |

**9R2  Comparison to Other Institutions**
We have limited results on how we compare with other institutions in collaborative efforts.

One area that we can compare is the percentage of high school enrollees in credit courses. According to the Iowa Department of Education, 26% of NICC's credit enrollees were high school students in the fall of 2004. This is significantly above the state average of 19%. Again, while the number of high school enrollees speaks well of our relationships with high schools, it also poses financial challenges for us.

**IMPROVEMENT (I)**

**9I1  Methods of Improvement**
With the implementation of Datatel, we are improving our ability to use data in decision making. This will assist us in improving the way we measure collaborative relationships.

AQIP has challenged us to assess our collaborative relationships and will continue to push us to improve the processes we use to build these relationships.

**9I2  Targets for Improvement**
Our biggest task is to establish methods for keeping track of our many collaborations. We encounter new opportunities for collaboration every day, yet we need to carefully decide which ones will help us achieve our mission and vision and promote our strategic plan.

We expect that our Director of Institutional Research will help make these relationships more quantifiable. Currently many of our measures focus on process. We measure number of students, number of credit hours, number of articulation agreements, and number of accreditations and certifications.

These are important measures, but we need to dig deeper and get to the level of outcomes. For instance, we need to look more closely at high school students' success in college courses, transfer rates, and transfer students' success at transfer institutions.

We are looking at the following targets for improvement:

- Increase the percentage of high schools students taking college-level courses who eventually enroll in a degree or diploma program at NICC.

- Increase involvement in innovative collaborations with high schools, such as academies and charter schools. Our immediate target is to establish an advanced science academy in Oelwein.

- Increase the number of joint admissions agreements with other colleges and the number of students enrolling in joint admissions programs.

- Increase the number of accredited programs. An immediate target is having our Human Services program certified by the National Organization of Human Services Educators.

- Start new programs responding to local workforce needs. We are currently collaborating with local utility companies to establish a Gas Utility Construction and Service program at Peosta.

We communicate many of our results to our internal audiences during All-College Day. Our President addresses new initiatives during the "state of the college" address at the start of the school year. We also offer information during faculty and staff workshops, forums, and recognition events.

The NICC web portal is growing in importance as a tool for internal communication. We provide links to news releases, newsletters, announcements, listservs, and e-mail.

The NICC web site is important in our communication with external collaborators. It provides links to news releases and institutional data. We will continue to improve the web site to allow for timely and accurate information to be available to our community partners.

We also distribute news releases to area newspapers and radio stations in an effort to inform the public about our collaborations.

Most of all, we enjoy sharing results with our partners face to face. This happens when we go to area high schools or invite college representatives to come to our campuses. It happens in Chamber meetings, economic development meetings, business and industry meetings, advisory board meetings, and meetings with accrediting and certifying agencies. These interactions form the basis for continuing and expanding our collaborative efforts.

# Index to the location of evidence
## relating to the Commission's
### *Criteria for Accreditation*
## found in Northeast Iowa Community College's
### *Systems Portfolio*

**Criterion One – Mission and Integrity. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.**

**Core Component 1a. The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.**

- **The college recently has revised its mission and vision statements. Both were approved by the Board of Trustees in June, 2005. [O1, 8C1]**

- **The mission reflects value-driven goals and objectives for staff and students and a commitment to students and communities. [1C1, 1C2, 1P1]**

- **The mission and vision are also supported by the strategic plan (V7), adopted in 2005. The plan articulates several institutional objectives which support, enhance, and compliment the mission and vision. [2C1, 2C2, 8C1, 8C2]**

- **An important part of the mission is to understand, identify, and be responsive to its stakeholders. [1P7, 3C1, 3C2, 3P3, 3R4]**

- **The mission assures students and stakeholders access to education and training through a variety of methods. [1C3]**

- **The mission and vision are published on the college web site and printed in numerous publications including the college catalog. [5P6]**

**Core Component 1b. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.**

- **The mission and vision reflect the college's commitment to helping prepare students for life in a diverse and changing world. [1C1, 1C4, 1C5]**

- **The mission of providing quality education assures that we recognize and respond to the diverse needs of students and other stakeholders. [1P9, 1P10]**

- **One of the objectives in the strategic plan specifically addresses the college's role in promoting a culture that is open, inquisitive, and positive while focusing on diversity throughout the college. [2C1, 2C3]**

- **Several of the common student learning objectives speak directly to the issue of diversity and the college's role in helping students recognize the value of a diverse society and their responsibilities in such a society. [2C1]**

- **The mission's concept of accessibility and quality education and the vision's emphasis on service is recognized through the college's responsibility to its many stakeholders. [3C2]**

- **The mission relates directly to other distinctive objectives which illustrate the diverse role that the college plays providing service to all stakeholders. [2C2, 2C3]**

**Core Component 1c. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.**

- **The mission and vision serve as a foundation for all college programs and practices. [1C2]**

- **The mission is supported through the college's planning process and is embedded into the structure of the strategic plan. [2C2, 8P1]**

- **Evidence that the mission is understood and supported can be found in the results of the ACT College Outcomes Survey [3R1] and the reports from transfer institutions. [3R3]**

- **The mission is endorsed and supported by college leadership and serves as the reference point for decision making. [5C2]  It is the core of the planning process. [5P1, 5P6]**

- **College employees review the mission and vision on an annual basis and are challenged to engage in ways to implement and sustain it.  [5P5, 5P6]  This is a central focus in annual departmental planning. [8P1]**

**Core Component 1d. The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.**

- **The college cultivates collaborative relationships with many different entities to fulfill its mission. [O2-table O-2, O4, 9C2]**

- **Governance and decisions are made through various levels and administrative entities.  The administrative structure blends a traditional hierarchy with elements of shared governance involving numerous college entities. [5C1, 5C2]**

- **College processes assure a broad base of input i nto the decision making process [5P1] that involves internal and external stakeholders. [5P3]**

- **All members of the college engage in annual department-level planning. [5P1]**

- **Board decisions and priorities are clearly communicated to ensure that all decisions align with the views and practices of the Board of Trustees. [5C2]**

- **Top administrative positions are district-wide with administrators spending time throughout the district.  Other administrative positions are duplicated on the two campuses to ensure effective management. [4C2]**

- **The college is active in promoting and developing leadership opportunities which support the mission. [5P]**

**Core Component 1e. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.**

- **The college is committed to upholding and protecting its integrity.  This is evidenced as a core value in the college vision. [O1]**

- **The college is committed to upholding the intellectual freedom of students and staff. [1C5]**

- **The college's strategic planning process allows for the design and implementation of courses and programming that meet l ocal needs and state criteria. [1P2]**

- **The college provides avenues for stakeholders to register complaints and grievances in a manner which is respectful and responsive. [3P6]**

- **The college maintains and supports institutional values and expectations that revolve around ethics and equity. [5C3]**

- **The strategic plan includes several institutional objectives that affirm the values of ethics and equity. [2C1, 2C3]**

- **The college meets all federal rules outlined in the Equal Opportunities Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. [5C3]**

**Criterion Two – Preparing for the Future. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.**

**Core Component 2a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.**

- **The college utilizes a variety of methods to identify and prepare for the future needs of students and staff. [1P2, 6P1, 6P3, 6P5]**

- **The college has identified methods to improve services and operations. [6I1]**

- **The college's future vision is clearly articulated in the strategic plan (V7). [8C1]  The plan's goals provide direction for the future. [8C2]**

- **The strategic plan is based on a realistic assessment of community college trends and demographic, societal, and economic data. [2P1]**

- **There is a commitment to utilize the Office of Institutional Research and Data as part of the annual planning process and decision making process. [7C1, 7C2, 7P2, 7P4, 7P5]**

- **Decisions to start new programs and courses are based on documented community needs. [1P2]**

- **The college monitors external and internal demographic trends to realistically prepare for necessary changes to the workforce. [4C3]**

- **The college is completing an assessment of the key areas of enrollment patterns, facilities, and budget issues. [O8,6R2]**

**Core Component 2b. The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.**

- **College personnel are the base that maintains and strengthens the quality of programming. This is reflected in the longevity, the ratio of full to part-time, and the numbers of advanced degrees. [O5-tables O-9 and O-10]**

- **The operating fund revenues have increased 17% over the last four years to support and insure the quality of programming and services. [6R2, 6R2-table 6-17]**

- **The college offers a wide range of support services to help students learn. [1P9]**

- **A solid information technology infrastructure, including computer labs, wireless campuses, and a new college web portal are maintained to support all aspects of the organization. [6R1]**

- **The planning process creates an environment for input from all sectors of the college that impact the ability to plan and improve. [8P1, 8P3, 8P6]**

- **The college maintains multiple facilities and technology sites to assure quality educational opportunities are available throughout the district. [O6]**

**Core Component 2c. The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.**

- **The college is constantly striving to improve by assessing student and stakeholder needs and establishing targets to meet those needs. [3P1, 3P3, 3I2, 6P1, 6P2, 6I12]**

- **New processes are in place to assist departments in using data in annual planning. [7P5]**

- **Measures are in place to evaluate student performance [1P13-table 1-6] and results of meeting student learning objectives. [1R1]**

- **Processes have been identified to measure other distinctive objectives listed in the strategic plan. [2P5]**

- **Measures are in place to evaluate support service processes, [6P5] the effectiveness of student support services [6R1] and administrative service processes [6R2] that give direction to areas for improvement. [6I1]**

- **Key institutional measures have been identified that align with the strategic plan.  Some of these will be used to demonstrated institutional effectiveness. [7C2]**

- **The college has established targets for how to improve its use of performance measures. [7I2]**

- **Results and success measures of collaborative partnerships [9R1] give evidence of effectiveness and targets for improvements. [9I2]**

**Core Component 2d. All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.**

- **Goals and strategies are articulated in the strategic plan and define the mission and vision. [8C2]**

- **All college employees are engaged in planning from the grassroots level through the Board of Trustees to fulfill the mission. [5C1, 5C2]**

- **Planning proposals are matched to the college mission and one or more goals of the strategic plan. They are then reviewed by the college vision committee, the strategic planning committee, and the budget committee. [8P1]**

- **Staff from across the college review the goals and objectives of the strategic plan to insure compliance with the goals and mission. [2P4]**

- **The President and Cabinet incorporate the recommendations into the annual budget presented to the Board of Trustees. [8P1]**

**Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.**

**Core Component 3a. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.**

- **Common goals and outcomes are clearly stated [1C1] and some vocational-technical programs have specific objectives appropriate to accrediting, certifying or licensing agencies. [1P1] Expectations are clear to students. [1P4]**

- **Development of new programs and courses are subject to meeting the stated student goals and outcomes. [1P2]**

- **The college measures student learning outcomes from the time students enroll to the time they graduate and beyond. [1P13]**

- **Strong measures of student learning include student scores on national board exams, performance at transfer institutions, and employment in their field of study. [1R1, 1R2, 1R3]**

**Core Component 3b. The organization values and supports effective teaching.**

- **Effective teaching is supported by setting high expectations for faculty and clearly communicating those expectations. [1C4, 1P6]**

- **The college has clear processes for recruiting and hiring quality faculty with the appropriate education and experience. [1P6, 4P2]**

- **The college provides faculty orientation and mentoring to assist new faculty in learning about the college and setting high standards for performance. [4P2]**

- **The college promotes an environment of intellectual freedom and inquiry that supports faculty in sharing their expertise and using innovative teaching techniques. [1C5]**

- **All faculty must apply for certification or recertification under the Quality Faculty Plan which outlines expectations for education, experience, and coursework relevant to teaching at the college. [4P1]**

- **The college assists faculty in obtaining certification by offering online courses for certification. [4C4]**

- **The college provides opportunities for professional development including national and regional conferences, technology trainings, faculty workshop days, and sabbaticals. [4C4, 4P3, 5P7]**

- **Library resources and online publications are maintained to help faculty gain access to information about best practices in college teaching. [1P9, 5P7]**

- **Teaching effectiveness is evaluated by conducting teaching observations and performance evaluations and by measuring student satisfaction. [1P6, 3R1]**

- **Faculty excellence is recognized and rewarded. [4P7]**

**Core Component 3c. The organization creates effective learning environments.**

- **The college has an open door policy and welcomes all students, thus promoting an interesting and complex learning environment. [1C2, 1C4]**

- **The college creates effective learning environments by accommodating the diverse needs of students [1C4] including a commitment to intellectual freedom. [1C5]**

- **The college welcomes individuals with disabilities and offers a wide range of accommodations. [1C4, 6R1]**

- **Students are assisted and advised in matching their interests, needs, and abilities. [1P5, 3PI] This is coupled with meeting learning support needs [1P9] and offering students involvement in college activities. [1P10]**

- **The ACCUPLACER placement test is used to determine where to place students so that they can be most successful. Students may start with developmental courses or take developmental courses side by side with credit courses. [1C2, 1P3, 6R1]**

- **Students are given the opportunity to give feedback on the learning environment through course evaluations and satisfaction surveys. [3P5, 3R1]**

- **The organizational environment supports and creates a positive climate for learning. [4C1]**

**Core Component 3d. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.**

- **College resources support various student learning opportunities through a variety of delivery formats. [1C3]**

- **Numerous support services are available to support student needs. [6C1]**

- **Information is solicited about student and faculty support service needs for purposes of improvement. [6P1, 6P2, 6R1]**

- **Two premier examples of resources which support student learning and effective teaching are the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation Center and the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety. [O1, O6, 9C1]**

- **The college's learning centers, writing centers, and libraries provide numerous resources for learning and teaching. [1P9, 6C1]**

- **Technology resources including computer labs, wireless campuses, and a web portal allow students to access course information, schedules, and grades. [6R1]**

- **The college provides facilities, equipment, and technology that support teaching and learning. [O6, 6R2]**

- **Student satisfaction with the resources indicates a good level of support by the college. [3R1]**

**Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.**

**Core Component 4a. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.**

- **The college supports lifelong learning by providing a broad range of credit and non-credit programs. [O2]**

- **Several aspects of the student learning objectives demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and social responsibility. [1C1]**

- **Support of an open i ntellectual environment creates a culture for learning growth. [1C5]**

- **The strategic plan and other distinctive objectives recognize the need for and commitment to a life of learning, improvement, and social responsi bility. [2C1, 2C3]**

- **The college provides training and learning opportunities for faculty and staff [4C4, 4P4] and recognition and rewards for accomplishments. [4P7]**

- **The college values and supports the applied concepts of service, excellence, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity. [5C3]**

- **Students are encouraged to pursue further education by helping them make a seamless transition from high school to college. This is facilitated through the TRIO-Upward Bound program, alternative high schools, high school contracted courses, post-secondary enrollment options, high school academies, and a charter school. [9C1, 9P1]**

- **The college demonstrates its commitment to institutional learning by supporting a culture of continuous improvement. [8P1, 8P3, 8P7]**

**Core Component 4b. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.**

- **The common learning objectives and expectations are comprehensive in nature to support a breadth of learning and responsibility. [1C1]**

- **Programs and delivery methods are diverse in order to accommodate multiple opportunities for skill and knowledge acquisition. [1C3] These are coupled with accommodations for diverse learning styles and a climate of intellectual inquiry and freedom. [1C4, 1C5]**

- **Students are encouraged to explore non-traditional careers. [6C1]**

- **Applied learning is promoted through internships, community service, service learning, and reflection. [1C5]**

- **Students are encouraged to take general education courses. Interdisciplinary course are offered and the establishment of learning communities is being explored. [1C5]**

- **A number of co-curricular activities that enhance the curriculum and help a student develop as a whole person are available. [1P10]**

**Core Component 4c. The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.**

- **Student learning objectives are intended to prepare students to appreciate and live and work in a diverse society. [1C1, 1C4, 1P12]**

- **Curricula is enhanced by incorporating a global perspective and multicultural content into most courses. [1C4]**

- **All vocational-technical programs go through a program review at least every five years to assess the currency and effecti veness of the program and its curriculum. [1P8]**

- **The college has 36 program advisory committees that provide information about entry-level competencies, changes in curriculum, and workplace expectations. [3R4, 9C1]**

- **A number of methods are used to determine the degree to which students are being prepared to function in a diverse society. [3P1, 3P7, 1R4]**

**Core Component 4d. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

- **The college maintains an open climate which facilitates the acquisition and application of knowledge. [1C5]**

- **The college vision encourages staff to live and apply the values of the college. [O1, 5C3]**

- **The common student learning objectives focus on civic responsibility to improve the world by respecting the rights, values, and beliefs of others. [1C1]**

- **Social responsibility and community service are encouraged and provided to communities through vocational and technical programs. [5C3]**

- **Several avenues of support are provided to assist students. [1P9, 1P12]**

- **The strategic plan assures that the college is supportive through its goals and related actions. [2C4]**

- **Opportunities for training and education are provided for faculty, staff, and administration. [4C4, 4P4, 4P5]**

**Criterion Five: Engagement and Service. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.**

**Core Component 5a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.**

- **The college is responsive in analyzing and meeting specific program needs of external constituencies. [1P2]**

- **Stakeholders are identified and their requirements and expectations are addressed. [3C1, 3C2, 3P1, 3P3, 3P5]**

- **Concerted efforts are made to understand the needs of students and other stakeholders by being open, sensitive, and responsive to complaints. [3P6]**

- **The college measures the satisfaction of students and other stakeholders. [3R1, 3R3]**

- **The college continually explores and analyzes stakeholder/constituency relationships and needs and measures the results. [6P1, 6P2, 6P3, 6P5]**

- **Meeting stakeholder needs results in numerous collaborative relationships. [9C1]**

**Core Component 5b. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.**

- **The college is actively engaged in building relationships with students and other stakeholders. [3P2, 3P4, 9P1]**

- **Communities actively seek to engage in collaborative opportunities with the college through the college's centers. [3R4]**

- **The college promotes a one-college focus but allows each educational site to develop a unique identity that corresponds with student and community needs. [4C2]**

- **Elements of shared governance are used to engage employees in decision making through the planning process. [5C1, 8P1, 8P2, 8P3]**

- **The evidence of the college's commitment towards engagement is apparent with its numerous partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, industries, administrative agencies, legislators, funders, and agencies supporting students. [9C1, 9P1, 9P2]**

- **Engaging internal faculty and staff is critical to improving. [9P3]**
- **The college's structural environment facilitates engagement with internal stakeholders. [4C1, 6P1, 6P2]**

**Core Component 5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.**

- **There is process to respond to specific constituencies if the request meets a specific need. [1P2]**
- **A broad range of methods are used to build relationships and facilitate communications with internal and external stakeholders. [3P4, 9P1, 9P2, 9P3]**
- **The college's work environment and activities are organized to make it easy for students to enroll, attend classes, seek needed support, and engage in campus activities. [4C1]**
- **The college offers many services online to respond to the needs of students and other stakeholders. [O6, 4C1, 6R1]**
- **Facilitating a seamless transition from high school to college, maintaining transfer and joint admission agreements with colleges and universities and working closely with business and industry are evidence of the college's responsiveness to service needs of constituents. [9C1, 9P1]**
- **Students' needs are met in ways that are easy to access. [6C1]**
- **The college responds to both internal and external constituencies' needs for services ranging from business services to computer information systems. [6R2]**
- **Responding to the needs of educational institutions, businesses and industries, legislators, accrediting entities, and contributors is a priority and accomplished in a manner unique to fulfilling the needs. [9C1, 9C2, 9P1, 9P2, 9R1]**

**Core Component 5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.**

- **Students report high measures of satisfaction for services provided. [3R1, 3R2]**
- **Student satisfaction with support services indicates that value is recognized. [6R1 -table 6-16]**
- **Value to external constituencies is demonstrated through the numbers of stakeholders involved in TRIO-Upward Bound, high school programs, joint admission programs, and business and continuing education partnerships. [3R2, 3R3, 3R4]**
- **Employees give the college a high rating in trusting faculty, staff, and administrators to do their jobs effectively. [4P8]**
- **Employees tend to be loyal to the college. This is evidenced by the average tenure in all employee groups. [4P2]**
- **The value of service to the communities is demonstrated by the high enrollment in credit and non-credit programs. [O2]**
- **Business and industry show that they value the college's programs and services through their contributions of equipment, resources, learning opportunities for students, and their sharing of expertise on advisory committees.**