Central Community College
October 23, 2009

Category 8 – Planning Continuous Improvement

8P1: How Central Community College (CCC) Manages Its Key Improvement Planning Processes

Central Community College has a mature system of planning continuous improvement processes. Improvements and changes in the system are well defined and have evolved over the years. Key planning processes include the following:

- Annual reaffirmation by Board of Governors of College Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and confirmation of annual Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Annual update and prioritization of Master Facilities Plan for three main campuses and permanent learning centers
- Annual update and prioritization of College-wide Technology Initiatives
- Annual update of three-year plans for all instructional programs, student services, learning support services, and extended learning services
- Annual budget development and regular monitoring to implement planning initiatives
- Regular Strategic Forums and Action Project reports to Higher Learning Commission for input and feedback

All key planning processes include needs of all employees in the formulation and updating of plans with approval and prioritization at departmental, campus, cluster, area, and local governing board levels. Major initiatives, including new instructional programs leading to new degrees or diplomas and capital improvements exceeding $500,000, also require approval from the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Changes to state, regionally or nationally accredited programs include approval of those accrediting agencies or boards. See figure 5P2-2 for flow and steps in the existing process.

8P2: How CCC Selects Short- and Long-term Strategies.

The College has an integrated planning process that is used for both traditional and improvement planning. This process is based on a continuous quality improvement cycle. This cycle is shown in detail in category five. As outlined in the planning cycle the planning process evaluates the need for any given project and then evaluates if it meets the College's mission, vision and service priorities. Overall community college instructional and service priorities for CCC are determined in Nebraska State Law. These are shown in Figure 8P2-1.

> **Instructional and Service Priorities:**
> 1. Applied technology and occupational education
> 2. Transfer education including general academic transfer programs
> 3. Public service, adult continuing education, economic and community development, foundations education, customized workforce training, and personal development
> 4. Applied research to enhance instructional programs, student achievement, institutional effectiveness, public service activities, and professional development

Figure 8P2-1

A college-wide team representative of student stakeholders and various employee groups updated the College Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Processes for Board input and approval in 2004. Employee groups and the Board of Governors reaffirm these long-term strategies annually. The Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Processes are shown in the Overview section (O1).

The process of determining short-term strategies is largely based on the indicated need from multiple data sources.   These include:

- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE)

- Faces of the Future Survey
- Key Performance Indicators (Academic and Non-academic)
- Student Survey of Instruction
- Employee Engagement Survey (Pilot Fall 2008, Revised Spring 2009)
- College Annual Reports
  - Extended Learning Services Annual Report
  - Business Services Annual Report
  - Student Services Annual Report
  - FTE/REU Annual Audit
  - Academic Services Annual Report
  - College President's Annual Report
  - Enrollment Report
  - Institutional Advancement Annual Report
  - Public Relations Annual Report
  - Campus Reports

Since becoming an AQIP accredited institution, the College has also adopted goals, which equate to the nine AQIP categories for effective institutions. Those are listed in Figure 8P2-2. All action priorities, programs, services, or planning documents refer to how initiatives will relate back to one of these goals.

Central Community College Goals	1. Provide teaching-learning experiences, systems, and processes that assure Central Community College students' success in achieving their stated educational goals 2. Initiate distinctive systems and processes that complement student learning and support the mission of Central Community College 3. Develop systems and processes that identify students' and other stakeholders' needs and measure the college's success in meeting identified needs 4. Establish staffing and development standards, systems, and processes that demonstrate a high regard and appreciation of people and have a positive impact on student learning and support and other important college objectives 5. Use leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes that effectively guide Central Community College in setting directions, making decisions, envisioning educational needs and opportunities, and building and sustaining a student-centered learning environment. 6. Provide student, faculty, and administrative support systems, processes, and resources that ensure an environment that encourages student learning 7. Collect and analyze data and use measures of institutional effectiveness to drive performance improvement 8. Create planning systems and processes that focus the college's resources on achieving its mission and vision 9. Promote the development of collaborative relationships that support student learning at Central Community College

Figure 8P2-2

In addition to defining short-term projects through data analysis, all employees, student groups, or community stakeholders can initiate suggestions for College-wide changes or improvement by multiple means, including the College Suggestion Box and by contacting the administration or one of the existing committees/teams.

As issues are identified, three to four Action Projects are defined by the Continuous Quality Improvement Team (CQIT). Additional quality improvement projects can be, and are selected for implementation, but

these projects are usually assigned directly to the responsible department/division and are not reported on annually to the Higher Learning Commission/NCA. The CQIT was originally established in 2002 and is tasked with developing recommendations on and monitoring progress on each of the action projects (called quality improvement projects within CCC). The CQIT involves various employee groups from across the College service area and serves as a conduit for communication between different components of the college by advising and recommending issues to the College Cabinet or responsible department. One key aspect in the selection process for the three or four projects selected to be reported on annually to NCA/HLC includes determining if the project supports one of the four existing Quality Improvement Campaigns. The Quality Improvement Campaigns are the Colleges long-term projects lasting between one and three years. These projects are defined by the team attending the Strategy Forum and are based largely on feedback from peer institutions and work completed at the forum.   The last forum was in 2007 and four quality campaigns were developed at that time. The campaigns are as follows:

1. Increase the number of CCC nursing graduates by increasing program enrollment and improving the program retention rate. (Related to CCC Goals 1 & 2)

- Target potential nursing students by defining students with a high propensity to be successful in the nursing. Once defined the potential students should be heavily recruited in conjunction with special events to encourage their joining the nursing program.
- Evaluate current Central Community College students who intend to become nurses and develop processes to improve their migration into the nursing program.

2. Increase student success rates in developmental studies through study and redesign of instructional and student support services. (Related to CCC Goal 1)

- Define the primary issues surrounding the success rate of developmental students and adjust curriculum and support processes to improve migration to non-developmental college level courses.
- Define the existing processes that limit the overall participation in developmental courses and modify those systems to improve participation and increase overall academic goal attainment of Central Community College students.

3. Review, coordinate, and revise the College's planning and budgeting processes and concurrently examine the adequacy of management information related to these processes. (Related to CCC Goals 3, 4, 7, 8)

- Process-map the existing processes used at all key decision making levels and adjusts those processes to ensure alignment.
- Define data used in annual planning and define what shortcomings may exist in the data. Once the shortcomings are defined, develop improvement actions related to the data and data delivery.

4. Improve College communication structures, especially as they relate to CQIT efforts, through changes to the college website, committee structures, committee activities, and communication formats. (Related to CCC Goal 5.)

- Evaluate the primary communications systems (evaluate the current data available) within the college and determine the best courses of actions to improve those systems.
- Develop an evaluation body (and supporting processes) to identify and evaluate annually the opportunities for improvement in the area of communication and develop and implement improvement activities.

Regardless of whether or not the project is one being reported on annually, the process for identifying the individual projects is the same. As issues are identified, Action Teams are formed to address the issues

with regular reports due back to the CQIT, College Cabinet and Board of Governors. Current CQIT members, CQIT charter, CQIT minutes, action projects, and the history of the campaigns are listed on the CCC website to be shared with all employees, students and the general public.
stakeholdershttp://www.cccneb.edu/igsbase/igstemplate.cfm?SRC=DB&SRCN=&GnavID=208

For projects implemented at the campus or department levels or not directly related to one of the campaigns, parallel processes are used to implement projects. Instructional and non-instructional departments develop short- and long-term strategies through input into instructional "Three Year Plans," which include categories such as environmental scans, past and projected student enrollments, planned personnel needs, equipment, technology, and facility needs. These plans are completed at the departmental, cluster, and area-wide levels. Master Facility Plans were completed on each of the major campuses and prioritized at a college-wide level in 2005-2006. These plans are reviewed annually by the College and campus leadership to prioritize improvements to facilities and major remodeling or construction.
projectshttp://www.cccneb.edu/igsbase/igstemplate.cfm?SRC=DB&SRCN=&GnavID=197

While regular review of infrastructure, repair, and maintenance are prioritized and completed, contingency dollars are also budgeted on an area-wide basis to accommodate unplanned capital expenditures.

8P3: How CCC Develops Key Action Plans to Support Organizational Strategies
In today's environment many of the key action plans involve not only providing learning opportunities to students but also the technology support, facilities, and budget to implement the plans. All employees can submit requests for technology improvements and budget needs through annual technology initiatives and requests to their supervisors. Budget requests are made by cluster and campus budget officers based on input from their employees. On-going and future technology needs can be generated by any employee by submitting an electronic technology Initiative form to the Information Technology Services Director and the Technology Advisory Committee.

College-wide reporting of data, including student retention and completion rates, student evaluations and employee surveys, often influence departments or college leadership in recommending key action plans for the coming year.

The four Quality Improvement Campaigns represent good examples of how action plans support the Colleges strategies. Foundations education and subsequent college-level studies prompted the suggestion to select an Action Campaign (1-3 years in length) and related shorter Action Plans (one year in length) (see section 8P2).

8P4: How CCC Coordinates and Aligns Its Planning Processes, Organizational Strategies, and Action Plans Across All Levels
As stated in 8P1, the College uses a unified approach to planning that encompasses numerous types of planning.   However, it is important to note that every effort is made to acquire stakeholder input from all areas. Planning and action teams are made up of employees representing hourly, contract salary, faculty and administrative areas. Part-time employees may also be part of teams or committees. Efforts are made to encourage representation from each campus and off-campus locations whenever possible. A robust distance communication system is in place to provide meetings to be conducted from multiple locations at the same time. In addition to campuses, clusters are area-wide organizational groupings to provide input and consistency among similar instructional and non-instructional programs that exist on multiple campuses. All CCC e-mail is available to solicit volunteers for teams and committees, and in some cases, supervisors are responsible for selecting broad representation for departmental teams. Student input and other external stakeholder input is also solicited through advisory boards, College suggestion box, student and employee surveys, and participation in meetings when possible.

For example, student learning assessments, employee surveys and advisory boards provide input that is collected and evaluated by departmental faculty on each campus. Then, faculty from each campus meet with their colleagues at the area-wide cluster level to compare assessment results. Recommendations for improvement formulated by the faculty at the cluster level are shared at area-wide Educational Services

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and area Cabinet levels. Members of the Board of Governors are also given annual updates on program reviews and key performance indicator results.

8P5: How CCC Defines Objectives, Selecting Measures, and Setting Performance Targets for Organizational Strategies and Action Plans
Objectives, measures, and targets for action plans are generally refined as a result of communication from the Board, Cabinet, CQIT, and Action Team members. Measures are based on existing data and reports or based on recommendations from institutional research department if the data does not currently exist. Objectives are written to include how the project will be measured. For example, from the 2006-2007 objectives, "Develop and implement a standardized college-wide student course assessment survey." Prior to this, there was no College policy on conducting student evaluations of courses. The Board directed the College Cabinet to create policy and procedures to allow for students to evaluate their courses. The Cabinet, with input from the CQIT, created an action team composed of faculty and administration to review student evaluation models from other institutions, adopt those practices deemed most appropriate for CCC, and pilot the instrument across the college, encompassing the multiple delivery formats and locations where courses take place. The Team completed the pilot and made additional refinements to the instrument. The Board was then able to adopt a policy and the administration and faculty were able to implement the new standardized college-wide student course assessment survey.

8P6: How CCC Links Strategy Selection and Action Plans
As action plans are developed, teams formulate resources that may be needed to implement recommended changes. For example, if surveys are needed, the Institutional Effectiveness department designs and completes the needed survey. If additional budget dollars are needed, budget officers are empowered to utilize existing accounts to accommodate budgetary needs or special requests can be addressed at the area-wide level. Future projections of technology, new programs, or capital improvement projects are figured into initiatives and taken into consideration when decisions are made to implement needed changes. Major changes in personnel, programming, or facilities can be implemented through general fund initiatives, foundation or other fundraising efforts, state or federal grant requests, or additional program fees paid by students or stakeholders utilizing college services.

8P7: How CCC Assesses Risk in the College Planning Processes.
The College assesses risk in several traditional and non-traditional methods. Insurance, grants, or outside contracted partnerships are utilized when appropriate to meet needs while not exposing students and the institution to unnecessary financial risk. The culture of the institution accepts risk-taking with the expectation and responsibility to assess changes and make adjustments if the results are not as positive as expected. As part of the planning process, programs and teams consider Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) as well as other Environmental Scans to determine what trends appear to be impacting current and future plans. The Board of Governors and institutional culture values conservative revenue planning and regularly budgets contingency dollars to account for unexpected changes in state, student or county aid as well as market fluctuations of major construction projects. Cooperative involvement among campuses, teams, and clusters helps address risks due to personnel changes or service changes. Lastly, depending on the scope and type of project, multiple bodies within the College will review the proposals and assess any potential risk and requirement for a mitigation plan.

8P8: How CCC Provides for the Development of Faculty, Staff and Administrator Capabilities to Address Requirements of Organizational Strategies and Action Plans
As addressed in Category 4 and 5, the College strives to provide opportunities for all employees to be involved in planning processes and to develop within their own positions. Specific examples include:
- All-college In-Services provide opportunities for all employees to develop themselves personally and professionally
- CQIT charter requires that members be from hourly, contract, faculty and administrative areas
- Any employee can initiate technology, program, facility, or departmental suggestions for improvement

- Professional development dollars and time are available for employees to take coursework, participate in workshops, attend conferences, or attend departmental, group, campus, cluster, or area-wide meetings
- Employees are encouraged to be involved in community activities and groups to understand changing community stakeholder needs and responsibilities
- Teams and individuals with faculty, administration and board representation attend Higher Learning Commission training/conferences such as the Strategy Forums; annual meetings, and other AQIP training events
- A broad variety of employees participate in AQIP training and Portfolio Reviews or Systems Planning for Action Resources and Skills (SPARKS)
- Input is solicited and information is shared through regular postings of team agendas, minutes, monthly updates from the President, and reports to the Board.

8R1: Measures of Effectiveness for Planning Processes and Systems

The primary measures used include measures imbedded in the College's quality improvement projects. Additionally, the College uses timeliness of plans, initiatives, budget monitoring and overall results of teams and their associated projects as measurements that planning is effective. Input from College-wide employee and student surveys, and stakeholder advisory boards is reviewed regularly to see if improvements are being implemented or if common issues of concern are being documented even after action plans have been implemented. Continued involvement of team members can indicate if past teams were deemed effective or recommendations were acted upon. Some of the key measures imbedded in the systems portfolio include:

- COMPASS, ASSET, and ACT testing
- Assessment of student learning
- Advisory boards' data
- Continuous Quality Improvement Team (CQIT) feedback
- Student feedback
  - Community College Survey of Student Engagement
  - Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement
  - Faces of the Future
  - Housing and food service
  - Event surveys (new student orientations, campus visit days, student workshops, and other events)
  - National Survey of Faculty and Students
  - Graduate Survey
  - Student Survey of Instruction
- Campus Open Forums
- Regional Job Markets Analysis
- Demographic Trends

8R2-3: How CCC Measures Performance Results for the College's Strategies and Action Plans

The results of the four quality improvement campaigns and the associated action projects included multiple specific measures used to determine overall performance. Below is a table showing the outcome results for the individual campaigns and projects (Table 8R2-1).

Outcome Results for Individual Campaigns and Projects

Campaign	Action Project	Performance Measure
Increase the number of CCC nursing graduates by increasing program enrollment and improving the program retention rate	Increase number of available slots in nursing program, expand nursing program at Kearney Learning Center, build Health Science Building to increase available slots	Current enrollment is up by 20 slots and 20 additional slots will be opened upon completion of the Health Science building in early 2010.
Increase student success rates in developmental studies through study and redesign instructional and student support services.	Develop standardized assessment measures and placement table, develop standardized college-wide mandatory testing and placement process.	Implemented standardized assessment measures and placement table college-wide, developed standardized college-wide mandatory testing and placement process, gained approval from College Cabinet
Review, coordinate, and revise the College's planning and budgeting processes and concurrently examine the adequacy of management information related to these processes.	Define current college planning process, define current college budgeting process, and develop a planning matrix to align planning and budgeting	Integrated college-wide planning process, developed communication plan on all planning and budgeting processes
Improve College communication structures, especially as they relate to CQIT efforts, through changes to the college website, committee structures, committee activities, and communication formats.	Implement posting of key performance data college wide, deploy SharePoint college wide, in conjunction with quality council, suggested changes to the Employee Engagement Survey.	Deployment of SharePoint college wide 2009, all key reports posted to the College web page and Employee Engagement Survey revised/updated –(Fall 2009)

Table 8R2-1

8R4-5: How CCC's Results for Planning Continuous Improvement Compare With the Performance Results of Other Institutions

The Nebraska Community College Association and Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education provide opportunities to compare budgets, capital improvement planning, revenue projections, program review results and retention information. Due to variation in how institutions report measurement planning, the available data is difficult to interpret. To that end the College uses perception data to determine the effectiveness of its planning processes. This can be found in figure 6R2-1.

8I1: How CCC Makes Improvements in the Institutional Planning Process

Over the past several years, multiple improvements have been made to our institution's planning processes. Some examples include:

- Inclusion of AQIP categories as basis for goals of the College
- Through involvement in the HLC Strategy Forums, Action Campaigns have been designed for multi-year projects whereas Action Plans have been designed to be for one year to provide the opportunity for quicker action.
- CQIT now sends agendas via the ALL CCC email communication system. Agendas, minutes, action campaigns and action plans, team member names and photos, charter, history, latest system portfolio, and systems appraisal and quality checkup reports are available on the College website for all internal and external stakeholders to review.
- Academic Three-Year Plans are being aligned with Technology Initiative and Budget Development timelines to streamline the number of requests identified by employees
- CQIT has been instrumental in the following:
  - Assisting in forming action project teams and monitoring progress (2002-present)

- o Evaluating key performance measures annually to seek new improvement opportunities (2002-present)
- o Developing ongoing monitoring of College-wide Suggestion Box for employees and students (2002-present)
- o Assisting in development of college-wide communication training for college employees (2004-2006)
- o Providing guidance on the college's first Six Sigma project (2005)
- o Developing proposals and piloting new professional development programs (2004-2007)
- o Reviewing System Appraisals and developing top priority lists used in planning the upcoming quality initiatives (2006-2007)
- Annually all employees receive a brochure outlining the College's Mission, Vision, Goals, Quality Improvement Campaigns and Strategic Processes

8I2: How CCC's Culture and Infrastructure Help Select Processes to Improve and Set Targets for Improved Performance Results in Planning Continuous Improvement?
CCC has a mature system of continuous quality improvement practices so groups and individuals are encouraged to suggest improvements and provide input on changes. Volunteers are solicited to participate in teams; distance communication systems are in place to facilitate meetings from multiple locations; and clusters work to ensure consistency between campuses. Student and employee surveys are completed regularly; community visits are conducted; and advisory board meetings are held to obtain stakeholder input on programs, services and effectiveness. Based on stakeholder feedback, future refinements in planning processes include the following:

- Improve feedback to employees on specific budget or programming decisions during the budgeting process
- Improve communication to community on facility and other capital improvement needs to encourage continued funding support