

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

March 5, 2007



**Academic
Quality Improvement
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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

SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT
In response to the *Systems Portfolio* of
DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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

March 5, 2007

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Elements of the Feedback Report	6
Strategic and Accreditation Issues	8
Using the Feedback Report	11
Critical Characteristics Analysis	12
Category Feedback	14
<i>Helping Students Learn</i>	15
<i>Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives</i>	21
<i>Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs</i>	25
<i>Valuing People</i>	29
<i>Leading and Communicating</i>	33
<i>Supporting Institutional Operations</i>	38
<i>Measuring Effectiveness</i>	40
<i>Planning Continuous Improvement</i>	44
<i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i>	47

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

Category 1 – Helping Students Learn: The institution has a mature system for helping students learn that focuses on identification of institutional strengths and opportunities to enhance student learning. The College has integrated the notion of a learner-centered environment with competency-based assessments as a means of determining and documenting how the institution helps students learn. The implementation of the environment and the definition of the competencies are led by the faculty working in tandem with administration and stakeholders, demonstrating the degree of collaboration and buy-in present to ensure that students are able to receive the best possible education the institution can provide – one that is valued by end-users and translates to seamless transfers to 4-year institutions or well-paid employment.

Category 2 – Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives: The institution has identified continuing education, industry training, literacy, community and workforce partnerships, diversity initiatives and resource development as objectives that are distinctive and provide service to the community. The distinctive objectives are aligned with the strategic plan, FIRSTS goals and action plans, and the mission of the institution. The institution currently uses enrollment and class completion data to measure other distinctive objectives and has identified the development of processes to measure the results of other distinctive objectives as a primary target for improvement.

Category 3 – Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs: The institution appears to be committed to understanding student and stakeholder needs, evaluating and responding to those needs, and using data to improve processes. The Institution has developed good will, a strong relationship with its communities, and a positive reputation for its programs and services which contributed to approval of tax levy increases, an accomplishment that less than half of Iowa community colleges have been able to achieve. This provides the institution with financial resources to support a facilities expansion plan that addresses increased enrollment. Due to changing demographic patterns, an area of stakeholder needs that may require more attention is the development of processes that support non-English speaking groups. .

Category 4 – Valuing People: The institution has initiatives focused on valuing its employees and recognizes the relationship between successful employees and accomplishment of student learning and other distinctive objectives. The institution provides multiple opportunities for professional development for fulltime faculty and staff, but does not appear to provide the same opportunities to the large number of part-time employees and adjunct faculty. The institution’s systems for recruitment, orientation, training, and compensating faculty and staff are consistent with its stated mission values.

Category 5 – Leading and Communicating: The institution recognizes that effective communication for a large, multi-campus organization is an ongoing challenge and has created an extensive communications system to ensure that that programs and administrations at the various campuses are aligned with overall institutional goals and views of the Board. The organizational climate that is in place focuses on placing decision-making at the level closest to students and appropriate stakeholders. The flow of the communications process is not clear and its effectiveness is not yet fully measured to enable identification of areas of importance.

Category 6 – Supporting Institutional Operations: The institution collects input from a variety of sources on student and administrative support process operation and has identified action plans to improve student and administrative processes related to the FIRSTS goals. The use of the LEAN workplace model has improved workflow and service. The institution needs to focus on identifying process measures aligned with the strategic plan and FIRSTS goals. Segmenting student groups to identify support service needs and needs for specific groups could help the institution improve support services to workforce, minority, English language learners, and other specialized current and potential student groups to enhance enrollment and diversity.

Category 7 – Measuring Effectiveness: The institution has developed processes for collecting and comparing data related to the mission and goals. A formal institution-wide process for evaluation of technology services, data collection, and distribution is in process to provide information on effectiveness and help the institution set priorities for improvement of services.

Category 8 – Planning Continuous Improvement: The institution is committed to a long-term plan to ensure that it not only survives but enhances its market share by becoming an

even more coveted education provider choice. The institution has processes in place for planning, establishing goals and measures, creating action plans, and communicating planning actions and results. The institution may benefit from prioritizing its numerous action plans to make significant progress in targeted areas. Since the action plans and goals were established in 2006, the institution does not yet have trend data for measures of improvement.

Category 9 – Building Collaborative Relationships: The institution has established a wide range of collaborative relationships consistent with its mission that will help the institution achieve its vision and goals. The institution is fully involved in the community it serves. Establishing benchmark institutions and organizations will allow the institution to analyze comparative data and set improvement targets.

Accreditation issues and Strategic challenges for **Des Moines Area Community College** are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

ELEMENTS OF **Des Moines Area Community College's** FEEDBACK REPORT

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying

improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

Executive Summary. Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team based upon the institution's achievements and challenges in regards to each of the nine AQIP Categories. Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis: Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

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

Category Feedback: The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more

significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES

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

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

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Des Moines Area Community College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the Criteria will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

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

The institution does not appear to have a systematic process for deciding what data are needed, what trends are important, and analyzing and using data for decision-making and tracking institutional performance. In addition, although the institution has determined a limited number of sources for comparative data, it does not appear that comparative data are being used to set targets that will improve the institution's capability to meet current and future student and other stakeholder needs and expectations. Many of the indicators and results that are discussed and/or included in the Portfolio are annual or less frequent, end-of-process, lagging indicators, such as satisfaction survey results and licensure pass rates, or qualitative measures of effectiveness such as completion of specific tasks. The lack of in-process, leading indicators and drivers of success such as cycle time and accuracy could delay

identification of improvement opportunities or make it difficult for the institution to achieve and maintain high levels of performance and satisfaction.

The institution does not appear to have a systematic, formal process for recruiting leaders who mirror the diversity of the student body, leadership development, and succession planning. The lack of a formal process will make it difficult for the institution to address vulnerabilities related to the large number of employees who will retire in the next few years, the strategic issue of diversity, continued growth, the complexity of multiple campuses, the increasing need for strategic planning, and competition from other colleges and universities. The implementation of a plan for filling leadership positions with well-qualified staff who mirror student and community demographics through identification of potential leaders, enrollment of potential leaders in the Administrative Leadership Program and/or other development opportunities, and ensuring potential leaders acquire the skills and experiences needed for leadership positions, particularly at the Dean and above level, would help the institution address these key vulnerabilities, enable long-term viability, and ensure that the mission, vision, and values are passed on as leadership positions become available.

As indicated by the institution, it does not have a systematic approach to assessment and placement of incoming students which results in a diminished ability to detect and address discrepancies between necessary and actual student preparation and differing learning styles. For example, the GPA of the institution's transfer students is lower than that of native students at ISU and retention rates in developmental mathematics and writing are lower than that of peer institutions. The institution's current initiatives to improve placement and support for a diverse student body are promising and include implementation of mandatory advising, increased alignment of faculty with Student Services, and redesign of support courses. Continued attention to these and related initiatives will require a strategic commitment in the foreseeable future.

The methods used to understand student and employee needs, expectations, and issues do not appear to occur on a basis that is consistent and timely enough to provide actionable data. For example, the ACT Student Survey was administered in 2003 and 2006 and the employee climate survey in 2001. Since students are typically at the institution three years or less and 45% of employees have been with the institution less than five years it would appear that the majority of survey respondents did not participate

in the previous surveys. The lack of methods to assess satisfaction between surveys and measure the impact of improvements could make it difficult for the institution to determine if changes in satisfaction levels are due to implementation of improvements or due to participation by a different population. In addition, it does not appear that the questions that are being asked on the ACT and employee climate surveys enable the institution to determine the key drivers of satisfaction or measure satisfaction related to requirements that have been identified through other listening and learning methods, such as the student needs listed in the Institutional Overview.

USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

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

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

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

be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

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

CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

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

Item Critical Characteristic

O1a The district is publicly supported and serves an 11-county service area with 25% of the state's population.

O1b Mission: To offer quality programs and courses to meet the different community interests, student abilities and personal objectives to citizens of all ages and levels of education for the purpose of improving the quality of life, the economic conditions and the public welfare of our state.

O1c Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate's degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-

- prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities.
- O1d Values: Responsiveness, excellence, community, learning, cultural understanding and mutual respect, innovation, and professional integrity.
- O1e Ten-year Vision: FIRST in quality, service, and affordability.
- O2a Educational offerings are delivered on campus and on line and include general education courses, transfer education, career/technical programs for skilled workers, new employee and re-training services, continuing education, adult literacy, GED services, and economic development.
- O3a Target populations include traditional age and first generation students, individuals desiring a career change, high achieving high school students, location bound students, and immigrants and international students for whom English is their second language.
- O3b Student base is 26,801 credit students (18% full time and 82% part time). There are 751 Hispanic, 1394 black, 899 Asian, 110 Indian/Alaskan native, and 20,822 white students
- O3c Other demographics include 76% 26 or younger (representing a trend toward younger students), 98% Iowa residents, 206 international students, and increasing enrollment at all campuses, particularly in distance learning (417 in 2002 to 9,805 in 2006), dual enrollment (1,067 in 2000 to 6,181 in 2006), Hispanic (25% increase in the past year), and black students (7% growth).
- O3d Student needs include seamless transfer for transfer students, training opportunities for career/technical students, clear matriculation plan for high school students, support services for at-risk and developmental students, a range of ESL classes for non-native English speakers, sessions that meet licensure requirements for continuing education students, and availability of campus resources for online students.
- O4 Collaboration/partnerships exist with Iowa State University (joint admissions agreement), K-12 districts (career/technical and college-prep courses), Iowa Workforce Development (employment and training programs), local business and industries (training, education, and consulting), other community colleges (legislative and funding initiatives), and labor unions representing faculty and support staff.

- O05 Faculty and staff base includes 764 full-time, 703 part-time, and 788 adjunct faculty (total 2,400). Classifications include administrative (1%), professional (23%), secretary and clerical (23%), service (7%), and instructional (47%). Other demographics include 54% of full-time employees are women, 86% of all employees are white, 88% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 95% have at least an associate's degree.
- O6a Six campuses include Ankeny (23 buildings), Urban/Des Moines (4 buildings), Boone (2 buildings), and Carroll, West, and Newton (1 building each).
- O6b All campuses have wireless access, the institution has a 3-year rolling plan for equipment and technology updates, and it strives to keep pace with industry standards.
- O6c Construction and renovation of facilities is funded by a tax levy which generates approximately \$50 million each 10 years that it is approved.
- O7 Key competitors include Drake University, Grandview College, Simpson College, Iowa State University, University of Phoenix, several for-profit two-year colleges, and businesses that are starting their own "learning colleges."
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plans enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.
- O8b Vulnerabilities include financial constraints caused by under funded state general aid, recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire, increases in the cost to deliver programs, growth of the immigrant population, increased competition for grant funds, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these "strengths and opportunities" sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing*

or outstanding opportunity for improvement (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b Mission: To offer quality programs and courses to meet the different community interests, student abilities and personal objectives to citizens of all ages and levels of education for the purpose of improving the quality of life, the economic conditions and the public welfare of our state.
- O1c Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate's degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-

prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities.

- O2a Educational offerings are delivered on campus and on line and include general education courses, transfer education, career/technical programs for skilled workers, new employee and re-training services, continuing education, adult literacy, GED services, and economic development.
- O3d Student needs include seamless transfer for transfer students, training opportunities for career/technical students, clear matriculation plan for high school students, support services for at-risk and developmental students, a range of ESL classes for non-native English speakers, sessions that meet licensure requirements for continuing education students, and availability of campus resources for online students.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Des Moines Area Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1P1	S	Common student learning objectives and program learning objectives are determined by faculty in collaboration with a wide-ranging group of stakeholders such as advisory groups, members of professional and trade organizations, accreditation agencies, and representatives from four-year colleges and universities.
1P2	S	Proposed programs are developed by faculty with input from an Advisory Committee, include information on student interest and employment opportunities, and are submitted to the Iowa Department of Education for review and approval. New courses are designed by faculty with input from business and industry advisory boards and postsecondary institutions. Proposals are submitted to discipline chairs, deans/provosts, and an administrative committee for review of clarity of descriptions, academic rigor, supporting rationale, and compliance with policy and procedures. A Curriculum Commission reviews the curriculum proposal

and makes a recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer for final approval.

- 1P3 S Preparation required of students is determined by faculty, accrediting agencies and industry using basic skill requirements, required course and program competencies, and the required progression of knowledge and competencies.
- 1P4 S Cross-divisional representatives from faculty, academic departments, and student services participate in initiatives focused on student learning and communicating expectations to students. The primary sources for communication of expectations to prospective and current students are the counselors, advisors, and the student services staff. Current students receive information on expectations through orientation sessions and classes, advising, meetings with faculty members, and course syllabi detailing course competencies available to students on the faculty home page.
- 1P5a S DMACC uses COMPASS assessments and counselor/advisor sessions to help students select programs of study and Choices, a career interest software program, for those students who are interested in expanded career advising. The institution also provides career interest assessment services to area high school students. Learning style inventories are available to students and support is offered through a variety of instructional support services.
- 1P5b O The institution does not appear to have a systematic process for detecting and addressing discrepancies between the necessary and actual preparation of students and their differing learning styles. Although it uses a variety of instructional methodologies, it does not appear that there is a method for ensuring that the methodologies are meeting the needs of students.
- 1P6 S The institution determines effective teaching and learning through college-wide assessment of student learning at the course, program, and institutional levels. Formative and summative assessment tools are used

at the course level while capstone, practicum, and internship experiences are used at the program level. A collaborative institutional model is also used for course assessment, General Education goals, and program assessment. Effective teaching is documented through instructor and class evaluations, a faculty development plan, workshops, and orientations.

- 1P7 O With the increased demand for distance learning, it is not clear what process the institution uses to balance the needs of students for online courses with the institution's needs for quality in student learning, limited class sizes, and face-to-face interaction.
- 1P8 S DMACC utilizes a variety of processes to monitor the currency and effectiveness of the curriculum. The decision to close a program is a collaborative effort and must be reviewed by the Curriculum Commission. A formal program evaluation process is completed every five years to determine the currency and effectiveness of a program. The evaluation includes analysis of five years of trend data on student demographics, retention and graduation rates, employment placement, market trends, and employer satisfaction. Faculty and advisory committee members are involved in the process and evaluation results are reviewed by the AQIP Leadership Team.
- 1P9 S Student needs for learning support are determined through an initial COMPASS or ACT assessment, identification of students at risk of failing a course, the Making Academic Progress Successfully program, referrals, and advisor interventions. Action Project 400 and a Title III grant focus on designing and developing systems for mentoring at-risk students. Assessment Center staff members assist students with tutoring and identification of preparatory courses.
- 1P10 S Co-curricular development goals are aligned with learning objectives as part of the development process for general education goals and as part of the requirements for programs and/or courses. For example, general education goals 1, 2, and 5 include objectives related to co-curricular activities; career/technical program goals may require participation in

professional organizations and activities; and individual courses may require service learning activities or participation in one of 58 active student organizations. The Student Activities Council provides opportunities for students to be involved in co-curricular activities.

- 1P11 S The model that drives student assessment involves gathering and analyzing data on individual course, general education, and program competencies; faculty selection and use of formative and summative assessment tools to ensure students are learning the material; and identification of individual courses for development of an assessment tool. In selecting an assessment method, faculty members use trend data to determine where students are not consistently learning the information and where course competencies and instructional resources need to be changed. An Action Plan was defined in 2005 to expand the institutional model of course assessment and map course competencies to the general education goals.
- 1P12 S Student preparedness for further education or employment is determined in a number of ways: for transfer students, by evaluating data from Iowa's three Regents institutions that receive the institution's students; for career/technical programs, through employer surveys and a close working relationship with advisory committees to ensure currency with industry needs and standards; and for all graduates, through a spring 2006 pilot study to assess salaries of the institution's graduates. The institution paves the path for transfer students through articulation agreements with four-year colleges and regular meetings between DMACC faculty and four-year faculty to ensure seamless sequencing of courses.
- 1P13 S A variety of measures of student performance are collected and analyzed including student learning at the program and course level, grades, enrollment, retention, persistence, graduation, graduate and employer surveys, licensure/certification pass rates, transfer GPA, grade distribution, and program and course evaluations.

- 1R1, 1R2a S Pass rates on licensure exams (Figure 1-10) show a favorable trend in seven of 13 areas. An additional three areas show consistent performance or slight declines. Dental hygiene (two tests) and one medical assistant test show unfavorable trends. Indirect measures of student learning also show consistent or favorable results. These include Course Retention Rate (Figure 1-18) which has been between 88.2% and 89.5% since Fall 2000, Fall-to-Spring Persistence (Figure 1-19) which has been between 64.5% and 68.6% since Fall 2001, and Fall-to-Fall Persistence (Figure 1-20) which has increased from 45.6% in Fall 2002 to 48.5% in Fall 2005.
- 1R1, 1R2b S Enrollment statistics for credit students (Figures 2-6 and 4-12) show a favorable trend growing from 18,844 in 2001 to 26,801 in 2006, a 42% increase. Non-credit enrollment (Figures 2-8 and 4-12) shows a slight decline from 35,257 in 2001 to 33,312 in 2006 with a favorable trend from 2005 to 2006.
- 1R1, 1R2c O Several measures of student learning and success show unfavorable trends. These include the graduation rate (Figure 1-11) which has declined from 30.86% for 2000 entrants to 26.66% for 2003 entrants and GPA at ISU (Figure 1-12) which has remained constant at between 2.66 and 2.54 from 2001 to 2005. The follow-up Status Report of Graduates (Figures 1-13 to 1-17) represents 2004-2005 only and is not normalized for the number of graduates making it unclear if the current level represents an improvement or decline over previous years.
- 1R1-1R3 OO Results data are not provided for several measures identified as important in the Portfolio. These include student learning by program and by course (one example is provided in Figure 1-8), student retention by program, course and program evaluations, grade distribution, late registration, programs available online, and students enrolled in online courses. In addition, the institution states that “because the process of mapping the specific course competencies to the general education competencies of the College is still fairly new, no reliable results can yet be reported for that process.”

- 1R3 O Limited trend data for MAPS Student Course Retention (Figure 1-22) shows an unfavorable trend in retention from Fall 2004 to Fall 2005 with the 2005 level below the level of regular students. Fall-to-Spring Persistence (Figure 1-23) has only one data point for MAPS students which is slightly above that of full-time students.
- 1R4 O Results for First term GPA of Transfer Students (Figure 1-28) are low compared with national results. The retention rate of students in developmental math and writing courses (Figure 1-30) is lower than students at peer colleges in the National Community College Benchmarking Project. In addition, comparative data are not provided for pass rates or licensure exams.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b Mission: To offer quality programs and courses to meet the different community interests, student abilities and personal objectives to citizens of all ages and levels of education for the purpose of improving the quality of life, the economic conditions and the public welfare of our state.

- O1c Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate's degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities.
- O1d Values: Responsiveness, excellence, community, learning, cultural understanding and mutual respect, innovation, and professional integrity.
- O2a Educational offerings are delivered on campus and on line and include general education courses, transfer education, career/technical programs for skilled workers, new employee and re-training services, continuing education, adult literacy, GED services, and economic development.
- O4 Collaboration/partnerships exist with Iowa State University (joint admissions agreement), K-12 districts (career/technical and college-prep courses), Iowa Workforce Development (employment and training programs), local business and industries (training, education, and consulting), other community colleges (legislative and funding initiatives), and labor unions representing faculty and support staff.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2P1	S	The institution determines other distinctive objectives through the strategic planning process, the Iowa Administrative Code which mandates that community colleges provide continuing education and literacy services to communities, and community involvement. The President, Cabinet, provosts, and academic deans are involved in the process and seek input from business and industry, professional organizations, non-profit organizations, and local and state governments.
2P2	O	There does not appear to be a systematic process for communicating expectations for other distinctive objectives to stakeholders and the

community. The Portfolio states that the expectations are communicated as part of the strategic planning goals but the FIRSTS goals in Figure 1-2 do not appear to include specific expectations for most of the other distinctive objectives. In addition, the processes that are described in the Portfolio appear to focus on communication of the list of distinctive objectives rather than the specific expectations for each objective.

- 2P3 O It is not clear how the institution determines institution-wide faculty and staff needs relative to other distinctive objectives such as community and workforce partnerships, diversity initiatives, and resource development. A process exists for departments providing the services to identify and request staffing or budget funds, but it is not clear how the budgeting process considers the needs of faculty and staff across the institution for these services.
- 2P4 S Other distinctive objectives are initially assessed by the departments providing the services or activities using a variety of outcomes, such as participation rates, completion numbers, student/customer satisfaction, and cost to deliver. The Cabinet reviews the departmental assessments to check alignment with strategic goals, the mission of the institution, state and federal mandates, and community needs.
- 2P5a S A variety of data and information are analyzed to assess and review the other distinctive objectives and readjust the expectations. Measures reviewed include number of individuals served in ABE/GED, ESL, and community instruction outreach; enrollment; successful completion of classes; student, customer, and stakeholder satisfaction; cost to deliver; diversity demographics; and foundation statistics.
- 2P5b O The institution has not developed comprehensive systems and processes to measure distinctive objectives beyond tracking enrollment, resource allocation, and student satisfaction. The institution has identified the development of processes to measure the results of other distinctive objectives as the primary target for improvement.

- 2R1a S Longitudinal results for enrollment in continuing education, community and workforce partnerships, industry training, and adult basic education (Figures 2-2 to 2-5) show favorable trends for all areas except continuing education and general education, continuing education career/recreational, and Iowa jobs training programs..
- 2R1b S Diversity demographics (Figures 2-6 to 2-9) show consistent or favorable trends in the percentage of race ethnicity compared to overall enrollment.
- 2R1c S The endowment balance (Figure 6-8) has grown from approximately \$1.25 million in 2001 to \$2.25 million in 2005, an 80% increase. Since 2002, Foundation assets (Figure 6-9) have grown from just over \$8.8 million to over \$9.8 million, an 11% increase.
- 2R1d O Results for Foundation development (Figure 2-12) show an unfavorable trend in two of the three measures. Scholarship dollars have declined 11% since 2001 and scholarships awarded have declined 9%.
- 2R1e O Results data are not presented on student, customer, and stakeholder satisfaction; cost to deliver; alumni and corporate contributions; and capital funds raised.
- 2R2a S Comparative data that are presented show favorable performance for the institution. Non-credit enrollment (Figure 2-13) shows that the institution is number two in the state and has remained steady at approximately 10% of the total students enrolled throughout the state. Comparative data for Iowa industrial new jobs training (Figure 2-14) shows enrollment at the institution has grown from 16% of the total in 2001 to 39.3% in 2005 placing the institution number one statewide in 2005. Iowa job training programs enrollment (Figure 2-15) and accelerated career education programs (Figure 2-16) show a consistent percent of total statewide enrollment that places the institution number one or two. In addition, the institution met or exceeded the Iowa State contracted Benchmarks in all but one area of adult literacy.

- | | | |
|------|----|--|
| 2R2b | OO | No comparative data are presented for three of the six other distinctive objectives: community and workforce partnership, diversity, or resource development. |
| 2R3 | S | A focus on the institution's other distinctive objectives has strengthened community relationships through a variety of initiatives including the Success Center to meet the needs of the Hispanic community; introduction of six new instructional programs; a Career Academy providing career/technical training for hard-to-fill jobs in construction, health care, and manufacturing; and the introduction of entry level ESL courses to enable transition from non-credit to credit status. |

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

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- | | |
|-----|---|
| O1c | Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate's degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities. |
|-----|---|

- O3a Target populations include traditional age and first generation students, individuals desiring a career change, high achieving high school students, location bound students, and immigrants and international students for whom English is their second language.
- O3b Student base is 26,801 credit students (18% full time and 82% part time). There are 751 Hispanic, 1394 black, 899 Asian, 110 Indian/Alaskan native, and 20,822 white students.
- O3c Other demographics include 76% 26 or younger (representing a trend toward younger students), 98% Iowa residents, 206 international students, and increasing enrollment at all campuses, particularly in distance learning (417 in 2002 to 9,805 in 2006), dual enrollment (1,067 in 2000 to 6,181 in 2006), Hispanic (25% increase in the past year), and black students (7% growth).
- O3d Student needs include seamless transfer for transfer students, training opportunities for career/technical students, clear matriculation plan for high school students, support services for at-risk and developmental students, a range of ESL classes for non-native English speakers, sessions that meet licensure requirements for continuing education students, and availability of campus resources for online students.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	S	To identify perceptions of the institution and needed programs and services, the institution regularly conducts market research that targets specific areas and groups within the region, the ACT student survey, and surveys of students, graduates, advisory committees, and employers. The data are used in strategic planning and may lead to the development and revision of programs and courses.
3P2	S	A variety of relationship building mechanisms are in place for current students including offering a variety of services, giving faculty training and time to build relationships with students, providing faculty as advisors for

student clubs, and enabling Student Services at each campus to develop flexible services. The institution is sensitive to the regional differences and needs of each of the campus communities within the different campuses that make up the institution. Relationships with prospective students are built through outreach, close working relationships at high schools, and community training programs.

- 3P3-3P4 O It is not clear what process is used to aggregate and analyze the information that is gathered on the needs of stakeholders and how the institution uses this information to select a course of action and build relationships. The Portfolio mentions a variety of methods to gather information on current and changing needs such as outreach services, advisory committee input, meetings with peers and community committees and boards, and meetings with government and industry leaders but it is not clear how these data were used to develop the requirements in Figure 3-1.
- 3P5a S The institution uses student and stakeholder surveys, outreach efforts, evaluation of relevancy of the curriculum, and results of processes to identify student needs to determine if new student and stakeholder groups should be addressed in educational offerings.
- 3P5b O The institution recognizes that it needs to investigate other tools for measuring student satisfaction issues beyond those currently addressed in the ACT survey.
- 3P6a S The institution has complaint procedures in place that are available to students and other stakeholders online and in the Student Handbook and College Catalog. An ombudsperson is located on each campus for additional student/stakeholder support. An institutional Judicial Officer provides communication with the ombudspersons, oversight of the College Judicial Board, formal disciplinary actions, and training for faculty and staff. In 2004, the institution created a centralized repository for student complaints to enhance communication and enable effective and consistent handling of complaints.

- 3P6b O It is not clear what process is used to aggregate and analyze complaint data in a formative and summative manner and how the results are used to identify systemic issues, select a course of action, and communicate actions to students and stakeholders. In addition, the complaint process appears to be dependent on the student to escalate the complaint following the chain of command making it unclear how the institution ensures complaints are handled in a timely and effective manner.
- 3P7 O Although the institution uses a variety of surveys to collect information on student and other stakeholder satisfaction, it is not clear how the institution determines the appropriate interval for administration of the surveys. For example, the ACT survey was completed in 2003 and again in 2006. Since students typically are at the institution three years or less, it would appear that this interval results in surveying a different population of students each time making it unclear how the institution determines if changes in satisfaction levels are due to improved services or due to surveying a different student population.
- 3R1,3R2 S Overall, the institution's results for the 2006 ACT Student Survey (Figures 3-2 and 3-3) show improvement in satisfaction and favorable comparison to the national norm. For College Services, satisfaction increased in 17 categories and decreased in four. For College Environment, satisfaction increased in 37 categories and decreased in six.
- 3R1 O The ACT Student Survey does not appear to address many of the expectations of students as shown in Figure 3-1. Examples include credit transferability, state-of-the-art instruction, and affordability.
- 3R2 S Results for the First Year Experience learning communities indicate a 94% term-to-term persistence rate compared to 76% for all full-time students.
- 3R3 S The institution's credit student market penetration rate is 3.47% compared to the NCCBP benchmark of 3.21%. The non-credit market penetration rate is 4.67% compared to the median of 2% for all reporting institutions.

- | | | |
|---------|----|---|
| 3R3,3R4 | OO | Results data are not presented for several direct and indirect measures of student and stakeholder satisfaction described as important in the Portfolio. These include service area penetration by age group; results of graduate, employer, customer, advisory committee, non-returning student, and stakeholder surveys; market trends; and student complaints. |
| 3R4 | S | Voter approval of a ten year tax levy in 2003 and a new levy in 2004, growth in Foundation assets, and collaborative building projects indirectly represent positive relationship building with the community. |
| 3R5 | S | Overall, student/stakeholder satisfaction compares favorably to the national community college norm. |

AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- | | |
|-----|---|
| O1d | Values: Responsiveness, excellence, community, learning, cultural understanding and mutual respect, innovation, and professional integrity. |
| O5 | Faculty and staff base includes 764 full-time, 703 part-time, and 788 adjunct faculty (total 2,400). Classifications include administrative (1%), professional (23%), secretary and clerical (23%), service (7%), and instructional (47%). Other demographics include 54% |

of full-time employees are women, 86% of all employees are white, 88% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 95% have at least an associate's degree.

- O8b Vulnerabilities include financial constraints caused by under funded state general aid, recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire, increases in the cost to deliver programs, growth of the immigrant population, increased competition for grant funds, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4P1	S	The institution utilizes minimum education credentials, skills, and/or experience standards for faculty developed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners along with a list of key performance skills and technical teaching skills typical of successful teachers to identify the specific credentials, skills, and values required for faculty, staff, and administrators. Job duties and responsibilities are documented in job descriptions that are submitted to the Job Review Committee for analysis.
4P2a	S	Several methods are used to recruit potential employees including posting positions on campus, in statewide and/or national publications, on the institution's Job Line and web site, and in the local newspaper. A partnership with Iowa State University to recruit minority graduate students to teach at the institution is a creative attempt to increase the diversity of the faculty and provide diverse role models for the institution's students. All new employees are provided with four types of orientation – human resources, benefits, technical and on-the-job. Full-time faculty members also receive a yearlong orientation and adjunct faculty receive a one-day orientation.
4P2b	O	It is not clear what processes are used to hire and retain employees and plan for changes in personnel. The Portfolio states that a standardized hiring process is used but the steps in that process are not described.

Salary surveys and benefits are mentioned as methods for retaining employees but information is not provided on non-monetary methods that are used to retain employees. As a result, it is not clear what process the institution has in place to address the vulnerability of recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire (257 employees eligible in the next three years).

- 4P3 O It is not clear what work processes and activities are in place to contribute to cooperation, high performance, innovation, empowerment, organizational learning, and skill sharing, particularly between the six campuses that are spread over an 11 county area. For example, how the institution addresses employee empowerment is not clear, particularly in light of the formal approval process required for most improvements.
- 4P4a S The institution provides multiple training and development opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators and is in the final year of implementation of an Action Plan to develop and implement an integrated system for recruiting, training, retaining, and developing talented and student-centered employees.
- 4P4b O It is not clear if the professional development activities provided for full-time faculty and staff are also available for part-time and adjunct faculty and part-time student support and administrative staff who equal 66% of total employees.
- 4P5 O It is not clear how the institution ensures that training supports a culture of continuous improvement, is aligned with the FIRSTS strategies and action plans, and augments the focus on helping students learn and accomplishing other distinctive objectives. For example, neither the FIRST Scorecard (Figure 1-2), the other institutional objectives (Figure 2-1), or Strategic Action Plans (Figure 7-2) include any indicators of objectives related to employee training to support the goals and objectives and contribute to institutional success.
- 4P6 S A formal performance evaluation system is in place to document performance of faculty, support staff, and administrative, professional and

technical staff. Evaluation occurs at the end of a probationary period and every third year after that and includes creation of a development plan, formal feedback, and informal coaching.

- 4P7 S The institution has a recognition and reward system that focuses on aligning rewards with the objectives in Categories 1 and 2. The system includes annual service awards, Foundation awards, employee awards, employee-to-employee recognition of extraordinary service, and an annual celebration of employees hosted by the President. Compensation is based on salary schedules that are reviewed and adjusted annually to ensure competitive compensation. Employees are supported through an employee wellness program, a health and safety compliance officer, addition of domestic partners to benefits coverage, tuition waivers, and paid leave.
- 4P8-4P9 OO It is not clear how the institution determines key issues related to the motivation of faculty, staff and administrators; evaluates employee satisfaction; analyzes the data; and selects a course of action. The last climate survey was completed in 2001. As shown in Figure 4-7, 45% of employees have been with the institution less than five years and per the text on page 53, 62 new full-time faculty positions have been added and 70 faculty retirees have been replaced since 2002, which means that these employees have never been formally surveyed. For the remainder of the employees, only one survey has been conducted making it unclear how the institution determines if satisfaction is increasing or decreasing and what current issues are driving employee satisfaction, particularly for different types and categories of employees.
- 4P10 O The measures of valuing people that are collected and analyzed appear to be qualitative making it unclear how the institution aggregates and analyzes the information and uses it for improvement.
- 4R1a O Although Staff Race Ethnicities (Figure 2-10) shows a favorable trend from 2001 to 2006 in the percentage of black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander faculty, the racial mix of faculty does not mirror the racial mix of students.

- 4R1b O New positions have been created and initiatives instituted related to valuing people, however little evidence is presented that quantifies the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives on employee satisfaction and development.
- 4R2 S The institution reports several results in processes associated with valuing people including a contract with Career-Builder to recruit a more diverse pool of applicants, addition of monthly meetings of new faculty, addition of a daily electronic newsletter to improve communication, and establishment of counseling offices in strategic locations in instructional buildings.
- 4R3 O Although the institution has added 62 new full time faculty positions and replaced 70 retiring faculty members since 2002, the number of sections taught by full-time faculty has dropped from 65% in Spring 2002 to 58% percent in Spring 2006 (Figure 4-10).
- 4R1-4R3 O Results data are not provided for several measures of valuing people mentioned as important in the Portfolio. These include event surveys, safety incident reports, wellness program membership, exit interview results, retention (other than years of service), results of AQIP Action Plan 397 related to employee training, and measures of productivity such as student/faculty ratios and faculty workloads.
- 4R4 O The institution provides little comparative data to determine how its results in valuing people compare to peer institutions.

AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Leading And Communicating addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations,

direction setting, future opportunity seeking, decision-making, use of data, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1c Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate’s degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities.
- O1d Values: Responsiveness, excellence, community, learning, cultural understanding and mutual respect, innovation, and professional integrity.
- O1e Ten-year Vision: FIRST in quality, service, and affordability.
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plans enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.
- O8b Vulnerabilities include financial constraints caused by under funded state general aid, recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire, increases in the cost to deliver programs, growth of the immigrant population, increased competition for grant funds, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Des Moines Area Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.

Item S/O Comment

- 5P1a S The annual retreat of the Board of Directors is the primary method for setting goals and priorities in alignment with the strategic plan, the ten-year vision (FIRSTS), and the shorter-term (3 to 5 years) action plans. The President gathers input for the goals through focus groups with stakeholders at each campus. Action Plan committees are responsible for accomplishment of the objectives and are required to review accomplishments with the Cabinet and Board.
- 5P1b O It is not clear how a focus on individual development and initiative, institutional learning, and innovation are addressed in setting institutional direction and goals.
- 5P2 S The President meets routinely with external stakeholder groups such as K-12 districts, four-year universities, government agencies, legislators, and business leaders to identify future opportunities and build partnerships. Information gathered is used to identify gaps, create partnerships, determine how better to serve the educational needs of the communities, and report on community needs to the Board.
- 5P3 S The organization is flat and uses policies and procedures to guide the decision-making process. The culture is to make decisions at the level closest to students and other stakeholders. District-wide decision-making is done by the administrative team. Curriculum, Academic Standards, and Diversity Commissions; committees and councils, teams, and workgroups address specific issues and have defined decision-making authority. As a result, many daily decisions regarding operational issues appear to be made at the staff and faculty level rather than by the College leadership team.
- 5P3-5P4 O It is not clear how decisions are made by leaders and by the commissions, committees, councils, teams, and workgroups. The Portfolio provides a lot of information on who has authority to make specific decisions guided by policies and procedures and the results and information that are available to the Board, leaders and committees. What is not clear is the process that is used by the chain of command

structure and the various commissions and committees to actually make and implement fact-based decisions, particularly when there are competing priorities, limited resources, or conflicting stakeholder needs.

- 5P4 S Data concerning results are broadly communicated and used to review presidential performance and to support decision-making in annual strategic planning and day-to-day operations. An Institutional Research Director was hired in 2002 to enhance the institution's ability to increase data generation and analysis to support decision-making at all levels.
- 5P5a S In order to ensure that the leadership system is aligned with the practices and views of the Board, the institution uses the communication system, collaborative partnerships, and open dialogue. A variety of methods are used to communicate between and across levels, departments, campuses, and external stakeholders including advisory committees, focus groups, informal discussions, regularly scheduled meetings, in-service days, email, campus communications, the external web site, phone, voice mail, electronic faxing, the intercampus mail system, and an internal Share Point Portal site.
- 5P5b O It is not clear how the institution determines the effectiveness or appropriateness of its approaches to communicating with internal and external stakeholders.
- 5P6 S The institution's leadership communicates information on the shared mission, vision, values, and performance expectations of the organization on a regular basis through a variety of methods. These include president and leadership team focus groups and visits to classes, Student Activities Council meetings, staff in-service days, joint deans meetings, discipline meetings, and faculty meetings.
- 5P7 S Leadership development opportunities for staff currently in leadership positions and potential future leaders are encouraged, developed, and strengthened through opportunities to chair committees or task forces; faculty release and professional leave time; participation in LINC, CLIC,

or community leadership development programs; and the Midwest Chair Academy.

- 5P8 O The institution does not appear to have a systematic process for succession planning that ensures a continued perspective regarding its mission, vision, and values. For example, a three year Administrative Leadership Program was instituted in 2003, however, it is not clear how the process applies to leaders beyond the dean level, how individuals are identified and linked with the program, or how the institution ensures that potential leaders acquire the needed skills and experiences for future leadership positions.
- 5R1a S Results from the first faculty and staff Survey of Perceptions (Figure 5-8) indicate that employees perceive the institution as a high performing institution with a focused mission/vision (97%), strong administrative involvement in continuous improvement (90.3%), learner-centered environment (90.9%), and a strong collaborative climate (90.8%).
- 5R1b O Results from the ACT Survey (Figure 5-9) demonstrate a large difference in the number of respondents between 2003 (6,169) and 2006 (820), making trend analysis and benchmarking possibilities difficult.
- 5R1c O Results data are not provided for several measures of leading and communicating that are mentioned as important in the Portfolio including participation in community service; number of community activities; Teaching Improvement Units earned; and findings from the 2004 Foundation survey of faculty, staff and Board members.
- 5R2 O The institution does not provide comparative or trend data for leading or communicating, with the exception of one item on the ACT Student Opinion Survey. On the ACT survey, DMAACC ranked in the 78th percentile in "Impression of Quality".

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O6b All campuses have wireless access, the institution has a 3-year rolling plan for equipment and technology updates, and it strives to keep pace with industry standards.
- O6c Construction and renovation of facilities is funded by a tax levy which generates approximately \$50 million each 10 years that it is approved.
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plan enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6C1	S	Key student and administrative support services include enrollment services, student development, instructional support, student life, human resources, facilities management, foundation, business office, information solutions, and planning.

- 6P1 S The institution identifies student support service needs through surveys; assessment tools; student orientations; advising, counseling, and enrollment management staffs; and outreach programs.
- 6P2 S The administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, and administrators are identified through surveys and state and federal requirements. Services are monitored for quality, consistency, and timeliness through department reports.
- 6P1,6P2 O There does not appear to be a systematic process to aggregate information on support service needs gathered through formal and informal methods, analyze the data, and use it to identify needs.
- 6P3 S Students provide input on student service operations through the Student Advisory Council. The Executive Dean of Student Services and the Executive Vice President meet with the Student Advisory Councils (SACs) regularly to solicit input on student service operations, the President formally meets with the SACs from all campuses before tuition is set to get input and feedback on the proposed tuition increases, and the President attends classes to gather input.
- 6P3,6P4 SS The LEAN Workplace model is used to document, streamline and improve support service processes. The model includes analysis by a team of administrative and support staff of a process that is not timely or is cumbersome, mapping of the process, identification of improvements, and mapping future action items. Focus groups are established to implement the action items and report on progress, roadblocks, and new issues identified during the process. Regular department staff meetings and cross training of staff provide for vertical and horizontal sharing of information and processes.
- 6P4,6P5 O The institution states that operational data are used to drive decision-making and planning but the majority of the indicators included in Figures 6-1 and 6-2 are qualitative versus quantitative and appear to be lagging indicators, such as satisfaction surveys, with few leading indicators, such as cycle time. In addition, data included in response to 6P5 such as

enrollment, grades, retention, persistence, etc., appear to be related to student learning or other distinctive objective processes, not support services processes.

- 6R1,6R2 OO Results data are not provided for many measures listed in Figures 6-1 and 6-2. Examples include room and building use, probations and suspensions, crime statistics, percent of budget spent on instruction, student to computer ratio, helpdesk ticket time, financial aid and transcript processing, satisfaction with technology, and tuition payments on time.
- 6R2a S Revenues (Figure 6-5) have shown a steady increase growing from \$50 million in FY2002 to \$66.8 million in FY 2006, a 34% increase. Revenue growth has kept pace with the growth in student enrollment with revenue dollars per credit and non-credit student increasing from \$901 in 2002 to \$1,112 in 2006.
- 6R2b O Although the institution's tuition rate is the second lowest in Iowa, the rate has increased from \$2,412 in FY 2003 to \$2,910 in FY 2007, a 20.6% increase (Figure 6-7). Per the Portfolio, the increase is due to a decline in state appropriations, yet the state general aid data provided in Figure 6-5 does not appear to support this statement. As a result, it is not clear how this increase supports the institution in meeting its goal of FIRST in Affordability.
- 6R3 O Although examples of comparison with other institutions for budget, tuition, and staff ratios were favorable, comparisons were not provided for many of the student and administrative support processes.

AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

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

analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1d Values: Responsiveness, excellence, community, learning, cultural understanding and mutual respect, innovation, and professional integrity.
- O1e Ten-year Vision: FIRST in quality, service, and affordability.
- O3d Student needs include seamless transfer for transfer students, training opportunities for career/technical students, clear matriculation plan for high school students, support services for at-risk and developmental students, a range of ESL classes for non-native English speakers, sessions that meet licensure requirements for continuing education students, and availability of campus resources for online students.
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plans enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.
- O8b Vulnerabilities include financial constraints caused by under funded state general aid, recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire, increases in the cost to deliver programs, growth of the immigrant population, increased competition for grant funds, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

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

Item S/O Comment

- 7P1a S The institution selects information to support student learning and institutional objectives through an integrated strategic planning process. Indicators are aligned to the FIRSTS strategic goals in the strategic plan. Measures are identified for Strategic Action Plans related to alternative schedule development, business and industry collaboration, dual enrollment strategies, enrollment management, new program development, assessment of student learning, increase in full-time faculty, student retention, and increased foundation scholarships.
- 7P1b O Many of the Strategic Action Plan indicators (Figure 7-1) are once a year, end-of-process, lagging indicators such as grade distribution, licensure pass rates, retention, and persistence or qualitative actions. As a result, it is unclear how the selected measures are used to manage and improve student learning on an on-going basis.
- 7P2a S Each department and unit identifies unique needs for data and information collection, storage, and accessibility. Requested information is provided through the Banner system, the Institutional Research and Planning Office, or Program Development Offices. Departments and programs are also provided data such as enrollment, student demographics, grade distribution, degree attainment, class size, room usage, retention, and persistence.
- 7P2b S Technology and communications systems have kept pace with industry standards through expanding wireless communication capability to all of the campus buildings, converting the telecommunications system to voice over internet protocol and supporting audio/visual meeting resources such as video conferencing devices strategically at all campuses to enable shared meetings and learning between the campuses.
- 7P3 S The institution has identified sources and needs for comparative data. Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, the National Center for Educational Statistics, and the National Community College Benchmark Project are used to collect comparative data and benchmark against other schools. The comparative data are used to

measure progress on the FIRSTS goals and on program indicators such as program size, grade distribution, retention, and persistence.

- 7P4 O It is not clear how data and information are analyzed at the institutional level and how the analysis is shared throughout the institution. It appears that the Director of Institutional Research posts performance and benchmarking data on an internal website for access by faculty and staff, but it is not clear if the posting includes analysis of the data.
- 7P5 S A formal process exists to enable department and individual staff members to request data from the Director of Institutional Research. Priorities have been established based on support of the strategic plan goals, indicators, and action plans; AQIP action projects; Innovation Grant activities; and student learning initiatives. Data on strategic goals and action plans are available on the strategic plan website.
- 7P6 S The Information Solutions/Systems Integration department, led by the Vice President of Information Solutions, is responsible for ensuring the accuracy, maintenance, relevance, and effectiveness of information systems and processes. The focus of this effort is on what data are needed to make the best decisions possible and ensuring accuracy and usefulness of data. The institution is developing an Information Technical Infrastructure Library to provide better access to decision information.
- 7P7 O It is not clear what measures are used to determine the effectiveness of the system for collecting and analyzing data. The measures that are provided in the Portfolio appear to be data that are collected to measure institutional performance, not measures for determining effectiveness of the system for collecting and analyzing data.
- 7R1,7R2 O Results are not yet available to determine if the system for measuring effectiveness meets the institution's needs in accomplishing its mission and goals. A system is now in place with initial benchmarks identified. Prior to the current effort, there was no real system for gathering evidence in place beyond basic expectations of the Iowa Department of Education,

therefore, historical trends and patterns and comparative data are not available.

- 711 S The institution is improving its current process for measuring effectiveness by working with the Iowa Department of Education and other community colleges in Iowa to improve the Iowa Management Information System. The institution will continue working with the National Community College Benchmark Project to provide data and improve the integrity of state and national comparisons.

AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b Mission: To offer quality programs and courses to meet the different community interests, student abilities and personal objectives to citizens of all ages and levels of education for the purpose of improving the quality of life, the economic conditions and the public welfare of our state.
- O1e Ten-year Vision: FIRST in quality, service, and affordability.
- O6a Six campuses include Ankeny (23 buildings), Urban/Des Moines (4 buildings), Boone (2 buildings), and Carroll, West, and Newton (1 building each).
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a

seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plans enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.

- O8b Vulnerabilities include financial constraints caused by under funded state general aid, recruiting well-qualified staff as a large number of employees retire, increases in the cost to deliver programs, growth of the immigrant population, increased competition for grant funds, and population shifts from rural to urban areas.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8P1	SS	The institution's vision of what it should look like in the future is outlined in its strategic plan "DMACC's 2016 Ten-Year Vision for Success: FIRST in Quality, FIRST in Service, and FIRST in Affordability." The institution used a collaborative, participatory, and systematic planning process to complete the ten-year vision. The process included analysis of data such as enrollment, retention, persistence, graduation rates, and market penetration; a market analysis; comparisons to other Iowa community colleges; identification of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities; and focus groups with staff and students. The data were used to identify priorities and themes which were reviewed at a Board retreat and during stakeholder focus groups. Indicators of success were selected, Action Plans developed, and Action Plan Committees formed.
8P2	O	It is not clear what process is used to select short- and long-term strategies and address conflicting expectations of key stakeholders. The Portfolio mentions that data such as enrollment, student demographics, retirements, financial status, and the local and state economy influence prioritization, but it is not clear how these data are used in the strategy prioritization process. In addition, the planning process was implemented

recently and it is not clear when the institution plans to repeat the process.

- 8P3 S FIRSTS goals resulting from strategic planning efforts provide the direction for strategic action plans with specific objectives, timelines and measures that are regularly communicated to the Board and posted on a website that is accessible to all staff and students.
- 8P4 O There does not appear to be a process to coordinate and align overall institutional strategies and action plans at various levels. The Portfolio discusses coordination of Action Plans at the institution level, but it is not clear how these plans are reflected in plans at the campus, department, and unit level.
- 8P5 S The process of selecting measures and setting performance projections is coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research to ensure alignment with the strategic action plans. Where possible, projections are set based on comparison to state, NCCBP and other comparative data.
- 8P6 S The process for developing Action Plans includes a requirement to identify resources to accomplish the objectives. A Cabinet-level champion is responsible for obtaining adequate funding through department budgets, a special appropriation, or an Innovation Grant. The institution allocates \$100,000 annually for disbursement to projects that support the FIRSTS goals and improve service to students.
- 8P7 O The methods for developing and nurturing faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities to handle changing institutional strategies and action plans appear to be informal, reactive and less structured than may be necessary to address future opportunities and challenges facing the institution.
- 8P8 O Although the institution regularly collects, analyzes and distributes data on each of the FIRSTS goals, the institution does not appear to collect and analyze measures of the effectiveness of the system used for planning. The information that is provided in the Portfolio appears to be

- data related to the FIRSTS goals rather than data related to planning process effectiveness.
- 8R1 O Because the FIRSTS goals and measures were created in 2006, the institution does not yet have quantifiable results or historical trends and patterns for institutional strategies and action plans.
- 8R2,8R3 O Although the Portfolio states that each Action Plan has projections for performance based on comparative data, the actual projections for performance for the FIRSTS goals and action plans for the next 1-3 years and how these projections compare with other institutions are not provided.
- 8R4 O While the institution appears to have qualitative evidence related to the successfulness of its planning process, it does not appear to have quantitative results. Examples of results that are missing include employee and stakeholder satisfaction with the process and number of people involved in the process.
- 8I2 S Results of planning for continuous improvement are posted on the website, reported to the Board of Directors, and included in the institution's annual report. Two target areas have been identified as requiring further attention as indicated by the following results: FIRST in Quality indicators have not shown significant positive change and the amount of scholarship dollars awarded, a FIRST in Affordability indicator, has declined.

AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Building Collaborative Relationships examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship

creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

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

Item Critical Characteristic

- O1b Mission: To offer quality programs and courses to meet the different community interests, student abilities and personal objectives to citizens of all ages and levels of education for the purpose of improving the quality of life, the economic conditions and the public welfare of our state.
- O1c Commitment to Students: Focus on creating opportunities for success by offering transferable courses; associate's degrees, certifications, or diplomas; workplace training and education; opportunities for high school students; support services for under-prepared students; partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies; improved access; avocational, personal, and professional development opportunities.
- O4 Collaboration/partnerships exist with Iowa State University (joint admissions agreement), K-12 districts (career/technical and college-prep courses), Iowa Workforce Development (employment and training programs), local business and industries (training, education, and consulting), other community colleges (legislative and funding initiatives), and labor unions representing faculty and support staff.
- O7 Key competitors include Drake University, Grandview College, Simpson College, Iowa State University, University of Phoenix, several for-profit two-year colleges, and businesses that are starting their own "learning colleges."
- O8a Opportunities include 5% annual enrollment growth (fastest growing service district in Iowa), strong linkages with local stakeholders, strong partnerships driving creation of a seamless education system, participation in the workforce development system in central Iowa, and facilities expansion plans enabling enrollment growth particularly in high demand programs.

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

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9P1a	S	The institution creates, builds, and prioritizes relationships with other colleges, universities, businesses, and organizations through legislative mandate, Board goals, administrative contacts and goals, and interaction in the community. The institution's mission and strategic planning goals are utilized to prioritize collaborative efforts. As shown in Figure 7-2, several current Strategic Action Plans are focused on building collaborative relationships including business and industry collaboration, dual enrollment strategies, new program development, and increased foundation scholarships.
9P1b	S	The institution has a unique joint admissions program with Iowa State University, providing students an opportunity to enroll at DMACC and ISU at the same time and to have the same privileges as ISU students (access to living in the dorms, library services, access to student clubs and organizations, access to sporting and cultural events) while still enrolled at the community college. Implemented in Fall 2006, the program currently has 203 students enrolled.
9P1c	S	This is the only community college that is a member of The Higher Education Collaborative, a partnership of six colleges and universities housed in a state-of-the-art facility in Des Moines, sharing space and resources, working together toward identifying the education and training needs of the businesses in downtown Des Moines, and working towards the development of shared degrees. The institution offers some credit classes in Business and Accounting and several continuing education classes at the Collaborative.
9P2	S	Advisory committees, focus groups, surveys, program evaluations, and meetings with community members and legislators are used to ensure the needs of those involved in collaborative relationships are being met.

- 9P3 O There does not appear to be a systematic process to create and build relationships within the institution, particularly across campuses. Per the Portfolio, cross-department meetings, visits to other campuses, and inclusion of a cross-representation of departments and campuses on Action Project teams are encouraged, but it is not clear how the institution ensures that these internal relationship-building methods actually occur and that there is integration and communication across these relationships.
- 9P4 O There do not appear to be measures in place to determine the success of external collaborative relationships. Measures related to building internal relationships do not appear to address satisfaction with and effectiveness of the internal relationships.
- 9R1 S Building relationships with area high schools has resulted in an increase of dual enrollment students from 1,067 students earning 5,849 credits in 2000 to 6,181 students earning 39,844 credits in 2006.
- 9R2 O The institution does not have data to compare results to other higher education institutions or organizations outside the education community.