Central Community College
Systems Appraisal Feedback Executive Summary
Draft April 26, 2006

This report summarizes the key feedback provided in the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. The key factors summarized include accreditation issues, strategic issues, and components of the critical characteristics analysis. The full report may be accessed on the Central Community College Web site at: http://www.cccneb.edu/edservices/AQIP/SPfeedback.doc

Accreditation Issues
Upon review of the college's systems portfolio, the Higher Learning Commission's Systems Appraisal team had this to say:

> "The Systems Appraisal Team concluded that Central Community College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the five _Criteria for Accreditation_ and each of their Core Components."

Strategic Issues
From the review of the colleges Systems Portfolio, the Systems Appraisal Team identified several issues that have the potential to impact future institutional strategies. The Higher Learning Commission expects Central Community College to discuss these issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and to take action to address those issues. The Team identified the following issues:
- Only two of the ten priorities targeted by CCC deal directly with student learning.
- Work processes that contribute to communications, cooperation and high performance are present throughout the organization; however, there is no explanation of the relationship of these processes to the goals, vision and mission of the institution.
- The institution lacks a model to compare data and to measure valuing people.
- The institution has established complex organizational processes that lead to paralysis rather than prompt action; there appears to be multiple layers of bureaucracy involving far too many individuals, committees, and programs in an ultimate decision-making process.

(NOTE: These priorities reflect issues the college self-identified in the systems portfolio, portfolio issues that need additional explanation/details in order for external readers to fully understand existing processes, or issues where CCC should seek improvement. In any case this gives the college an opportunity to examine how the Team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves.)

Critical Characteristics Analysis (Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement)

The following table summarizes the most critical strengths and opportunities for improvement identified by the team. 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)". For the purpose of brevity this report does not included (ordinary) strengths and opportunities or issues addressed in other categories of the systems portfolio.

Systems Portfolio Category	Strength Or Opportunity	Comments
1P6a	SS	CCC developed and implemented eight major processes for assessing general education and program-specific learning objectives.
1I2	OO	Areas designated as priorities are indicated, however, the data sources are unclear. Only two of the ten priorities targeted deal directly with student learning.
2P3b	OO	Although cultural diversity is identified as a "first value" for CCC, individual campuses determine needs rather than having a college-wide mechanism.

2P5, 2R1a	SS	CCC has signed Tech Prep agreements with 63 of the 72 schools in its 25-county service area. With an increase in the number of agreements, the Tech Prep program has grown roughly 30% from 2002-03 to 2004-05.
2P5, 2R1b	SS	The CCC Training and Development and Grants Departments wrote more than 60 grant proposals that collectively garnered $266,000 to provide training for 13,544 (duplicated headcount) local workers.
2P5,2R1c	OO	CCC does not formally collect data on frequency or size of participation in it's cultural diversity events.
2I1	OO	CCC intends to improve systems and processes relative to Category 2, but this improvement is not yet underway.
3I2b	OO	CCC may have set up too many data gathering mechanisms, processed too many planning models, so that prompt, effective, and well-targeted responsive action is difficult – all of which hinder rather than facilitate planning.
3I2c	OO	CCC does not indicate how the status of action items is communicated to faculty and staff during the review and recommendation process.
4C3a	OO	CCC is aware of the change in age demographics in the service area which will impact the size of the hiring pool and number of potential students available to the college. The aging workforce offers critical challenges for the college and the service area. The college could face a hiring crisis in the not-too-distant future. Currently almost 50% of its employees are 50 years old or older (See Table 4C3-1).
4P2a	OO	CCC conducts employee orientations; however, specific mentoring or training is not widespread. Recruiting, hiring and orienting of new employees does not mention anything about the priority value of diversity.
4P3a	OO	CCC notes that interpreting and administering some policies across multiple campuses can be confusing and reports that policies are sometimes interpreted and administered differently resulting in inefficiency and inconsistency across campuses and sites. The portfolio states there is some confusion regarding ethical practices, policies, and procedures.
4P6	OO	CCC is in the process of updating its 25-year old personnel evaluation system by forming three committees (one for each campus) comprised of faculty, staff, and administration to review and improve the evaluation processes.
4P8	OO	The college determines "key issues" related to motivation of faculty, staff, and administrators and shares them with all personnel; however, it is reliant on the "presumption of trust and attentive listening on the part of all involved" for there to be follow-through, if any.
5P2	OO	Conversations by college leaders was the main action identified to demonstrate how leaders seek future opportunities. The use of data to maintain "ongoing awareness of relevant trends" in these discussions and planning efforts is unclear.
5P8	OO	Some planning models are identified to assure consistent sharing of mission, vision and values; however, CCC has no college-wide succession plan and ultimately may lose much institutional knowledge.
6I1a	OO	Both the Student Services and Business Services Departments need to develop systematic processes for using the large amounts of data that is generated about their performance.

7P2b	OO	While having a central authority to remove data collection duplication, redundancy and wasted effort is commendable, there is concern this could further inhibit rapid-response action and confuse a bureaucratic system that is acknowledged to be extremely complex and confusing to employees.
7R1b	OO	The judgment that effectiveness measures generally do meet CCC's needs is not referenced to any indicated selected standards of performance.
8P1b & 8P1d	OO	The planning process steps involve much back-and-forth sharing of documents. This seems burdensome to the process, and could be streamlined by making the planning committee more inclusive from the start.
8P2a	OO	CCC has a clear strategic process in place to monitor stakeholders' needs and trends and analyzes these against the college role and mission; however, the recommendations coming from the planning team involve few actual actions. Most items listed involve collecting more data and/or redefining organizational groups. Other action-items are very broad in scope (e.g., connection of planning process to budgeting; eliminate sense of internal competition), but offer no specifics.
8P2b	OO	It is unclear how the AQIP-style recommendations crosswalk with the College Planning Goals (Figure 8P2-1).
8P8	OO	CCC gathers measures of effectiveness; however, the analysis and use of data is unclear.
8R1	OO	The planning goals in Figure 8P2-1 are truly strategic in nature; but the list of accomplishments in 8R1 and the numbers in Table 8R1-1 are of a different cast, capable of accomplishment in one year. Many of the institutional strategies and action plans are vague and/or involve minimal effort on the part of the college (e.g., hire a consultant, upgrade the College web page, establish a President's Advisory Committee). There is no apparent link between these strategies and defined, expected outcomes. Success is defined here simply by doing tasks, rather than by measuring the effectiveness or outcomes of those tasks.
8R2a	OO	The historical accomplishment of 80-90% of its objectives does not take into account the outcomes of those objectives, merely that action was taken.
8R2b	OO	The college focuses on outcome improvement through the continuous improvement process.
8R2c	OO	Although CCC reports participation in a number of benchmark projects, no comparison data is given.
8R4a	OO	As evidence that the continuous improvement is effective, CCC provides a list of those involved in the continuous improvement processes. While the scope of participation is to be lauded, this data does not demonstrate the effectiveness of the continuous improvement efforts.
9I2c	OO	There is emphasis on analyzing and improving teaching, learning, diverse cultural issues and learning styles, and other instructional support processes; however, throughout this portfolio, little narrative has been given to improving diversity – which was initially listed as the number-one priority.

Any Questions or comments about this report should be addressed to Brian McDermott at 308-398-7387.