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Visions
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AQIP Systems

2010 Portfolio

Northeast Iowa Community College
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Location

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) is a public, non-profit institution located in the northeast corner of Iowa with two main campuses 100 miles apart in Calmar and Peosta. Bordering southeastern Minnesota, northwestern Illinois and southwestern Wisconsin, the NICC district occupies an exceptionally beautiful part of the state.

History

NICC has been in existence for nearly 45 years and has undergone many changes over the years. In 1965, the Iowa General Assembly enacted legislation to create a statewide system of post-secondary schools known as "merged area schools." Iowa Department of Education (IDE) was responsible for developing and overseeing these schools. The state was divided into 16 area school districts. Permission was granted to the school in each district to provide vocational training, draw down federal funds and charge tuition. After much debate, local leaders chose Calmar, Iowa, (population 1,017) as the site for the school in Area One. Calmar was centrally located in the new district and was strategically placed at the intersection of three major highways. This allowed students easy access to instruction.

Local leaders submitted an application to the State Board of Education and Area One Vocational-Technical School was created in 1966. Area One offered its first vocational and general education classes in temporary, rented facilities beginning in August 1967. A 210-acre farm was acquired in December. Construction began on the proposed Calmar campus the following year. Area One covered Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties and sections of Bremer, Buchanan and Mitchell counties. In 1970, Area One adopted Dubuque and Delaware counties and parts of Jackson and Jones counties as a result of Area Eight joining other districts. As the district expanded south, the name Area One was no longer appropriate and the first name change came about. The name was changed to Northeast Iowa Technical Institute (NITI) in 1979.

This expansion also triggered a need for more space. Students from the southern end of the district would have to travel too far to take classes at the Calmar campus. As a temporary solution, NITI rented classrooms in downtown Dubuque. As enrollment grew, the need for a southern campus became more urgent. Ninety five acres of land were purchased in the small town of Peosta, Iowa (population 1,187) in 1974. Construction of the Peosta campus began in 1978 and the campus opened in 1979.

The next major change came in 1988 when NITI received approval from the State Board of Education to offer the Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS) and Associate in Applied Science (ASS) degrees. With this approval, NITI became a comprehensive community college and changed its name to Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC). Since then, the College has continued to evolve. NICC has expanded to include six centers, including two in Dubuque and one center in Cresco, New Hampton, Oelwein and Waukon. The centers offer education and training to students living in those areas and serve as a catalyst for economic development.

In 1997, NICC joined the National Safety Council in creating the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) on the Peosta campus. NECAS provides training to prevent agricultural related injuries and deaths. In 2000, another expansion came from collaborating with the community-based Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and Iowa State University to create the Northeast Iowa Dairy Center on the Calmar campus. The Dairy Center includes a state-of-the-art dairy operation and facilities for instruction and research. Other additions included the new Child Development Centers opening in Peosta in 2003 and in Calmar in 2006. In 2007, the Peosta campus opened a new building to house the Construction Management and Gas Utility Construction and Service programs.

Mission and Vision

NICC's mission and vision statements are based on institutional values and serve as a reminder of what NICC views as important. NICC's goals for student learning and the shaping of the academic climate are reflected in the College's mission and vision statements which are published on the NICC website and in the catalog:

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

- **Vision:** *The Northeast Iowa Community College educational community will live the values of service, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity within a culture of continuous improvement.*
 - **Service:** Dedication to the ever-changing educational needs of our stakeholders
 - **Respect:** Recognition of individual dignity by promoting trust and cooperation
 - **Innovation:** An open climate fostering collaboration, improvement, and advancement of ideas
 - **Stewardship:** Responsible management that sustains resources for the common good
 - **Integrity:** Policies, practices, and actions reflecting responsible institutional citizenship

Accreditation and AQIP

NICC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and IDE. As an institution of higher learning, NICC has always aimed to improve and that culminated in NICC becoming an AQIP accredited member. The [Vision 7 \(V7\) Strategic Plan](#) targets seven areas for improvement and can be found at <http://web.nicc.edu/files/market/V7Summary.pdf>.

Overseeing the seven areas is the Quality Council (QC) that guides the College's improvement efforts. The QC consists of the chairs of seven subcommittees, called the V7 subcommittees. An integral part of AQIP membership is creating a *College Wide Assessment Plan* that explores key processes and assures their alignment with the College's mission, vision, and V7 goals. A draft of the [College Wide Assessment Plan](#) can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/assessment_plan.pdf.

Bond Levy

On December 11, 2007, NICC successfully passed a district-wide bond referendum for \$35 million to be used for infrastructure upgrades, renovation and new buildings. In August 2008, NICC's Town Clock Center for Professional Development, located in Dubuque, was remodeled at \$618,000. This remodel provided the district with a one-stop center for Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and East Central Intergovernmental Agency (ECIA). During the summer of 2009, NICC remodeled Calmar's existing Industrial Technologies (IT) building turning it into a state-of-the-art facility for \$4.8 million. Calmar's IT building houses the Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Commercial-Residential and Industrial Electrician, Computer Applications Technician, and Computer Technology programs. There was also the renovation of the faculty spaces and a classroom in the Max Clark building to provide a more conducive environment for teaching and learning.

In April 2009, NICC broke ground on the Peosta campus to begin the \$7.6 million Industrial Trades building, which was opened in September 2010. This building houses Welding, Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machining, Automotive Technician, Diesel Technician, and Electronics programs. In September 2009, NICC broke ground on the Calmar campus to begin the \$7.5 million Student Center. This renovation and addition to the existing Student Center will house Student Services, Library, Learning Center, Writing Center, Testing Center, Disability Services, Bookstore, Cafeteria, and provost office. All bond-funded improvements and expansions are expected to be completed in 2011.

Funding from the bond is being used to renovate the Health Sciences and Library wing of the main building on the Peosta campus and a full upgrade of NICC's computer technology infrastructure. NICC used part of the bond to fund an audit and master planning of the College's computer infrastructure and architecture. The Instructional and Institutional Technology QC subcommittee played a key role working with the consultants from RSM McGladrey. The resulting plan guided the application of a successful Title III grant awarded recently for a five-year implementation.

In order to help students learn, NICC reflects its mission and vision to stakeholders through credit and non-credit instructional offerings. This includes not only the coursework, but also NICC processes required to support instruction. NICC [programs of study](#) can be found at http://www.nicc.edu/index.php?option=com_program&Itemid=715

Category 1: Helping Students Learn

The College's fall term enrollment has grown significantly from 2006-2010, from a total headcount of 4,788 to 5,146. This represents both part-time and full-time students at all campus and center locations.

The College has many processes in place to determine objectives for learning and development for students, including the following:

- [12 Common Student Learning Objectives](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/common_learning_objectives.pdf) (http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/common_learning_objectives.pdf)
- Program- and course-specific learning objectives
- Collaboration with other agencies, including accrediting and licensing agencies and four-year institutions

To develop new programming, NICC responds quickly to community needs that match local, state, and national workforce trends through the following processes:

- Analyze workforce trends and local gaps
- Engage the NICC Curriculum Committee for initial design and final approval
- Seek input from business and industry
- Align grant-writing activities with program planning to secure funding
- Evaluate new programming regularly and revise as necessary
- Consider flexible delivery options
- Review existing programs and recommend improvements or suspensions to keep programming up-to-date

The College prepares students for learning through placement assessments, prerequisite courses, General Education Development (GED) programming, developmental courses, and learning center support. Students are made aware of these expectations through NICC marketing materials, the NICC website link for future students and the NICC *College Catalog*. In addition, NICC employs a high school relations coordinator, tech-prep coordinator, and career outreach coordinator to regularly communicate NICC opportunities to K-12 students.

At NICC, many departments collaborate to help students match their interests and abilities to programming:

- **Academic Advising**—offers face-to-face and online orientation, as well as one-on-one advising
- **Admissions**—with Marketing, develops clear and targeted program materials
- **Career Services**—offers free career interest inventories
- **Adult transition coordinators**—support non-traditional students explore career options
- **Faculty**—provide attendance tracking and monitor an academic alert system

For underprepared students, NICC offers three learning centers with certified instructors, computer-assisted instruction, peer tutoring, one-on-one tutoring, writing centers, Adult Literacy tutoring for GED and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, computer literacy skills, TRiO Student Support Services, and personal counseling.

Instructors, as well as students, are held to high standards of effective teaching and learning. This begins with the hiring process, in which guidelines of experience and education are clearly set. Following employment, effective teaching is measured through approval of syllabi, adherence to online course guidelines and standards, course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys, classroom observations, program reviews, and monitoring of attrition rates and licensing and certification success. Broader measures include NICC's annual *Alumni Survey* and *Employer Survey*, as well as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) survey.

In addition to credit programming, NICC also offers a full range of non-credit programs to help students learn through Continuing Education and Economic Development. Continuing Education ranges from recreational programs to college preparatory courses. It also provides mandatory continuing education for professions licensed or certified by

the state. Economic Development provides training for new and current employees through job training programs, custom contract training and consulting services, as well as retraining programs for workers who have lost their jobs because of plant closings or layoffs. In FY 2010, 37,365 students enrolled in non-credit programs. NICC non-credit students accounted for 489,068 hours of training.

Co-curricular development goals align with curricular learning objectives as NICC seeks to educate the whole student. For many, college is a life-altering experience and may be a difficult time. To enhance students' experiences at NICC, the College offers co-curricular activities, such as student clubs, professional associations, honor societies, iMPACT student senate and ambassadors, national conferences and competitions.

To measure NICC's progress towards meeting its objectives for student learning, the College regularly collects student performance measurements. The results of these measures identify if students are meeting academic program expectations, personal goals and the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives*. The Teaching Excellence and Innovation QC subcommittee is developing a student e-portfolio that will further measure student achievement. Currently, individual programs collect data and determine student success through course exams, assessment matrices and licensing exams.

Other indicators demonstrating student learning are improved distance learning retention rates, strong transfer student performance compared with native students at the Iowa Regents institutions, and a high job placement rate of NICC graduates as reported on the annual *Alumni Survey*. In addition, SENSE and CCSSE survey data reports satisfactory results for support services.

Recent improvements that NICC has made in helping students learn include the following:

- Improved processes and systems for program reviews through the development of action plans
- Development of a capstone course and e-portfolio to measure students progress toward the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives*
- Development of mandatory training for online instructors
- Facility expansion at Calmar and Peosta campuses
- Move toward mandatory orientation and development of online orientation option
- Formation of Advising Task Force to implement holistic advising
- Focus on mandatory course placement based on reading scores to be implemented in 2011
- Renewed commitment to utilizing student surveys and focus groups to inform decision-making
- Addition of supplemental instruction in the classroom through an Adult Literacy instructor
- Creation of task force of Developmental Education to reform learning center model
- Development of a comprehensive retention plan
- Revision of *Student Conduct Code* to focus on learning and education

The decision to improve specific processes stems from the V7 strategic planning process, which operates as a goal-setting and action framework towards continuous improvement.

Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

NICC's service area was established by IDE. The district includes eight counties and parts of five others, and covers 4,991 square miles, with a 207,627 population. NICC's ability to provide accessible and quality instruction and training is largely dependent on the College's key processes that are separate from instructional programs and serve external stakeholders. These non-instructional processes assist NICC in fulfilling its mission and are based on the results of national trends, internal data on students and NICC communities, Continuing Education and Economic Development feedback from clients, and external studies and benchmarking data such as the CLARUS Market Scan and National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP). Major processes include developing AQIP action

projects, creating the External Relations department, increasing and diversifying revenue sources, establishing a college-wide QC, and maintaining the iMPACT student senate organization.

NICC is striving to improve the measurement of results of its non-instructional processes through a *College Wide Assessment Plan* proposed by the QC. This assessment plan will link with the Board of Trustee's strategic plan and ultimately lead to defining dashboard indicators to measure NICC's progress on the *College Wide Assessment Plan*. This will provide a visual assessment for the College to see the progress of achieving the established non-instructional, as well instructional, goals.

Currently, NICC measures these processes through a variety of formal and informal means:

- QC feedback from faculty and staff through the V7 process
- NCCBP data
- CLARUS Market Scan data, which reveals NICC's perception in the district
- Consultations with other community colleges
- Review of best practices
- Perkin' with Penny community forums
- Continuing Education and Economic Development evaluations and feedback

Successful examples through which the College has utilized non-instructional processes and results to strengthen its services to external stakeholders includes the placement of caps on online courses, development of a merged External Relations department, and the development of a college-wide [Information Technology Master Plan](http://www.nicc.edu/images/pdf/05new_action_project_tech_master_plan_091109.pdf). This plan can be found at http://www.nicc.edu/images/pdf/05new_action_project_tech_master_plan_091109.pdf

Improvements in accomplishing non-instructional objectives have been greatly aided by the streamlined V7 process and structure of the QC and its subcommittees. This process has created a unified voice regarding the College's non-instructional objectives and execution of new processes to accomplish them.

Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

In order to maintain its commitment to responsiveness to student needs, the Student Access and Success QC subcommittee is tasked with identifying changing needs and informing the College. Processes in place to identify these needs include:

- Placement tests
- Learning centers
- Adult transition coordinators
- Advising and Counseling
- Academic Alerts
- CCSSE Survey
- SENSE Survey
- CLARUS Market Scan
- NCCPB
- Annual *Alumni Survey*
- Annual *Employer Survey*

In order to assess and then respond to identified needs, it is imperative that NICC build and maintain relationships with its students. NICC faculty and staff also provide many opportunities to connect with students on campus through classroom interaction, one-on-one tutoring, writing center assistance, financial aid advising, career exploration activities, and meetings with various special group coordinators. Another way NICC builds student relationships and connections is through the Student Life, Diversity and Leadership department and increased outreach to alumni.

Other internal and external stakeholder groups' needs are considered and analyzed regularly as well. This is through relationship-building activities and formalized reporting process, that includes a variety of monthly meetings among stakeholder groups, formal and informal surveys, participation in community and business organizations, All College Day, program reviews, Perkin' with Penny community forums, alumni outreach and events, outreach to the K-12 and four-year college systems, and legislative contacts and visits.

Stakeholder and student satisfaction is measured both formally and informally through the previous activities. Results regarding students' and other stakeholders' satisfaction and building relationships demonstrate both strengths and weaknesses within the College, including the following:

- Communication gap between time of acceptance and enrollment at the College
- Higher than peer performance for providing an academic and social support network
- Desire for more program-specific events and interactive programming
- Steady high school yield rate
- Growth in new student orientation
- Increased student engagement in non-classroom activities
- Increased credit enrollment
- Strong transfer performance of students at Regents institutions
- Increased training through 260E and 260F agreements

NICC is pleased to report much improvement in this category, including the following milestones:

- Implementation of Datatel Colleague Advancement to increase alumni and donor productivity
- Planned 2011 implementation of Lumens system to collect data and allow for online registration for Economic Development and Continuing Education
- Development of benchmarks from the 2008 CCSSE survey results
- Development of first comprehensive retention plan
- Implementation of new satisfaction and gap analysis survey for business and industry piloted by Economic Development and Continuing Education
- Recommendations of Advising Task Force made to vice president of academic affairs and deans
- Restructuring the department of Student Life, Diversity and Leadership
- Improved alumni relations through the development of an online alumni newsletter, annual Alumni Hall of Fame events, and networking opportunities.

Category 4: Valuing People

Key factors in how NICC organizes its human resources include demographics, service areas, position types and training. NICC maintains a close match between employee and student demographics, including both gender and ethnic diversity. Currently, NICC has more women than men in all employee groups. Women comprise 73% of administrators and 64% of Cabinet. They also make up 62% of full-time faculty and 88% of full-time support staff. The ethnic composition of NICC's workforce includes, 98% non-Hispanic whites as compared to the 95.8% non-Hispanic white students, excluding those students who "non-report."

However, the College anticipates that the student population will become more diverse in the next ten years as the district's demographics shift. The College Environment and Diversity QC subcommittee was established to emphasize the importance of a culture of inclusion. An additional goal of this subcommittee is to provide relevant opportunities for personal and professional development through orientation and training, self and supervisor evaluations, recognition and benefit systems, College-wide communication, and safe and caring workplace systems.

NICC also organizes Human Resources into positions that are district-wide as compared to campus or center-based. Another organizational factor is the type of position, such as administrators, supervisors, faculty, or support staff.

There are also Arts and Sciences faculty as compared to Career and Technical faculty and full-time faculty as compared to part-time or adjunct faculty. Specific qualification and skill requirements vary by position type.

NICC measures how it values employees through results of evaluations and surveys, factors like relationships and compliance, and data indicators like percentages and ratios. NICC has a purposeful assessment plan in place, but is still limited in its data results in valuing people. However, employee satisfaction results are positive, as expressed through exit surveys as shown in Table 4-4. As compared to other similar institutions measured by NCCBP in 2007, NICC ranks lower than the national averages including training dollars per full-time employee.

NICC's improvements in valuing people include involving a variety of groups and committees in guiding process and systems improvement. These groups include QC and related subcommittees, professional bargaining units, and College Senate. NICC future improvement plans include improved compensation and classification, staff development, and use of assessment tools.

Category 5: Leading and Communicating

NICC strives to align institutional leadership, communication, decision-making and communication processes with the College mission and vision. The QC monitors this alignment through its oversight of the *V7 Strategic Plan*, which is scheduled for review by the Board in 2011, and the *College Wide Assessment Plan*.

College-wide decision-making is assured through broad representation and involvement in QC, College Senate and important standing committees, as seen in Table 5-2. NICC's decision-making has a strong focus on students and learning, as seen in the *12 Common Learning Objectives*. NICC's leadership assures focus on students and learning by staying abreast of trends in higher education and by maintaining local, state and federal external relationships.

NICC continues to improve in making data-based decisions regarding the improvement to services to students. The director of institutional research generates data reports through a variety of sources. This information is communicated to internal and external stakeholders through publications and face-to-face opportunities and in the process, allows college leadership to set clear and high expectations.

Clear and high expectations promote a culture of excellence. NICC fosters this excellence through supporting employee leadership development. One aspect of leadership development NICC intends to further develop a formal plan for leadership succession.

NICC efforts in this area include acting on 2002 *AQIP Constellation Survey* results to improve College communication and leadership development. NICC continues to improve on leadership development and training and the use of the *College Wide Assessment Plan*.

Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations

NICC aligns key administrative support goals with the mission and values of the College. Support needs are identified through a variety of ways, including assessments, meetings, evaluations and the V7 process. Key institutional support processes are managed by specific departments, as shown in Table 6-1. One key support process is campus safety, overseen by the College-wide Emergency Management Team.

NICC measures support service processes through data collected by surveys, like SENSE and CCSSE; reports, and high school yield and enrollment; scores, like ACCUPLACER assessment; use, like library circulation; and by participation numbers in events, like new student orientation.

One NICC support service with wide influence is the Business Services department. Business Services performance result is the successful balance of a decrease in state aid with tuition and grant revenue. An additional performance result for this area is successful management of bond funds toward facility improvements and infrastructure needs.

NCCBP comparisons with other colleges reveal that NICC is above average in ratios of student to professional staff in some key support services, like financial aid services, and below national averages in services like career services. However, NICC ranks average in its use of funds for employee development and training.

NICC improvements in this area include improved data collection and decision-making, diversification of revenue sources, and communication. NICC's communication culture largely revolves around meetings, including QC subcommittee meetings.

Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness

NICC is working to continuously improve its data collection, distribution and management. The V7 strategic planning process has guided NICC's improvement in making data-driven decisions. The V7 focuses efforts on seven institutional objectives, with strategic goals for each objective. One of NICC's AQIP action projects is the development of a *College Wide Assessment Plan* to measure the College's progress toward its strategic goals.

This assessment plan will be driven by the College's strategic plan, and data will be used in the following ways:

- NICC will review quantitative research from the Community College Research Center, the Lumina Foundation, and the Teacher College Record Journal to stay abreast of national trends.
- The director of institutional research will collaborate with other community college institutional researchers to identify pertinent issues regarding the generation, reliability and interpretation of data and to promote continued research and reflection.
- NICC staff will review quantitative data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC) to compare NICC to other institutions
- The Student Access and Success QC subcommittee will monitor and set goals for student recruitment and retention.
- NICC will conduct program reviews of the career-technical programs.
- NICC will review institutional data to inform curriculum improvements.

As part of the V7 Planning and Continuous Improvement objective, the College hired an institutional researcher in 2005. As a result, processes are in place to communicate data to various stakeholders throughout the College through data profiles, trend studies, and comparative data reports. These are shared with faculty and staff via all-campus emails, special data requests, and Cabinet reports. Additionally, the implementation of Datatel allows for trained users to create and/or access queries for departmental goal setting and decision-making.

Results regarding how the College measures effectiveness will be assessed through the analysis of the *College Wide Assessment Plan*. Comparatively, data from IDE shows that NICC is similar to other Iowa community colleges on several measures of student demographics and in the performance of its Adult Literacy program. Comparative data from the CCSSE and the NCCPB also provide results for NICC to measure effectiveness.

Improvements in this category have resulted in NICC's hiring of a director of institutional researcher, the establishment of a Datatel Support Specialist, enrollment in NCCPB, and participation in the CLARUS Market Scan.

Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

Since joining AQIP in 2002, NICC has focused on creating a culture of continuous improvement. Along with developing a new strategic plan, the president and her team assessed the College's committee structure and replaced the cumbersome three-committee structure with one QC. This structure for annual planning remains in place today and reflects the following:

- **Goals**—Strategic priorities are identified, and the requested resources for new initiatives and/or equipment and plant fund needs are aligned with the College mission and vision.
- **Processes**—QC has oversight responsibility with Cabinet having final approval. Both short- and long-term planning is encouraged.

NICC's strategic plan, V7 process, and AQIP action projects guide the selection and prioritization of short- and long-term strategies. To coordinate across various organizational levels, NICC's planning process starts at the grassroots level with departments developing action plans and moves up to the QC for review and recommendations to the Cabinet and Board of Trustees.

NICC's measures of effectiveness of the planning process include the number of:

- Departments utilizing data
- Proposals linked to the College vision, mission and strategic plan
- Projects funded and implemented
- Projects meeting performance benchmarks and outcomes.

Since embracing AQIP, the College has achieved the following results:

- Revised the planning process of the strategic plan
- Provided data for planning and decision-making through Institutional Research
- Developed a *Facilities Master Plan* with input from all college employees
- Expanded the use of the College's web portal, Xpress
- Created a College Senate
- Developed an *Information Technology Master Plan*.

Over the next 1-3 years, the College intends to improve further by reviewing and updating the strategic plan annually, use data in all decision-making, increase faculty certification, implement the enrollment management plan, and use the *Educational Master Plan* to guide programming.

NICC is focused on continuous quality improvement. In 2008, NICC was particularly focused on the V7 goal of continuous improvement. During that year the College accomplished the following:

- Revised the planning process of the strategic plan
- Created the QC and the seven subcommittees
- Revised the project proposal form
- Published *Making Visions Reality* newsletters
- Held training for the QC
- Held information sessions for faculty and staff on AQIP, strategic planning process, and accreditation
- Provided training to all supervisors on the planning cycle
- Visited advisory boards to provide an overview of the College's accreditation through AQIP
- Planned for interface with College Senate

Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

NICC cultivates numerous external and internal partnerships that contribute to NICC's effectiveness. The College prioritizes these partnerships by how well they match the College's mission, vision and strategic plan. Additionally,

the College assesses how well the partnerships fit the needs of the communities and how feasible they are in terms of required resources and personnel.

NICC measures its relationships with partners in a variety of ways, including:

- Quantitative measurements of attendance, enrollment, participation
- TRiO-Upward bound success rates
- High school enrollment and percentage of student body
- New 260E and 260F agreements
- Hours of continuing education enrollment
- Employment rates of students
- Maintenance of accreditation of College and programs
- Budget figures demonstrating cost-effectiveness
- State reports and surveys of community colleges
- Fundraising success
- Grant writing success
- Alumni participation
- Students at NICC receiving services from other agencies

NICC continues to improve methods for keeping track of its many collaborations. The College encounters new opportunities for collaboration every day, and it needs to carefully decide which ones will help achieve the mission and vision and promote the strategic plan. Improved dialogue and documentation have occurred in recent years, but continued improvement in this area is necessary.

NICC has improved the College's ability to use data in decision-making, through the use of Datatel. NICC continues to work toward fully utilizing Datatel capabilities toward measuring collaborative relationships. Currently, NICC can demonstrate improvements in building collaborative relationships through a number of successes:

- Successful passage of the 2007 \$35 million bond referendum
- Work by the Partnerships and Collaborations QC subcommittee to ascertain the satisfaction level of key stakeholders through surveys and other measurement tools
- Creation of a Grants office that expanded collaboration with internal and external stakeholders

Targets for improved performance results in building collaborative relationships include:

- Increasing the percentage of high school students taking college-level courses who eventually enroll in a degree or diploma program at NICC.
- Increasing innovative collaborations with high schools, such as academies and charter schools.
- Increasing the number of joint admissions agreements with other colleges and the number of students enrolling in joint admissions programs.
- Increasing the number of accredited programs at NICC.
- Increasing the number of new programs responding to local workforce needs.

AQIP Category1: Helping Students Learn

Processes (P)

1P1. Determining Common Objectives for Learning and Development

In 1997, the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* were written by the Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Committee (IEO), which was replaced by the Teaching Excellence and Innovation QC subcommittee. This subcommittee now has oversight and the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* remain one measure of student learning.

1P2. Determining Specific Program Learning Objectives

In addition to the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives*, NICC maintains program specific learning objectives. The vice president of academic affairs and the program dean take the lead in determining these objectives. If it is an existing program, they collaborate with faculty to develop appropriate objectives. When new programs are developed, an industry-based advisory board composed of experts from the field is created to help identify.

NICC also collaborates with accrediting and licensing agencies, transfer institutions, and business and industry partners. If the program is accredited, certified or licensed, it must meet specific standards. NICC uses these standards to develop learning objectives for the program. The program and its courses also need to meet the expectations of transfer institutions. When articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities are developed, the receiving institutions often provide learning objectives.

Advisory boards play a critical role in determining program-specific learning objectives in vocational and technical programs, including student learning outcomes that serve as the culminating demonstration of learning as applied in the workplace.

Each program maintains course guides that list course-specific learning objectives. The Curriculum Committee oversees these course guides and approves any additions, deletions or revisions.

1P3. Design of New Programs and Courses

NICC constantly reviews local, state, and national demographic and workforce trends to determine how to best serve the communities. This means developing new programs that match these trends. For instance, northeast Iowa is seeing a growing trend in renewable energy. By securing \$2.1 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and in 2010, NICC was able to launch a Wind Turbine Repair Technician program and various continuing education renewable energy programs.

NICC offers new programming based on the recommendations of area industry partners. One new program in development is the AAS Chemical Technology degree, which will prepare students to work in every aspect of the chemical process industry, from basic research to hazardous waste management. Another program in development is a Veterinary Science Technology program, intended for students interested in pursuing careers in areas of public health, food safety, emerging infectious diseases, and livestock health and well being.

The most important part of beginning a new program is verifying that a workforce need exists. Administrators and faculty review labor market trend data to ensure that a new program will meet an anticipated job demand. They may establish an ad hoc advisory board with experts from around the state to help determine the feasibility of starting a new program. The College follows the same process when developing new program-specific learning objectives:

The Curriculum Committee plays a vital role in developing new programs and courses. The committee participates in

the initial design and final approval of all programs and courses and ensures that student learning and success is at the center of new programming. NICC staff review the demographics of students likely to enter the program and plans accordingly. For instance, some programs may tend to attract displaced workers, while others may appeal to recent high school graduates planning to transfer to four-year schools.

1P4. Design of Responsive Academic Programming

All career programs receive regular input from supervisory and advisory committees. Additionally, regular program evaluations provide information regarding the effectiveness of academic programming. Flexibility in delivery format and course scheduling provides responsiveness to student needs including hybrid, online, and a comprehensive selection of Iowa Communications Network (ICN) courses to respond to the site-bound needs of rural students.

1P5. Determining Required Preparation

NICC has an open-door policy. The question is never if a student has a place at NICC, but rather where the student fits into the College's educational program offerings.

Because of NICC's commitment to open access and student success, the College uses ACCUPLACER as the primary course placement tool. Before enrolling, students are required to test for reading, writing and math.

Proper placement improves student success in meeting both *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* and course-specific objectives. NICC routinely utilizes the writing and math placement scores. Based on data from the 2009 SENSE survey, the use of reading scores as a factor in improving student retention is under review by the Learning Center Task Force.

Table 1-1 shows the cut-off scores used to determine placement in specific writing, reading and math courses. When students come with other placement tests, such as the ACT, SAT, ASSET, or COMPASS equivalency charts are used to determine their placement in NICC courses.

Table 1-1 Placement Scores	
If ACCUPLACER Score is:	COURSE PLACEMENT is:
Writing	
2-5	Communication – Reading and Writing Intensive ESOL if applicable
6-7	Foundations of Writing
8-12	Composition I (college level)
Reading	
Below 66	Communication – Reading and Writing
66-120	College Level Courses
Math	
Arithmetic Test: Below 80 Elem. Algebra Test: Below 44	Pre-Algebra Math Fundamentals
Arithmetic Test: 80-120 Elem. Algebra Test: 44-59	Introductory Algebra
Elem. Algebra Test: 60-74	Intermediate Algebra (Remedial) Math for Liberal Arts (college level)
Elem. Algebra Test: 75 or above	College Algebra Precalculus

Source: NICC Concordance Tables

Another method for ensuring student readiness for college coursework is to require successful completion of prerequisite courses. For instance, in order to advance to higher-level communication classes, students must complete ENG 105: College Composition I with the grade of a C- or better.

In the same way, some program courses require specific prerequisites. It may be completion of a course with a qualifying grade, or it may be a specific score on a placement test. For example, nursing students must have a qualifying ACCUPLACER math score before they can enroll in the math-intensive course Dosage Calculations.

Admission to the College is open, although students may not be immediately admitted to a chosen program due to identified deficiencies. NICC offers students many opportunities to work toward meeting the entrance requirements of their desired program through GED programming, developmental education classes, drop-in brush up classes, learning center support, and dual enrollment in transfer credit classes.

1P6. Communication of Required Preparation and Learning and Development Objectives

Prospective and current students are made aware of the expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives in a variety of ways. All marketing materials emphasize that NICC is an open-door college that welcomes all learners.

Both current and prospective students can find information on the NICC website at <http://www.nicc.edu/>. The website offers an easy-to-use menu designed with specific types of users in mind. For instance, there are links entitled "Current Students" and "Future Students." By following the appropriate path, each type of student can find relevant information about admission, registration, and program and degree requirements.

Students can access the complete NICC College Catalog on the website. In an attempt to "go green," paper copies are only printed internally by request. Student can locate comparable information in program-specific brochures and website links. Each brochure provides entrance requirements, tuition and fees, career opportunities academic requirements and graduation requirements.

NICC finds personal communication is the best way to help prospective students understand NICC expectations and advantages. The College maintains regular contact with every high school in the district. The high school relations, tech-prep, and career outreach coordinators formed a partnership in 2009 named EXCEL and these employees, as well as the Admissions Representatives, make regular visits to area high schools to share information with principals, guidance counselors, teachers and prospective students.

Distance Learning web pages include explanations and expectations for all forms of distance learning courses: online, ICN and hybrid. The online "quiz" link allows students to assess their own readiness for distance learning courses. The new "FAQ" link helps students understand the concept of distance learning and prepares them for what to expect as a distance learner.

When prospective students visit campus, Admissions Representatives and Intake Advisors meet with prospective students and discuss program offerings with them. Prospective students are encouraged to participate in bimonthly Welcome Wednesdays, a half-day event offering a campus tour, interaction with faculty, placement testing and information regarding admission, registration and student support services.

NICC now offers face-to-face and online orientation options for students. Orientation allows students the opportunity to meet with faculty, staff and other students to learn about programs, degree requirements, policies and success strategies. Due to the College's participation in the SENSE survey and Entering Student Engagement Institute (ESSI) in 2010, approval has been granted to implement a required Orientation course beginning fall 2011 term.

As recommended by the National Association of Academic Advisors (NACADA), advising is required for all students in all terms of their enrollment at the College. The advising process has gradually been moving away from course scheduling and toward a more holistic approach. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor early and then utilize the online self-registration process. In addition, an advising syllabus was developed by the NICC Intake Advisors and was made available to students in the spring 2010 term. This syllabus delineates the rights and responsibilities of students and advisors in the advising process. It also provides strategies for student success and College and community resources available to students.

1P7. Assisting with Program Selection

NICC is committed to helping students select a program that matches their needs, interests and abilities. This is accomplished in several ways:

- Clear and targeted materials that accurately portray NICC's programs and expectations for students
- Career interest inventories, both online and paper formats, to help students discover career paths and majors
- Academic advising to assist students in focusing on a program path
- Adult transition coordinators to support non-traditional students in exploring potential careers

Once students have chosen a field, their ACCUPLACER test scores serve as one determinant of their level of preparation. Many of these students utilize learning center services to prepare for retaking the tests. Attendance tracking and academic alert systems also let staff members know if students are succeeding in their studies and provides opportunity for NICC to offer additional support.

1P8. Assisting Underprepared Students

NICC is seeing a growing number of students who are under prepared for college level work. NICC serves and supports these students in several ways:

- Learning centers provide individual or group tutoring, instruction in English, math, reading, science, study skills, test-taking, time management and more
- Peer tutoring is arranged with peer tutors recruited from students who have already mastered a course
- Writing centers assist NICC students with any writing-related questions or needs
- Adult Basic Education instruction includes career-based classes for students with learning challenges and academically-oriented classes for students who want to "brush up" on skills or gain the GED
- The Adult Literacy program also provides ESOL classes, high school diploma completion, and National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC)
- Adult transition coordinators work with under prepared students who often have been out of school for many years or are first-time college attendees
- TRiO Student Support Services provide intensive support for program-qualified students, many who are first-generation students
- Counselors assist students with time management, stress management, social skills and other issues that interfere with classroom performance

1P9. Detecting and Addressing Learning Styles

NICC provides faculty training in diverse learning styles and offers coursework in a variety of mediums, including face-to-face, online and hybrid classes to meet students' preferred learning methods.

1P10. Addressing Special Needs

NICC operates in accordance with the federal American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and related laws. In 2010, NICC served a growing number of students with disabilities. Disability Services is overseen by two full-time coordinators located at the Calmar and Peosta campuses. If students with disabilities self identify, NICC staff will assist in providing necessary accommodations to qualified students. In addition to serving students, the disability coordinators mentor NICC faculty and staff regarding disabilities, federal regulations and accommodation methods. Examples of accommodative services include extended time testing, mobility assistance, enlarged-type documents and sound amplification.

1P11. Cross-College Communication for Effective Teaching and Learning

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

Effective teaching starts with the hiring process. NICC hires faculty candidates who meet the standards set forth in Iowa law. In 2010, 95% of faculty had a master's degree or above, 65% of faculty members teaching in career and technical areas had a bachelor's degree or above, and 100% of the vocational faculty had three or more years experience in their professional field. What sets successful candidates apart is their dedication to teaching and passion about their discipline. Successful teachers utilize best practices and research-based pedagogies that spark student engagement.

NICC measures and documents effective teaching in several ways:

- All faculty develop a syllabus for each course, including course objectives, textbook and materials, assignments, and grading criteria.
- Distance Learning works to ensure consistency among online and hybrid courses through online course guidelines and standards and a rubric approval process.
- Several committees developed course evaluation tools and student satisfaction surveys for online courses.
- An ICN technician conducts one-on-one training sessions for all ICN instructors.
- Each department dean observes and evaluates new full-time and part-time regular faculty twice per year for the first three years, then once every three years.
- Deans keep an open-door policy and encourage students to share any concerns about their experiences in specific courses.
- At the end of each semester, students complete anonymous course evaluations. The evaluations measure student satisfaction with course objectives, classroom resources and instructor performance. The supervising dean reviews the course evaluations and provides the instructor with a written summary.
- Regular program reviews measure the effectiveness of career programs at least every five years.
- Enrollment, attrition, graduation, transfer and employment rates are analyzed and strategies for improvement are explored.
- Programs are reviewed in relationship to meeting licensing and certification requirements.
- *Alumni Survey* is administered to solicit feedback from students about their perception of the education they received and whether or not their expectations were met.
- *Employer Survey* is administered to employers to gauge their perceptions of student knowledge and entry-level competencies.
- The CCSSE survey was conducted in 2006 and 2008 and the SENSE survey conducted in 2009. Both surveys assess the quality of education and support services at community colleges.

1P12. Building an Effective and Efficient Course Delivery System

NICC seeks to provide an effective and efficient course delivery system. A number of individuals including faculty, academic deans, advisors and the vice president of academic affairs are involved in making decisions about course delivery. Guidelines are developed in accordance with The Higher Learning Commission's Best Practices for Student Success.

When looking at course delivery, NICC uses a specific framework to guide decision-making. General education courses are scheduled during convenient times. Common prerequisite courses are also scheduled during condensed sessions such as winterim, May term, and summer.

Each NICC program has an educational plan that specifies courses and course sequence. NICC staff members review these plans to make sure courses are offered in sequence and at appropriate frequency. If a student is off track and needs a course to graduate, NICC deans may grant an independent study called Special Arrangement.

NICC revised the course delivery system in 2007 to improve efficiency. Schedulers use an approach called "precision scheduling." Precision scheduling means data is used to analyze student needs and then target courses to meet those needs. Precision scheduling has many advantages, such as reducing the need to cancel or add sections at the last minute, reducing last-minute hiring or re-assignment of faculty, and helping attract and retain good adjunct faculty by offering them a fairly stable and predictable schedule. Efforts in precision scheduling have been effective. For example, the fall 2007 semester indicated 56 cancelled courses compared to 108 cancellations in fall 2005 and 83 cancellations in fall 2006. The number of students impacted by cancellations has decreased from 360 in fall 2005 to less than 85 in fall 2009.

NICC's course management system and related technology are continuously assessed, enhanced and upgraded to meet student needs and organizational requirements. For example, in 2009 NICC hired RSM McGladrey to assess the College's technological infrastructure, hardware, software and training. The resulting report laid out a framework for NICC to improve its ability to offer technologically-advanced coursework. In relationship to these needs, NICC's Board of Trustees accepted the *Information Technology Master Plan* in January 2010. The plan is currently being implemented and will be funded by Bond Levy revenues as well as a recently awarded Title III grant.

1P13. Ensuring Program and Course Effectiveness

NICC has a program review process that looks at programs on a rotational basis. All career programs go through a program review every five years, with some program reviews scheduled more often, as determined by licensing and certifying agencies. A variety of individuals assist in a program review. Program faculty compile data and complete an evaluation report, then share their results with the supervising dean. The vice president of academic affairs oversees the program review process with assistance from a panel of three faculty and staff members from outside the program under review. During the program review, the panel has the opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the program all with the focus on quality improvement.

1P14. Changing or Discontinuing Programs and Courses

The program review team looks at enrollment data, graduation data, curriculum, feedback from students and employers, advisory board recommendations, labor trends, marketing strategies, and financial status. The goal is to highlight the strengths of the program and make recommendations for improvement. If a program appears to be struggling, the vice president of academic affairs can request a viability study. The viability study is an independent review of the program along with recommendations for improvement or program suspension. This review helps the president's Cabinet make a recommendation on the future of the program. If the recommendation is to suspend or discontinue the program, faculty are notified and consulted about other teaching opportunities within NICC.

1P15. Determining and Addressing Learning Support Needs

With the College's expanding uses of data to drive decision-making and program design, it is moving from anecdotal evidence that it is addressing student learning support needs, to a stronger culture of hard evidence. QC and other committees are utilizing CCSSE, SENSE, and NCCBP survey data as well as an expanded use of brief, online surveys and face-to-face focus groups with NICC students. NICC addresses student learning support needs in several ways including mandatory testing for course placement in math and writing, Disability Services, learning centers, writing centers, intake advising, personal counseling, adult transition services, Distance Learning, online tutoring, Adult Basic Education, and Continuing Education and Economic Development programs.

In addition, NICC libraries provide heavily utilized learning support services for both students and faculty. The Wilder Library on the Calmar campus holds more than 18,000 books, 275 periodicals, and 4,000 audio-visual titles. The Burton Payne Library on the Peosta campus holds more than 13,000 print titles, 190 periodicals, and 2,000 audio-visual titles. Both libraries solicit input from faculty and students as to what types of resources would help them in their teaching and learning. NICC library staff are readily available to help students and faculty locate materials and are dedicated to making students lifelong learners by teaching information literacy skills.

In order to determine which resource and services to provide to the patron community, the library staff reviews the curriculum syllabi, interlibrary loan requests, catalog search history and reference questions. This information combine with current issues and patron requests aid in the evaluation of the collection, ensuring it is up to date and adequately meets the needs of the patrons. Due to different learning styles and needs, the libraries provide information in print, audio, visual and electronic formats. Even though there are different courses at each campus, the libraries act as one with both collections available on one catalog. Materials are easily shared with video streaming, online databases and vehicle transportation of physical materials.

Through funding from the successful Bond Levy, both the Calmar and Peosta libraries will be expanded in space, resources and opportunities for student, faculty and staff engagement. These state-of-the-art facilities are expected to become the central gathering places on each campus.

1P16. Aligning Co-curricular Development Goals

NICC seeks to educate the whole person. There is more to being a college student than just attending courses and working toward a degree. For many, it is a life-altering experience that involves a new way of looking at the world and themselves. NICC supports and encourages students in that process. The College provides a number of co-curricular activities designed to enhance the curriculum and help students develop other skills and aptitudes.

Student Clubs, Professional Associations, and Honor Societies—The College recently revised the student club structure into three categories; student clubs, Professional Associations and Honor societies. All of these groups provide students with engagement opportunities outside the classroom. Students are able to develop leadership, teamwork, communication and social skills. Service learning is a focus for student groups and a requirement for club recognition. Student Life, Diversity and Leadership sponsors an annual service trip over spring break which provides selected students the chance to experience different environments, cultures, and socioeconomic groups. Students participating in some of these clubs travel to state and national conferences and competitions, thus testing and honing their skills and expanding their horizons. Many students return with state and national awards, such as the Dairy Club and Phi Theta Kappa, which fuels their interest in learning.

Student Government—Both the Calmar and Peosta campuses maintain iMPACT student senate comprised of students from all areas of the student body. iMPACT is managed by the director and assistant director of Student Life, Diversity and Leadership and seeks to develop and promote activities that enrich the social, cultural and academic atmosphere at NICC and provide opportunities for growth in leadership, communication and responsibility. The iMPACT teams also provide extensive Student Life, Diversity and Leadership programming designed to help all

students develop a sense of belonging. In collaboration with Admissions, iMPACT also provides a student ambassador function for NICC. iMPACT students represent the College at recruiting fairs, community events and college functions. They provide campus tours for prospective students and assist with new student orientations.

1P17. Determining Awarding of Degrees and Certificates

NICC works closely with other educational institutions to ensure that students transfer successfully and succeed in other settings. The College participates with other community colleges and the Iowa Regent institutions by using a common course numbering system to facilitate transfer from one institution to another. NICC also collaborates in the following ways:

- Offers a Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract with select institutions that guarantees that NICC students will be admitted with junior status to many four-year colleges and universities
- Maintains joint admission agreements with a number of colleges and universities in Iowa
- Reviews the Iowa Regents Transfer Report to demonstrate how students transferring from NICC perform compared to “native” students and students from other community colleges
- Reviews the annual [Alumni Survey](#) to identify if NICC graduates are employed in their field or a related field, unemployed, or pursuing additional education. The survey also gives graduates an opportunity to state if they felt prepared to enter their profession and can be found at http://www.nicc.edu/images/Career_Services/fy09alumnisurveyfinal.pdf
- Reviews the annual *Employer Survey* surveys regarding whether employers have hired or would hire NICC graduates. If they employ one or more graduates, employers are asked to assess the NICC graduates’ knowledge, skills, and overall preparedness for entering the workforce.
- Conducts a business skills survey through Economic Development every three years to determine business skills shortage. This survey also determines needs in relation to the development of business professional training programs and input for credit programs.

1P18. Design Processes for Assessing Learning

NICC believes that it is important to assess student learning progress. Faculty are encouraged to clearly explain their grading criteria in their syllabi. All courses are expected to meet at least one of the *12 Common Learning Objectives* and many courses meet more than one of the twelve objectives. In addition to the *12 Common Learning Objectives* students are assessed on classroom performance and industry certification standards. The more information students know up front, the better they can prepare themselves to meet the criteria. NICC faculty do not grade on attendance, however, many faculty use participation as one of their grading criteria. They clearly explain the criteria for participation.

Instructors use both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment gives students feedback on their work while they still have an opportunity to make improvements. It focuses on the process of learning. Summative assessment focuses on outcomes and usually consists of a grade for a project or course. Many faculty are using more summative assessment to display the mastery of the subject material that is being taught. More faculty are using reflective portfolios that the students complete at the end of the course that provides a course long assessment. A capstone class has been developed to help students complete a degree long e-portfolio of the *12 Common Learning Objectives*.

NICC faculty use a variety of assessment tools, depending on the program and course. Some of the assessment tools include pre- and post-testing, background knowledge probe, focused listing or minute paper, muddiest point, memory matrix, models, concept maps, application cards, student-generated test questions, essays, special projects, presentation, portfolios, self-assessments, and learning logs or journals.

Results (R)

1R1. Measuring Learning and Development

NICC collects a number of student performance measures from the time students enroll to the time they graduate and beyond. [Table 1-2](#) identifies these measures and can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/student_performance_measures.pdf.

1R2. Performance Results for Common Learning and Development Objectives

The *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* are embedded into departmental goals, course guides and course competencies. Every NICC course must address at least one of the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* with the goal that each student will have had exposure to all 12 by the completion of their program. The Teaching Excellence and Innovation QC subcommittee developed a student portfolio of learning objectives and corresponding course and implementation of that process in its early stages.

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

1R3. Performance Results for Program Learning Objectives

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

Additionally, NICC is pleased at the high student pass rates on their nursing board exams. The NCLEX exams show that NICC students score within 95% of the national average on both the Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN) exams. [Table 1-3](#) shows NICC students' results on the PN exam and RN exam. [Other results](#) can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/board_pass_rates.pdf

NCLEX Exam Results		
	PN	RN
2006	100%	88%
2007	100%	86%
2008	94%	84%
2009	100%	87%

1R4. Evidence of Acquired Knowledge and Skills

Fulfilling graduation requirements and passing required licensure exams indicate a minimum knowledge and skills base. Other indicators include students' performance at transfer institutions. The fall 2006 Regents Transfer Report from Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa shows that NICC students fare well compared to "native" students. Their cumulative grade point average is listed in [Table 1-8](#).

Table 1-8 NICC Transfer Student Performance			
Cumulative Grade Point Average - Fall 2009			
	NICC Students	IA CC Students	"Native" Students
Iowa State University	2.74	2.7	2.96
University of Northern Iowa	2.93	2.86	3.09
University of Iowa	2.92	2.79	3.03

Source: Board of Regents Transfer Student Report

Another indicator that students have acquired the knowledge and skills they need comes from the *Alumni Survey*. The survey provides information about NICC graduates' employment and education status. Table 1-9 shows the results for NICC graduates with technical degrees and diplomas.

Table 1-9 District Graduate Placement				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Graduates Employed in Related Field	55%	59%	58%	66%
Graduates Pursuing Continuing Education	34%	27%	24%	16%
Graduates, Employer Satisfaction	98%	85%	95%	96%

Source: NCCBP Trend Data

1R5. Performance Results for Support Processes

Both SENSE and CCSSE survey report satisfaction rates for support services. NICC has limited results regarding the impact of processes related to helping students learn, however, Student Services has begun the process of developing student learning outcomes for support services and will have those in place by fall 2011. Through CCSSE and SENSE, the College has collected usage statistics, indicating a clear need for these support services.

Survey data provides insight into how these support services translate into academic success. In 2008, the College hired a consultant to assess ways to improve provided accommodations. One key action taken was changing the Disability Service Coordination to full-time positions on each campus. A Learning Center Task Force continues to identify the overlap in NICC learning centers, writing centers, Adult Literacy and Developmental Education students. This process has taken several attempts, but an understanding of the overlap and best practices continues to inform us how to best allocate resources in a manner that will serve the remedial and support needs of students.

1R6. Comparison of Performance with Other Institutions

One measure of how NICC students compare to students from other institutions can be found in their performance in national contests. NICC students do especially well in the agricultural area. For instance, NICC competed at the fall 2010 National Post-Secondary Dairy Judging Contests at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin, against nineteen two-year colleges from across the country. NICC placed first nationally in Practical Application and third nationally in Traditional Judging. The students also received numerous individual and teams awards. As a result of their placing, the students qualified to advance to the June 2011 International Judging Contest in Scotland.

Improvements (I)

111. Improvement in Helping Students Learn

With the College's increased focus on data driven decision-making and work of the QC subcommittees, and improved communication, NICC has made great strides in systematically working toward quality improvements in and out of the classroom. A few examples of such improvements include:

Program Reviews—One way NICC has improved processes and systems for helping students learn is by creating action plans following program reviews. Each program review identifies strengths and areas needing improvement. NICC establishes goals and action plans aimed at continuous improvement. The action plans define the task, assign responsibility, determine the resources needed, list activities to be accomplished, and provide for yearly follow-up.

Portfolio for 12 Common Student Learning Objectives—A Capstone Course which includes an e-portfolio, was created by the Teaching Excellence and Innovation QC subcommittee in 2010. This Capstone Course will help students identify and document their own *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* through coursework and out-of-class activities.

Online Training— was developed in 2008 and made mandatory for all online instructors. This includes rubric standards for consistency and improvement in course design and delivery. An online orientation has also been developed for students to better ensure student success. One of the single greatest improvements at NICC has been the expansion of online and hybrid instruction, which began at NICC in 2000. The first classes were taught by four instructors and attended by 52 students. In 2009, NICC switched from using WebCT to Xpress. The decision to switch Learning Management Systems (LMS) was made based on a solid relationship with CampusCruiser, familiarity with the product, and ease of use for faculty and students. In fall 2010, NICC reported 3,158 registrations in 168 online/hybrid courses. Eighty instructors are currently teaching these courses. The student population of the online/hybrid courses has grown to become the second largest "campus" in the NICC district.

Facility Development and Remodel—NICC has expanded and improved facilities district-wide. As of fall 2010, the following building space improvements and expansions have been completed or are in progress:

- The remodel of the Industrial Technology building on the Calmar campus.
- The creation of a new Industrial Trades building on the Peosta campus.
- The expansion of the Calmar campus Student Center, including Student Services and the Library.
- The remodel of the Health, Sciences and Library wing on the Peosta campus.
- The creation of a 28-acre Outdoor Learning Lab on the Peosta campus.
- The opening of the Oelwein Regional Academy of Math and Science (RAMS) center to the public, promoting math and science education in the district for high school students, faculty and the general public.
- The expansion of the Calmar campus Dairy Center, including two new science labs and two related classrooms.

Online and Required Orientation—online orientation was developed in FY 2010 and is open for use at this time. The College recently approved requiring orientation for all new students at the recommendation of the Student Access and Success QC subcommittee and based on SENSE data.

Renewed Focus on Holistic Advising—based on CCSSE and SENSE data that demonstrated student need for earlier, intrusive and holistic advising, the College formed a cross departmental Advising Task Force to review the current processes. As a result of the task force work, the advisors will be assigned at the time of acceptance to the college, advisors will make regular contact with their advisees, and the focus of advising session will be less scheduling based and more goal and academic planning focused.

Student Learning Objectives in Student Services—Student Services recently started developing departmental student learning objectives and will complete and begin assessing these objectives fall 2011 term.

Reading Placement—As a result of participating in the SENSE survey in 2009 and ESSI in 2010, the College is reviewing the need for mandatory course placement for reading. This implementation is scheduled for fall 2011.

Student Focus Groups—the College has a renewed commitment to using student surveys and focus groups to inform NICC decision-making regarding student needs and the learning environment. This process began with multiple focus groups regarding implementation of mandatory orientation.

Supplemental Instruction—Through IDE funding, the College secured an Adult Literacy for the Workforce in Iowa (ALWI) grant which allowed us to pilot placing an instructor within a career program to provide supplemental instruction and support for those students. Due to the success of this pilot study, NICC is seeking to secure funding to expand.

Comprehensive Retention Plan—The College Retention Plan and an AQIP Action Plan is ready to be unveiled to the larger College population fall 2010. The project was delayed for six months in order to use SENSE data.

Revision of the NICC Student Conduct Code—The *Student Conduct Code* and corresponding documents were redesigned in 2009 to merge both academic and behavioral misconduct issues and to place a stronger focus on education and learning rather than discipline and sanctions. All misconduct and incident reports are funneled through the dean of Student Services or associate dean of Student Services who monitor and track behavioral issues. Students with multiple misconduct reports or reports of dangerous patterns of behavior are reviewed by a newly developed Behavioral Assessment Team.

Creating an environment of high expectations—Another focus resulting from SENSE data analysis is a renewed commitment to creating an environment of high expectation for students in and out of the classroom as well as for all employees of the College.

112. Setting Targets for Helping Students Learn

NICC culture embraces ongoing review of its institutional infrastructure. The QC helps college programs and departments determine improvement target areas. The target areas are then tied to the budget process through V7 financial requests. Utilizing the V7 process as a framework has assisted in department goal setting and action plans, moving towards continuous improvement.

In 2008, NICC reviewed all programs to determine if they met program goals and helped students transfer to other colleges or move onto jobs in their field. In 2009 NICC achieved the following:

- Implementation of precision scheduling.
- Achieved Department of Education approval for the Wind Turbine Repair Technician program and CNC Machinist Technician program.
- Met or exceeded average scores for national and state board or licensing exams.
- Met or exceeded average GPA for transfer students.
- Maintained high rates of employment among graduates.
- Increased the percentage of students working in their field of study or a related field.
- Implementation of on-going training and professional development opportunities for distance learning faculty.

In 2010, NICC is using assessment results from SENSE and CCSSE and intends to improve services through:

- Development of the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* for Student Services functions.
- Development and implementation of mandatory new student orientation.

- Assignment of an advisor to each student, at the time of acceptance to the college.
- Review of remedial and support services and implementation of best practices in such services.

NICC shares the results and improvement priorities with students, faculty, staff, administrators and the public through the NICC website, marketing materials, news releases, direct mail, orientations, faculty and staff workshops and regular departmental meeting, e-news alerts, and Xpress announcements.

AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Processes (P)

2P1. Designing and Operating Non-instructional Processes

AQIP action projects are one way in which NICC designs and operates non-instructional processes that serve stakeholder groups. NICC retired the original four AQIP action projects in 2008. The original projects were to create a systematic approach to the college planning process, institute multi-source funding, develop a *Facilities Master Plan*, and enhance staff excellence. NICC implemented new projects that were developed from 2006 System Portfolio feedback. The 2006 projects included implementing a *College Wide Assessment Plan*, developing a college-wide retention plan, creating an assessment plan of the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives*, and creating a QC. In 2009, the projects were updated to include an *Information Technology Master Plan*. Of these action projects, several focus on non-instructional college processes.

NICC recognizes that most of its non-instructional projects are directly linked to external stakeholders. Hence, the college reconfigured the Institutional Advancement, Foundation and Grants departments to merge with Marketing and Legislative Affairs under the broader district-wide External Relations department in 2008. This department is now responsible for creating and maintaining a flow of communication and involvement between the college and external stakeholders.

One of the now retired non-instructional projects included a college focus on increasing revenue sources, which was partly accomplished by hiring a full-time grant writer who secured \$3.5 million in grants in FY 2010. This was further advanced by policies to expand the Foundation Board and improve outreach to NICC alumni and further advocacy and development of legislative relationships.

Furthermore, the original AQIP process of reviewing and approving new college projects involved three committees: the first to assess projects' alignment with the strategic plan, the second to assess alignment with AQIP categories, and the third to assign potential funding sources with final approval from the Cabinet. That process was cumbersome, so a streamlined process was adopted. The QC replaced the three committees, with Cabinet still retaining the final approval. Instead of one form for all projects, two were created to minimize bottlenecks. One form is for requests made for equipment, supplies or plant fund needs. The second form is for other projects or new staff/faculty needs. The implementation of this streamlined process allowed the College to retire this AQIP Action Plan in September, 2009.

iMPACT student senate provides key leadership in non-instructional processes. iMPACT has elected officers from the student body and serves as host for various college events, speaks for ceremonies, and helps select programming with the director of student life, leadership and diversity. iMPACT also provides an opportunity for students to participate in community service activities. iMPACT students have participated in Days of Caring for the city of Dubuque, worked in homeless shelters in Chicago, Illinois and Denver, Colorado during spring break, and raised funds for Honor Flight for World War II veterans. Finally iMPACT plays a role in decision making for the college by having two representatives on the College Senate.

2P2. Determining Major Non-instructional Objectives

As with instructional processes, NICC continues to emphasize and support strategic planning initiatives for non-instructional processes through AQIP action projects. While these action projects often have an instructional focus, the process itself is non-instructional and projects are designed to serve a variety of stakeholders. Toward serving external stakeholders, the College continues to look at national community college trends and collects need

assessment data on NICC students and communities, though advisory board meetings, employer and alumni surveys, and student surveys.

The work that Economic Development and Continuing Education does in the community provides valuable feedback of external stakeholders. The program managers gain valuable feedback from employers and community members about programming ideas and direction for the College. Non-instructional objectives are also determined through an analysis of data, such as that found in the NCCPB benchmarking project and CLARUS Market Scan.

2P3. Communicating Expectations

Face-to-face dissemination of college expectations happens through all-staff gatherings, administrative and program meetings, advisory board committees, QC subcommittees, and community events, like Perkin' with Penny, a public community exchange with NICC President Penny Wills, Ph.D. These face-to-face meetings are used to inform the campus communities and external stakeholders about NICC accomplishments, plans for the future, and opportunities for collaboration. They also provide stakeholders with a forum to exchange ideas, insights and feedback to the College.

All-College Day is a significant opportunity for communication because all NICC employees assemble in one room via videoconference technology. On this particular day, offices and classrooms are closed, and all employees come together to share in visionary thinking and activities linked to AQIP action projects. For example, the 2010 speakers and break-out sessions focused on technology, one of the four current AQIP action projects.

NICC uses several other communication channels to help external stakeholders stay focused on the strategic plan throughout the year, including:

- Xpress weekly announcements
- College website
- iMPACT meetings
- *The Foundation Annual Reports*
- Monthly electronic alumni newsletters]

2P4. Assessing and Reviewing Objectives

NICC's primary assessment process is through the QC and subcommittee review. Much of that review takes place through the V7 process as explained in 2P5.

2P5. Determining Needs

The College has streamlined the annual planning process in order to quickly identify and respond to faculty and staff needs. This includes needs related to implementing strategic plan goals, including non-instructional processes.

The process works in the following way: In the fall, deans and department heads meet with their departments to identify program goals and create an annual department plan. They discuss how to link their efforts to the College's strategic plan and the AQIP categories. As they develop their goals and plans, they clearly identify the human and material resources needed to implement them.

Mid-winter, departments submit their proposals to the QC. The QC includes members from all levels of the institution. Faculty and staff have a strong voice on the seven subcommittees and are able to speak directly to their needs.

Strategic Quality Initiative (QI) proposals are reviewed and ranked by the QC. Equipment, supply, and/or plant fund needs are sent to a subcommittee of provosts and vice presidents for review. Employment requests are sent directly to the president's Cabinet for review.

All proposals are evaluated in relation to NICC's vision and mission and recommendations for acceptance are made for both instructional and non-instructional strategic needs. Cabinet selects, approves and allocates funding to the V7 proposals that are most consistent with articulated objectives.

2P6. Incorporating Feedback

NICC has an ongoing process of improving the assessment and review of the strategic plan. The QC, which includes representation of all members of the college community, is in charge of revising the strategic plan. One of the Council's tasks is to engage the NICC community in making such revisions to provide every employee the opportunity to give feedback on the current plan and provide suggestions for future goals and activities. The Planning and Continuous Improvement QC subcommittee is involved in the process.

Results (R)

2R1. Measuring Non-instructional Objectives and Activities

NICC has seven V7 strategic goals and has established a number of measures that support the goals. The College plans to use the measures found in the *College Wide Assessment Plan* to determine progress toward each goal, such as satisfaction survey tools, needs survey tools, inventory log of complaints, inventory of employee participation in community partnerships, compiled list of V7 input from all departments, and institutional research data.

2R2. Performance Results

NICC's process of determining how to best track its strategic goals is ongoing. It is possible to get a sense of progress towards each goal by reviewing this portfolio.

2R3. Comparison of Performance with Other Institutions

NICC realizes the importance of having comparative data. As the College determines specific performance measures, personnel consult with colleagues at other community colleges and review national best practices to learn the most reliable and accurate measures. This has produced informal comparisons that suggest NICC's practices of establishing, operating, evaluating non-instructional processes is in line with other community colleges and best practices, such as establishing a culture of continuous improvement.

NICC joined the NCCBP in 2007. The NCCBP gives community colleges opportunities to report outcome and effectiveness data, receive reports and compare data with those of peer institutions. This data is critical for NICC to share with external stakeholders and internal staff in setting non-instructional objectives that can improve student learning. Many of the NCCBP measures match the NICC strategic plan. NCCBP performance measures include:

- Enrollment demographics
- Retention and success in developmental and college courses
- Class size
- Ratio of students to faculty
- Ratio of students to staff

- Persistence rates
- Completion rates
- Performance at transfer institutions
- Student satisfaction rates
- Student goal achievement
- Employment and career preparation

Furthermore, the results of the CLARUS Market Scan show that NICC has a solid market penetration in the workforce training when working directly with employers to provide non-credit training to existing or expanding workforce. 47% of employers recognized NICC first when asked to list colleges or universities providing workforce training.

2R4. Performance Results Strengthening the College

Reliance on evidence-based data continues to strengthen the College and enhance its relationship with stakeholders in the district by demonstrating the following:

- A clear direction for the future
- Assessment of non-instructional student and community needs
- College responsiveness to such needs
- Engagement of employees
- Open communication
- Wise use of resources
- Evidence of institutional effectiveness

For example, NICC has used NCCBP benchmark data to strengthen the College by creating a cap for the number of students enrolled in an online class section. This cap was set based on evidence that similar peers capped courses at twenty students. The data has also been used to enhance NICC's community relationships. NICC is in the process of collecting data to enhance the results from the community business surveys, which will be used to gain feedback from area employers.

NICC used the CLARUS Market Scan to determine mind awareness of the college. The results of this scan noted that NICC had a top of mind awareness of only 3%. This determined that the College needed to invest more resources into marketing. As a result, NICC completed a door-to-door campaign in 2007. This improved community awareness of the College.

The College also hosts local Perkin' with Penny events, which are based on a question and answer format. These events are held in the communities the College serves. Community businesses and civic leaders are invited to ask questions about the College and provide input for the future direction of NICC. This provides the College with qualitative data. The data gathered engages NICC in continuous improvement toward building relationships and collecting input on programming efforts to address the unique needs of each community in the district. Follow-up events are planning to provide feedback about the status of suggested activities and to seek further advice for the future.

The QC has proposed an assessment plan for the College. Further refinement and data gathering are in progress. The Board of Trustees aims to define dashboard indicators to support their work with a goal to connect the assessment plan with the dashboard. The Board will be involved in strategic planning in January 2011. The outcome will provide input to establish a dashboard. The Foundation Board began a strategic planning session in October 2010. All strategic plans will have common threads and be measurable for assessment and improvement measures.

All dashboard indicators will be connected with the strategic plan of the Board of Trustees. This will help close the feedback loop and provide a visual assessment for the College to see the progress of achieving the goals established.

Improvements (I)

211. Recent Improvements

As a 2008, AQIP action project, NICC developed an assessment plan that identified goals and benchmarks to assist in college-wide decision making. Within this assessment plan, a detailed timeline for each project or initiative is developed and data collection tools are identified. The plan also requires project or initiative-based:

- Measures for each strategic goal
- Data collection methods
- Plan to communicate results
- Comparison data from other institutions with similar goals

As explained in 2R4, NICC Board of Trustees aims to define a dashboard in order to obtain a snapshot of NICC's quality improvement process. The dashboard identifies annual performance indicators and allows the College to view what degree it is meeting its broad goals.

212. Selecting Specific Processes

The V7 process and structure of the QC subcommittees, as stated in 2P5, ensure a unified voice when activities regarding new initiatives are executed. For example, the Instructional and Institutional QC subcommittee was involved in the development of the *Information Technology Master Plan*. All relevant stakeholders provided input via focus groups and online surveys to the consulting company, RSM McGladrey. The resulting master plan provided directions for the College to pursue.

Additionally, NICC has determined measures and established data collection methods for each strategic goal. The College communicates these measures and data collection methods to all employees in the following ways:

- All College Day
- Annual planning process
- Committee meetings
- Advisory board and community meetings
- NICC website
- *Making Visions Reality* newsletter

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

Processes (P)

3P1. Identifying Changing Needs of Student Groups

NICC is committed to student success and responsive to community needs. The Student Access and Success QC subcommittee is responsible for identifying the changing needs of students and informing the college of these needs. The College uses a variety of methods to identify the changing needs of student groups, including:

Placement Tests—Placement tests gauge student preparedness for college-level courses. NICC relies on ACCUPLACER scores for reading, writing and math.

Writing Centers and Learning Centers—Learning centers and writing centers provide one-on-one and group tutoring and support.

Adult transition coordinators—Staff work directly with adults making career and life changes. They assist them in starting an education, exploring non-traditional careers and finding employment.

Advising and Counseling Sessions—Students share their needs during advising and counseling sessions. These informal sessions often yield important information about student needs.

Academic Alerts—Faculty monitor student attendance and progress. If a student is absent or failing, faculty file an *Academic Alert*.

Enrollment Reports—Enrollment reports also reflect trends in student needs. These reports indicate how the College may need to shift focus to better serve a diverse student body.

Course Evaluations—At the end of each semester, faculty distribute course evaluations to students. These evaluations provide an opportunity for students to rate each course on how helpful it was in meeting their needs.

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

Formal and Informal Surveys—The College utilizes Survey Monkey to broadly reach all students or for quick, informal surveys to reach targeted students. Results of these surveys help the College analyze and respond to students' changing needs.

CCSSE Survey—In 2006, NICC administered the CCSSE for the first time and administered the survey again in 2008. The third administration will take place spring 2011. Results from the CCSSE provided data that is being utilized by the Student Access and Success (SAS) subcommittee and other teams at the College.

SENSE Survey—The SAS QC subcommittee's efforts pushed NICC toward administering the SENSE survey in fall 2009. SENSE provided the College with data that directly corresponds with institutional retention plan priorities.

CLARUS Market Scan—In 2007 the College hired the CLARUS Corporation to conduct a series of five district-wide market scans. These scans included the markets of high school, community, workforce, customer service and non-returning students. The comprehensive report from CLARUS is being used by the SAS subcommittee to set goals and direction for recruitment, retention and marketing.

NCCBP—The College joined the NCCBP in 2007 and the vice president of academic affairs and institutional researcher annually review and disseminate this data for college-wide use and planning.

Alumni Survey—NICC Graduates receive a written survey about their employment and/or educational status. The survey helps identify if graduates have continued in higher education or found employment in their field or a related field.

Employer Survey—A number of employers fill out a survey about their satisfaction with hires from NICC. This helps the College assess if graduates are prepared for the local workforce, or if programs need to be retooled to fit the changing needs of local and regional employers.

3P2. Building and Maintaining Student Relationships

CCSSE data identified a gap in communication with NICC students between the time of acceptance and enrollment at the College. It is reported that NICC loses many students during this timeframe. It is intended that this communication gap will be closed as a result of a change in advisor assignments and mandatory orientation efforts.

While students are on campus, interactions with NICC faculty and staff provide many opportunities to connect and build relationships with students. These relationships may occur through classroom interactions and feedback, one-on-one tutoring, Writing Center and Learning Center assistance, adult transition coordinator meetings, financial aid advising and career exploration activities. However, CCSSE data shows that NICC has need for improvement in this area.

2009 SENSE data reveals that NICC scored slightly higher than other medium colleges for providing an Academic and Social Support Network. A closer look at the scoring reveals that for developmental students, NICC scored 3.7 points below other medium colleges, while for non-developmental students, NICC scored 5.9 points higher than other medium colleges. These results indicate a need to strengthen services related to this benchmark for the developmental student population.

Another way NICC builds student relationships and connections is through Student Life, Diversity and Leadership, which has improved and expanded since 2007. Improvements include a restructure of the club process, improved funding to support clubs who want to provide service projects, improved activities, and a student leadership team that is focused on service learning.

Finally, NICC has also grown its outreach to alumni through the development of an online alumni newsletter, annual Alumni Hall of Fame events, and other alumni networking opportunities. Engaging alumni offers them an opportunity to give back and continue to connect with NICC.

[Table 3-1](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/building_student_relationships.pdf) located at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/building_student_relationships.pdf shows some of the ways in which NICC builds relationships with prospective students (P), current students (C), and alumni (A).

3P3. Analyzing Changing Needs of Stakeholders

The Partnerships and Collaboration QC subcommittee is developing a survey to be completed by external stakeholders. This survey will determine the level of satisfaction with existing services and training with business and industry, and to ascertain the training needs not met. NICC will administer this survey to external stakeholders in 2011.

Additionally, NICC uses a variety of ways to assess the needs of both internal and external stakeholders, as listed below:

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Board of Trustees—The NICC Board of Trustees meets monthly to make decisions for the College. The Board also participates in annual retreats to discuss issues and carry out strategic planning for the College.

College Senate—The College Senate holds monthly meetings and participates in an annual retreat to provide a forum for discussion of the College's mission and strategic plan, including but not limited to, academic and student matters, instructional issues, facilities and organizational culture.

QC—The QC meets monthly with all subcommittee chairs. In addition, subcommittees hold monthly meetings.

Employees and Supervisors—Meetings between employees and supervisors are held on a regular basis in both formal and informal ways.

Departments—Regular departmental meetings are held to share information and participate in annual strategic goal-setting and planning. As part of the planning process, departments submit V7 requests (quality initiatives) for consideration by the QC.

Committees—College Committees meet at various intervals, and include members from all levels within the institution. District-wide committees include: College Senate, QC, Diversity, Orientation, Graduation, Deans, Student Services Planning Council, Technology Committee, Campus Council, Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Development Committee. Administrators also learn about staff needs through departmental meetings and ad hoc task forces organized to deal with specific issues.

All College Day—All College Day provides an opportunity for all NICC employees to gather for a full day of planning and learning once a year.

Program Reviews—Program reviews are completed every five years by all career-technical programs. This includes assessing needs, documenting processes and outcomes, and establishing future goals and objectives.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Family Members—Family members and significant others of students are welcomed on campus through *Welcome Wednesdays*, Parent Orientation, and celebratory events such as graduation and induction into honorary societies.

Community Members—Community members' needs are identified through the president's meetings with community leaders and administrative participation in community organizations, boards and meetings. Community leaders from the district's cities and towns also provide feedback to the college through community breakfast meetings dubbed Perkin' with Penny. NICC staff receive information about community needs through the NICC Centers' staff and community-based meetings and activities. Additionally, all Cabinet members serve in various community service organizations.

Educational Institutions—Local school districts' needs are identified in two major ways:

- NICC's president and/or vice president for academic affairs attend a monthly all-district superintendents meeting.
- The high school relations coordinator, tech-prep coordinator, TRiO Upward Bound directors, admissions representatives and career outreach coordinator work directly with school personnel and students to facilitate student transition from high school to college.

The College also meets regularly with four-year colleges and universities on transfer agreements and data sharing agreements regarding student performance both before and after transfer.

Business and Industry—Connections are completed primarily through Economic Development and Continuing Education professional development team NICC representatives attend chamber of commerce and economic development meetings throughout the region and meet with various business throughout the year. NICC collaborates with business and industry to provide job training to more than 6,000 individuals each year through 260E and 260F agreements. The College also collects information about business and industry needs through career program advisory boards.

Legislators—Contact with NICC is facilitated in a variety of ways including:

- Regular invitations for representatives to visit the campuses to hear community concerns.
- The president and director of external relations meet with state legislators and candidates each fall to address specific issues in advance of the legislative session.
- The president and director of external relations make biannual visits to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Congressional delegation and advocate for the needs of community colleges.
- The president and director of external relations regularly visit the state capitol during the legislative session.
- The president and director of external relations regularly meet with contracted lobbyists, state association and legislative liaisons from the state's community colleges to discuss statewide issues of joint concern throughout the year.
- The director of external relations works with iMPACT student senate offices to involve students in grass root efforts throughout the year and in a legislative event at the State capitol every year.
- NICC upper administration participates in ongoing contact with legislators through phone calls, emails and in-person.

Accreditation and Licensing Boards—They inform about changes in regulations or licensing and reporting requirements for which NICC programs need to comply.

3P4. Building and Maintaining Stakeholder Relationships

NICC is deliberate about building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. All employees serve as ambassadors for the college, and maintain regular contact with one or more of our stakeholder groups. They know that every contact provides an opportunity to build and strengthen the relationship. [Table 3-2](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/building_stakeholder_relationships.pdf) located at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/building_stakeholder_relationships.pdf shows some primary strategies for building these relationships.

3P5. Determining Educational Offering and Services

NICC will continue to work with the student and stakeholder groups identified in [Tables 3-3](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/internal_stakeholders.pdf) located at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/internal_stakeholders.pdf and [3-4](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/external_stakeholders.pdf) located at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/external_stakeholders.pdf

At the same time, the College realizes that some of the subgroups will change. Therefore, the College identifies new groups in the following manner:

- All employees are responsible for environmental scanning. They identify new stakeholder groups and identify opportunities for new programs and services.
- The director of institutional research tracks enrollment data and district demographic changes to identify emerging groups of stakeholders. For instance, the number of individuals over 65 in the district is growing and can be identified as a new prospective student group.
- Economic Development and professional development staff members take the pulse of business and industry and survey the workforce trend data provided by IWD.

- Faculty work closely with advisory boards which keep NICC abreast of demographic changes, changes in equipment and technology, and new skills needed in the workplace.
- The president and vice president for economic development serve on various economic development boards.
- Admissions representatives, High School Relations, Tech-Prep, TRiO Upward Bound, and Career Outreach staff members listen to the needs of high school colleagues and prospective students.

3P6. Managing Complaints

NICC makes a concentrated effort to understand the needs and concerns of students and other stakeholders. This includes being open and responsive to complaints. Staff collect feedback, complaints and grievances through a variety of means:

Course Evaluations—At the completion of each course, students complete an online course evaluation form. The responses are electronically compiled and made available to the dean supervising the instructor and the instructor him/herself.

Course Complaints—If students are unhappy about a course, they can file a complaint. NICC developed a complaint form in 2008 to collect and document complaints. This form is available to faculty and staff on Xpress. The complaint is forwarded to the appropriate administrator. The director of human resources reviews complaints involving discrimination, harassment or retaliation. A description of final response and follow-up are submitted to the appropriate provost.

Grade Challenges—If a student wishes to contest a grade, the department dean refers the case to an ad hoc Grade Review Committee. This committee consists of the vice president of academic affairs, a program dean, a student counselor and several faculty members appointed by the vice president of academic affairs. They review the course guide, syllabus, grading criteria and student scores before determining if the grade is appropriate or needs to be revised. Decisions are forwarded to the student and the instructor.

Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation—Board, Human Resources and student conduct policies affirm that complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and/or retaliation filed by employees, students or campus visitors will be investigated immediately. All employees receive and are required to sign a copy of the policy upon hire. Additionally, periodic training of employees and managers aimed at heightening awareness of discriminatory behavior and harassment is conducted. The director of human resources investigates complaints against employees. The vice president of academic affairs partners in any investigation involving a faculty member, and the dean of student services is involved in all investigations involving students. The vice president for finance and administration will decide the outcome once the investigation is completed.

Support Staff Grievances—Support staff are encouraged to resolve disputes with their immediate supervisor or the parties involved. If this is not possible, they can file a grievance citing a violation of their contract. This can also be done if there is a dispute involving the application or interpretation of the contract. The first step is to present an oral complaint to the immediate supervisor. The supervisor must give an oral response within ten days. If dissatisfied, the employee can file a written grievance with his or her supervisor within five days, and the supervisor is required to respond within five days. The next steps are to take the complaint to the director of human resources and finally to arbitration. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on both parties.

Faculty Grievances—Faculty are encouraged to resolve disputes with their supervisor or any other parties before resorting to filing a complaint. Faculty can file a grievance if they believe there is violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of the provisions in their contract. The first step is to present an informal oral complaint to the immediate supervisor, with the purpose of resolving the matter informally. If dissatisfied, the faculty member can move to the formal grievance stage. This involves filing a written grievance with the immediate supervisor. The

supervisor must respond within five days. The next steps are to take the complaint to the director of human resources and finally to arbitration. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on both parties.

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

Student Conduct Complaints –Student conduct complaints are funneled to the dean of student services or associate dean of Student Services for evaluation, processing and disposition. The *Student Conduct Code* and supporting documents were revised in FY 2010.

Citizen Complaints—Board Policies 504 and 702 specify that whenever a citizen desires information or wishes to express a comment concerning any aspect of the College and its operation, such citizen shall discuss the problem with the responsible individual. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, an appeal process is in place. The Board of Trustees will hear no appeal unless produced in writing, signed by the party bringing the appeal, and presented to the Board through the president.

Results (R)

3R1. Determining Satisfaction

The College uses several formal and informal methods for determining student and stakeholder satisfaction including:

Student Satisfaction	Stakeholder Satisfaction
Enrollment and retention data (CCSSE survey)	Career program reviews
SENSE survey	NICC Alumni Survey and Employer Surveys
CLARUS Environmental Market Scan	CCFSSE
NCCBP	QC, Campus Council, College Senate, Departmental and other committee meetings
Student course evaluations	Trustee Board and NICC Foundation meetings
Student forums and focus groups	Open-door policy encouraging faculty and staff to drop in and talk to administrators
iMPACT student senate meetings	All College Day
College Senate student representation	Employee and community forums
Meetings with high school students, teachers, and administrators	Advisory board meetings
President's personal emails to students	Cabinet, provost and dean meetings
Student surveys and focus groups	Faculty and staff workshops days
Open-door policy encouraging students to drop in and talk to faculty and staff	President's Cabinet

For additional results associated with student satisfaction, please refer to 6R2.

3R2. Performance Results for Student Satisfaction

The College employees value student satisfaction. NICC's primary source of satisfaction data comes from the CCSSE and SENSE surveys. Other methods for determining student satisfaction include topic-specific surveys administered through Survey Monkey. The NICC Facebook site and Admissions Blog also provide informal feedback. Student focus groups are yet another technique used to determine student needs and satisfaction. For example, 2010 focus groups on new student orientation revealed that students prefer program specific events, hands-on navigation time on the Xpress web portal, and interactive programming. The College Orientation Team is using that data to design the new mandatory orientation to begin fall 2011.

A comparison of CCSSE survey results between 2006 and 2008 reflects a number of changes.

Improved areas include:

- Increased email communication between students and faculty
- More personal reading undertaken by students
- An increase in the number of students who completed or are planning to complete an internship or field experience,
- More encouragement to students from diverse backgrounds
- Increased student opportunity for critical thinking and numerical problem-solving

Challenge areas include:

- Fewer class presentations by students
- A decrease in institutional emphasis on financial support,
- Declined student satisfaction with financial advising, career counseling, and job placement assistance

More satisfaction results can be found at Table 3-7.

3R3. Performance Results for Student Relationships

Program enrollment and high school yield are two ways to gauge results for building relationships with students, but the College also evaluates this through student participation in several events held on and off campus.

District High School Yield Rate—The high school yield rate has grown from 16% in FY 2006 to 17.5% in FY 2010. This is calculated based on the number of district high school seniors who enrolled at NICC after graduation. Enrollment in the district high schools are predicted to drop over the next decade, so the College must be more creative in recruiting methods for this population. Admissions and Marketing have developed targeted recruiting materials for high school students. A new NICC recruiting plan is in its initial stages of development and will address a comprehensive recruiting plan for both the traditional age student as well as the adult learner.

Growth of New Student Orientation—Enrollment in the new student orientation is increasing. In FY 2011, NICC will make new student orientation mandatory. In addition, an online orientation was developed in FY 2010 to accommodate online learners and others. It is ready to launch at this time. Orientation is intended to ease new students with the transition into college life, provide access to college resources, and improve student retention.

Increased Student Engagement in Non-classroom Activities—The restructuring of Student Life, Diversity, and Leadership and hiring of a district-wide director and associate director has made dramatic improvements in student engagement outside the classroom. The College has seen impressive growth in the number of students and families attending events and activities:

- Development of a student senate and ambassador program called iMPACT

- Annual service learning experience held during spring break week
- Active student participation on district committees
- Student leadership development retreats
- Revised and improved student club process
- Increased number of students participating in on campus and off campus events and activities

Credit Enrollment—As seen in Table 3-6 fall credit enrollment rose dramatically for approximately five years because of an explosion of high school enrollment. Enrollment continues to grow amongst all populations, with a peak in total student enrollment in fall 2010 at 5,146 students. This peak in enrollment was also due to an economic downturn and an increase in dislocated workers and retraining needs.

Year	Head Count FT	Head Count PT	Total
2006	2,051	2,737	4,788
2007	2,085	2,725	4,810
2008	2,103	2,665	4,768
2009	2,564	2,825	5,389
2010	2,511	2,625	5,136

Source: IPEDS

Because NICC has experienced consistent growth in high school enrollment over the last decade, the College added several new positions to assist in meeting the needs of high school constituents, including a tech-prep coordinator and one career outreach coordinator. High school enrollment increased from 1,889 in 2006 to 2,869 in 2009 (*source: MIS File Transmittal Report; Credit Files*).

Non-Credit Enrollment – For non-credit programming, registration hours also increased from 464,863 in 2006 to 489,068 in 2010 (*source: MIS File Transmittal Report; Non Credit Files*).

3R4. Performance Results for Stakeholder Satisfaction

NICC has many external stakeholders. One group of stakeholders is the three Iowa Regent institutions: Iowa State University, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa. NICC receives academic performance reports annually from these institutions. These reports demonstrate that students transferring from NICC succeed academically at a rate equal to transfer students from other Iowa community colleges. They also do well in comparison to these institutions’ “native” students. For more detail, please refer to 1R4.

Stakeholder satisfaction is also measured through surveys like the *Employer Survey*, the faculty CCFSSSE survey, and the student CCSSE and SENSE surveys. Please refer to table 3-7 to view CCSSE results

Support Service Category	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Applicable
Academic Advising	36%	47%	10%
Career Counseling	13%	26%	47%
Child care	6%	6%	81%
Computer lab	48%	29%	19%
Financial aid Advising	28%	33%	27%
Job Placement Assistance	6%	13%	65%
Peer or other Tutoring	16%	16%	59%
Services to Students with Disabilities	6%	9%	77%
Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	27%	30%	37%
Student Organizations	11%	17%	63%
Transfer Credit Assistance	16%	23%	49%

Source: CCSSE Benchmark Report

3R5. Performance Results for Stakeholder Relationships

Family Members and Significant Others—Parents and significant others are important in helping students succeed. The parent/significant other orientation, as part of the new student orientation, is well attended and growing. The College has also created a parent-specific new orientation brochure and plan to develop a parent information section on the Admissions web page in 2010. Attendance details can be found in table 6-3.

Transfer Institutions—NICC has partnered with a number of four-year institutions to develop joint admission agreements. These partnerships with four-year institutions are a win-win situation for both the students and the collaborating colleges. In order to facilitate relationships with other colleges, NICC provides access space for representatives from nearby colleges so they can routinely spend time at NICC campuses.

Business/Industry—NICC has 36 advisory boards comprised of local business leaders. NICC is a member in 15 local chambers of commerce, eight economic development organizations, two regional economic development groups, and two Tri State partnerships with Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois. Economic Development surveys business and industry to determine and target training to specific needs. NICC enters into contracts for workforce training with an average of 60 companies per year. In FY 2010, NICC brought in almost \$12 million through 260E and 260F grants, serving more than 6,000 employees in area business and industry.

Communities—NICC engages in collaborative ventures that meet the needs of the communities. Examples include:

- The Peosta campus partners with the City of Peosta's Community Center and the University of Dubuque. As part of the agreement, NICC students use their facilities at a discounted rate.
- The Town Clock Center for Professional Development in Dubuque hosts the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). It also provides numerous training opportunities for local businesses and hosts a business consortium.
- Allamakee County residents passed a bond referendum to construct an NICC Center in Waukon, which opened spring 2008. NICC collaborates with local schools, businesses and industries to bring education and training to this location.
- The Cresco Center was funded by the Cresco community and is staffed by NICC. The facility is located next to the local high school.

3R6. Performance Results with Other Organizations

The College uses CCSSE and SENSE data to compare NICC student satisfaction with thousands of other students from community colleges across the country. In 2007, NICC joined NCCBP and data from 2010 is reflected in Table 3-8.

Table 3-8 National Community College Benchmark Peer Report			
Description of NCCBP Measure	NICC	Peer Group Avg	Variance
PERSISTENCE/GRADUATION			
Persistence: Fall to Spring, All Students	78%	70%	9%
Persistence: Fall-Fall	53%	48%	5%
Graduation Rate; FT student cohort	34%	28%	7%
CAREER PREP			
Career Prep: Employed in Related Field	66%	61%	5%
Career Prep: Employers Satisfied	96%	N/A	
Career Prep: Pursuing Education	16%	27%	-11%
MARKET PENETRATION			
Market Penetration: Credit Students	3%	3%	0%
Market Penetration: Non-credit Students	13%	2%	11%
COURSE ENROLLEE SUCCESS			
College Algebra:	67%	64%	3%
College-level Courses:	79%	77%	2%
Comp I:	84%	74%	10%
Comp II:	62%	70%	-8%
Credit Grades:	78%	76%	2%
Dev First College-level: Math	63%	63%	0%
Dev First College-level: Writing	84%	68%	16%
Dev Math:	65%	59%	6%
Dev Writing:	70%	65%	5%
Distance Learning:	59%	66%	-7%
Speech:	81%	81%	0%
COURSE RETENTION			
Speech:	95%	89%	6%
Dev Writing:	94%	90%	4%
Dev Math:	92%	86%	6%
Dev First College-level: Writing	97%	88%	9%
Dev First College-level: Math	100%	86%	14%
Comp II:	82%	88%	-6%
Comp I:	96%	91%	5%
College-level Courses:	94%	92%	2%
College Algebra:	94%	86%	8%
FACULTY LOAD			
Faculty Load: % Credit Hours by FT Faculty	66%	58%	8%
Faculty Load: % Sections by FT Faculty	64%	55%	10%

Source - NCCBP peer report-2010

There is a change in enrollment patterns at NICC and other community colleges in Iowa. The Iowa community colleges fall 2008 and fall 2009 *Credit Student Enrollment Report* published by the Iowa Department of Education shows that NICC credit enrollment was 13.31%, slightly behind the state average of 14.34%.

NICC has developed specific strategies to address these trends, including: expanded recruiting territories, revised recruiting materials to target specific segments of the populations, improved course scheduling through precision scheduling, and newly developed courses and programs.

Improvements (I)

311. Improvements and Performance Results for Needs

AQIP has given the College a structure for engaging in continuous improvement. In 2008, NICC developed a QC representing the seven strategic goals for the College. The QC is responsible for data gathering and AQIP status reporting.

In 2009, NICC's External Relations implemented the Colleague Advancement module of Datatel to increase productivity, identify and cultivate donors, plan strategic campaigns and monitor goals, analyze data, and build relationships.

In 2010, NICC began preparing for Lumens implementation. In 2011, NICC Continuing Education will replace the use of Datatel with the Lumens system to improve data-collection for more than 38,000 students annually. This decision was made because of the Datatel limitations for collecting information and the ability for students to register online.

NICC administered CCSSE and the CCFSSSE for the first time in 2006 and set goals based on comparison benchmark data. With the re-administration of CCSSE in spring 2008, the College determined progress and defined new benchmarks. NICC decided to administer the CCSSE again in 2011.

The Student Access and Success QC subcommittee spearheaded an AQIP Action Plan and developed the College's first comprehensive retention plan. With this renewed focus on retention, this subcommittee championed the purchase and administration of the SENSE survey. The College supported a team to participate in the ESSI institute, which allowed a deeper focus and analysis of the SENSE data. The recommendations for improvement developed at the Institute have been included in the new retention plan.

Economic Development and Continuing Education are developing a satisfaction and gap analysis survey. The survey will be used to obtain baseline data from district business and industry groups.

An Advising Task Force was convened in 2009 with the charge to review and make recommendations for improving NICC's advising process. The district-wide, cross-departmental team utilized several surveys and reviewed best practices in advising to make recommendations to the vice president of academic affairs and academic deans. Consequently, several smaller Intake Advising processes, such as assigning an advisor at the time of acceptance to the College, have been revised.

Results of stakeholder assessments have focused the agenda for the annual All College Day event. For example, All College Day 2008 focused on student engagement and retention, one of the AQIP Action Plans. All College Day 2009 focused on cross-college collaboration. All College Day 2010 focused on effectively using technology. This decision was the result of a College-wide forum held by the president to assess the needs and concerns of NICC employees regarding technology issues. Data received through this and other methods have helped to inform NICC planning for its recently awarded Title III grant.

In addition, the College continually reviews existing programs to see if they meet business and industry needs. The College also pursues new programs in response to local employment trends. Most recently, NICC has implemented Wind Technology, CNC Machining, with Chemical Technology planned to begin in fall 2011 and Veterinary Science Technology planned to begin in fall 2012.

3I2. Improvements to Process and Target Selection

Through the NICC annual planning process, *Making Vision Reality* and V7, all College employees have the opportunity to participate in planning for quality improvement. Please see table 8-1 Annual Planning Process.

With NICC's improved data collection, storage, and analysis processes, all decision makers of the College now have a wealth of data available for making strategic decisions. Decision-makers are able NICC student data, whether gathered through surveys or focus groups, to ensure meeting student needs. Additionally, NICC compares learning and support services benchmarks with those of other community colleges.

**AQIP CATEGORY 4:
VALUING PEOPLE**

Processes (P)

4P1. Identifying Employee Credentials, Skills, and Values

Job descriptions are maintained for every position at the College. Whenever a position is vacated, the job description is reviewed and revised if it does not accurately reflect the educational requirements, qualifications or job duties. Periodically, all job descriptions are reviewed and compared to like positions in other Iowa community colleges and to similar public and private sector positions.

4P2. Hiring Processes

NICC sets clear and consistent expectations for employees regarding credentials, skills and values. The hiring process is used to ensure that employees meet Iowa law and the College's expectations in these areas.

Faculty who teach in Iowa community colleges meet Iowa's uniform minimum educational standards and the credentialing standards of the Quality Faculty Plan of the institution at which they teach. Table 4-1 provides the minimum educational standards for Arts and Science and Career and Technical Faculty.

Faculty Teaching Area	Minimum Educational Requirements
Arts and Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master's degree in assigned area• Master's degree and a minimum of 12 graduate credits in assigned area
Career and Technical Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate or graduate degree in assigned area• Specialized training and at least 6,000 hours of work experience in assigned or related area

Source: Iowa Administrative Rules 2009, Chapter 281, Section 21.3

The faculty application requires candidates to provide a statement of their educational philosophy and reasons for wanting to teach in a community college. Prospective faculty who come to campus for an interview must demonstrate their teaching ability through a microteaching demonstration and answer interview questions that explore their commitment to student success and their willingness to contribute to quality improvement efforts at the College.

NICC also sets high expectations for administrators. Search committees hiring administrative positions carefully screen the academic preparation and pertinent experience of all candidates. Those hired must meet the requisite criteria for the position. Support personnel hired by NICC must also meet the qualifications set for the position. Clerical candidates participate in skills testing. Applicants for service staff jobs must meet physical requirements, as well as, certification or licensure requirements for the position.

4P3. Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining

Open positions are advertised on the NICC website and in national, state and/or local media—print and online. Employees are encouraged to apply for positions that will allow them to advance and outside applicants are recruited. NICC is connected with leaders in education, business and industry. The College is often successful in attracting candidates who have the type of “real-life” experiences valued by students.

For top administrative positions, NICC advertises regionally and nationally. After screening the initial pool of applicants, the search committee invites the top candidates to spend a full day on each campus. The candidates

participate in formal interviews and informal meetings. The College also holds open forums on each campus so that faculty and staff can meet the candidates and ask questions. Participating faculty and staff have the opportunity to complete a candidate rating form.

In hiring supervisors, faculty and staff, NICC advertises in local and regional media. A search committee is comprised of the immediate supervisor and faculty or staff which interviews the candidates and makes a recommendation to the immediate supervisor, who makes a final decision.

Support staff positions are initially advertised internally to meet the requirements of the collective bargaining agreement. If the position has not been filled internally after five days, NICC advertises the position externally. The immediate supervisor and individuals from the department review and screen applications and invite selected applicants to skills test. After skills testing, the committee invites the top candidates for an interview and makes a hiring decision.

All new employees receive orientation appropriate to their position, which is coordinated by the hiring supervisor. New full-time employees also meet with the director of human resources for an orientation to NICC policies and procedures and to review the NICC employee benefit plan. New employees receive instructions on how to use Xpress shared campus files and are shown the location of the *V7 Strategic Plan, Employee Handbook, Faculty Handbook*, and other employee forms as applicable.

New faculty members are invited to attend an orientation session before the start of each semester. The orientation covers a wide range of topics, including pay and benefits, certification under the *Quality Faculty Plan*, policies and procedures, student services, and course and classroom management tips. The Mentoring subcommittee of the NICC Quality Faculty Plan Committee has developed a structured mentoring program for NICC faculty who request a mentor. The new faculty member is partnered with a seasoned member of the faculty for the first year.

Distance Learning provides training and mentoring for part-time and adjunct faculty who teach online and ICN courses. In addition, several part-time and adjunct faculty members serve as active members of the Online Committee that meets monthly to discuss, assess, and implement ideas and issues.

NICC has strong employee retention as evidenced in Table 4-2, NICC is an attractive place to work, and it tends to have a stable and loyal workforce. Exit interviews are conducted with employees who leave the College and employees have the option of completing an exit survey (See 4R2).

Table 4-2 Longevity by Position Type	
Position Type	Average Longevity
Full-Time	
Administrative Staff	7.5 years
Faculty	12.3 years
Support/Service Staff	11.2 years
Part-Time	
Administrative Staff	4.8 years
Faculty	4.0 years
Support/Service Staff	3.1 years

NICC does encounter retention issues with adjunct faculty who tend to feel less connected to the College than other employees due to variable hours and outside job responsibilities in addition to their NICC employment at the College. Despite these challenges, NICC tries to promote retention among adjuncts. For example, all adjunct faculty are invited to attend an orientation session before the start of each term. Attendance at the fall 2010 session included approximately 68% of new adjunct faculty from both campuses.

4P4. Employee Orientation

NICC orients employees to the College's history, mission and values in a variety of ways. These items are stated on the NICC web page and in application packet documents. New employees also receive information on the location of the *V7 Strategic Plan* and the *Employee Handbook* and *Faculty Handbook*. The new faculty workshop includes material on the history of NICC. Finally, All College Day includes an update on progress regarding AQIP action projects, the *College Wide Assessment Plan*, strategic planning efforts, and the V7 planning process.

4P5. Personnel Changes

NICC studies workforce trends that will impact the composition of NICC's personnel. For example, the College will face a wave of retirements as aging employees conclude their careers. Currently, the average ages are 49.6 for full-time faculty, 48.3 for Cabinet members, 44.8 for full-time administrators, and 44.6 for full-time support staff. Although the Board of Trustees discontinued the early retirement plan after FY2007, economic conditions made it necessary to reinstate the program in FY 2008. In FY 2010 College employees were offered a retirement incentive package. As a result, the college lost five administrators, seven faculty, and three support staff to early retirement.

NICC continues to work towards its goals of mirroring its workforce demographically with the student body and the district's population. The College is particularly interested in gender and ethnicity parity.

4P6. Designing Productive Work Processes

NICC has focused on streamlining work processes since the implementation of the Datatel in 2005. Every college department impacted by Datatel created work flows for departmental processes, streamlined processes, and eliminated duplication. Datatel manuals provide detailed references for processes and new staff training.

Beginning in 2008 several NICC departments completed lean training including Student Services, Business Services, both campus libraries, and Continuing Education and Economic Development.

The Xpress web portal (a CampusCruiser product) tied to the Datatel system has created much efficiency:

- Centralized access to campus information including forms
- Eliminated paper payroll invoices for over 700 employees twice monthly
- Linked employee and student e-mail systems
- Provided a course management system for online courses
- Provided online grade book and course information access to faculty and students
- Enabled online enrollment

Imminent changes at NICC include implementation of the Lumens system in Continuing Education and moving to web time entry and approval for all timesheets. Additionally, a Title III grant will allow for the purchase of an enterprise content management system that will reduce the creation and storage of paper records and the implementation of an online applicant tracking system in human resources.

4P7. Insuring Employee Ethics

NICC makes clear its commitment to and requirements for ethical practices in the following ways:

- Pre-employment background checks for personnel in designated positions
- Statements on ethics and professional behavior in Board policy, *Employee Handbook*, and *Faculty Handbook*
- Inclusion of ethics and professional behavior in job descriptions

- Signed statements from all employees held in personnel files regarding harassment, sexual harassment, and illegal drugs and alcohol in the workplace
- Acceptance of computer use policy with each network log-in
- Signed confidentiality statements by all employees with access to student or employee records
- Orientation on ethics and professional behavior for new employees
- Annual financial audits

4P8. Determining Training Needs and Alignment

NICC determines training needs in the following ways:

- Individuals discuss training needs as part of their scheduled evaluations.
- Faculty and support staff committees discuss training needs with their respective groups and use these discussions as a basis for planning annual development activities.
- Distance Learning assesses experience and specific training needs for all new online and ICN faculty.
- Cabinet aligns employee training with short and long-range organizational plans.

Due to budget constraints, a professional development needs assessment planned for 2008 was not conducted. However, the Title III grant recently awarded to NICC will fund a full-time training coordinator. The coordinator will be hired in 2010-2011 and will report to the director of human resources.

4P9. Reinforcement of Employee Training

Because employees tend to stay at NICC for a long time, the College helps them develop and contribute throughout their careers. NICC promotes and models the value of lifelong learning in a variety of ways:

- Opportunities for professional development and training, including an annual faculty workshop day and funding available to faculty who wish to attend regional and national conferences
- Tuition-free credit and non-credit classes at NICC for regular employees
- Incentives for degree completion, including salary advancement and paid educational leave (Table 4-3)

Degree	Salary Advancement	Paid Leave Days Available
	Greater of 5% of salary or	
Associate	\$500	5
Bachelor's	\$1,000	10
Master's	\$1,500	15
Doctorate	\$3,000	30

4P10. Designing and Aligning Evaluations

The College has redesigned faculty and professional, non-bargaining staff evaluation processes. In 2008 a task force established a new process for evaluating professional, non-bargaining staff. The new annual process includes a review of the job description, identification of performance attributes and opportunities, and opportunity for goal setting and review. This new evaluation process aligns with V7 Category: College Environment and Diversity in that it better assures a process of assessing employee satisfaction and focusing employee engagement in the NICC work environment.

The process begins with self-evaluation and goal review and goal setting by the employee. The goals are tied to the V7 categories and the AQIP action projects. During the same time period, the supervisor completes his or her assessment of the employee's performance and reflections on the employee's progress on active goals. The next step is a meeting between the employee and the supervisor. At the conclusion of the meeting, the employee and

supervisor agree on appropriate goals for the coming year. The supervisor then finalizes the evaluation and a brief review meeting within a few weeks of the evaluation conference is held so the final evaluation can be reviewed and signed.

The second round of evaluations using the revised form and process will be completed in 2010. Employees and supervisors will be surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the process and the task force will reconvene to discuss the results and modify the process and form if needed.

Similarly, the faculty evaluation process and form were revised in 2009. The vice president of academic affairs worked with two academic deans and faculty to accomplish the revisions. Faculty evaluation consists of a self-assessment citing accomplishments, challenges, and goals for the evaluation cycle. The goals are tied to the V7 categories and AQIP action projects. The supervising dean observes a teaching session and takes notes to share with faculty. The dean also fills out a written assessment. The two then meet for a conference to review these assessments, come to a common understanding, and discuss any issues of concern. Both parties sign the evaluation, which is placed in the faculty member's personnel file.

New full- and part-time regular faculty are evaluated twice a year during the three-year probationary status and every three years thereafter. For those faculty in probationary status, goal-setting is done once a year and reviewed for progress in the second evaluation. On a three-year evaluation cycle, faculty write and review goals during for each evaluation and are encouraged to write and complete goals in the interim.

Support staff evaluations are completed annually by the prospective supervisor. The process includes a written evaluation instrument and a conference to discuss the evaluation between the supervisor and support staff employee. The employee has the opportunity to respond to the evaluation in writing. The support staff evaluation process is slated for revision in 2011 to make it consistent with faculty and non-bargaining staff processes.

4P11. Designing and Aligning Employee Benefits

NICC maintains a strong system of employee recognition, reward, compensation and benefits. Through the V7 planning process, NICC assures this system aligns with NICC objectives for instructional and non-instructional programs and services. The system of recognition and rewards includes the following:

- Weekly e-news alerts include individual and team accomplishments
- Annual recognition assembly for faculty and staff on each campus
- Employees are honored with "years of service" pins
- Recognition of those who have completed a degree or received an award or recognition
- Annual presentation of Extra Effort Awards to an individual on each campus who has gone over and beyond the call of duty and made a significant contribution to the College in terms of time and energy
- Annual faculty member nomination for the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Award and participation in the annual NISOD conference
- Annual administrator, faculty member and support staff member nominations for the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees awards
- Faculty are honored each year with a special faculty lunch
- Support staff are honored each year with a special support staff brunch
- Supervisors encouraged to show appreciation to employees as often as they can formally and informally

NICC also tries to reward employees by providing good compensation. The Board of Trustees sets the compensation range for professional, non-bargaining staff. The collective bargaining process governs all other salaries, including those of faculty and support staff. In addition to salary, NICC provides a generous benefit package. The benefit package for full-time employees includes:

- Family or single health insurance (\$25 or \$50/month premium contribution for family and fully-paid single)

- Family or single dental coverage (fully paid by the College)
- Term life insurance (fully paid by the College)
- Disability insurance (fully paid by the College)
- Retirement contribution (6.95% of gross salary contributed by the College, 4.5% contributed by employee)
- Tuition-exempt classes for employees
- Tuition reimbursement program for dependents (50% reimbursement upon successful completion)

Because of the bargaining process, NICC is unable to reward individual faculty and support staff with merit raises. However, as described under 4P9, faculty and staff have the opportunity to advance their salaries by completing additional education.

4P12. Employee Motivation

NICC has two college-wide committees that encourage conversations related to the motivation of faculty, staff, and administrators. The first is the QC with its focus on quality, assessment, and other important institutional issues. The second group is the College Senate. A wide range of issues come before the Senate including employee recognition, student enrollment management, hours of operation, college programs and activities. Additionally, Human Resources staff and the Diversity and College Environment QC subcommittee are currently reviewing instruments to utilize for an employee satisfaction/climate survey to be administered in spring 2011.

All employees are encouraged to communicate openly with their supervisors. They are invited to share concerns about their position or the institution at large. This is usually accomplished during employee evaluation meetings and provides an effective way to gauge individual motivation.

The president holds conversation sessions and informal and formal meetings with faculty, staff and students on each campus. The purpose of these sessions is to give faculty and staff an opportunity to raise issues of concern. Occasionally, conversation sessions are arranged to discuss a specific area of concern, such as benefit changes, enrollment issues, administrative changes or budget planning.

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

4P13. Providing and Evaluating Employee Satisfaction

NICC strives to be a safe, caring workplace. Individual supervisors are charged with direct communication with individuals under their supervision and maintenance of a healthy, safe environment.

In recent years, NICC has taken many steps to promote health on campus, including operating tobacco-free campuses, offering annual influenza vaccines, providing annual employee health screenings, distributing health brochures and information, and providing referrals to mental health and substance abuse services.

NICC provides a comprehensive health plan for employees and their families and an ongoing challenge is rising health care costs. In order to address this issue, the College formed a Premium Equivalent Committee (PEC) to oversee NICC's self-funded health and dental plans and to come up with ideas to maximize benefits while keeping costs in line. The PEC also works with local health and wellness experts from the health fund's third-party administrator to collect data, study health and dental plan changes, and craft recommendations to include in the collective bargaining process. In FY2011, the PEC will release a Request for Proposals from third party administrators (TPA) for NICC's self-funded health plan. The College has used the same TPA since 1998. Though

generally satisfied with the TPA's performance, members of the PEC will survey the marketplace to ensure that plan administration best serves the interests of NICC employees.

The College has also taken steps to prepare for human and natural emergencies. Staff have been trained in the basics of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). One of the components is the Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS is an established hierarchy of people, on each campus and in each center, who maintain safety during an emergency. The district-wide emergency management team meets monthly to address issues, routinely conducts training drills and exercises, and annually updates the emergency plan. Key cards, the ability to lock down, and improved methods of communication are under current study. The College established an Information Security Task Force in fall 2010 and charged the group with the following:

- Identifying theft, fraud, and information security concerns
- Establishing roles and responsibilities for key personnel
- Defining confidential and sensitive information and information systems
- Taking inventory of information assets
- Assessing risks to information systems
- Designing an information security policy and incident response plan
- Implementing security measures
- Monitoring, evaluating, and enforcing the information security program

Results (R)

4R1. Measuring Employee Value

The measures that NICC currently collects and analyzes related to valuing people include the following:

- Individual performance evaluations
- Exit interview data
- Professional development expenditures
- Number of faculty mentor relationships
- Compliance with the *Quality Faculty Plan*
- Minority students to district minority population
- Minority staff to district minority population
- Percent of credit hours taught by full-time faculty
- Percent of course sections taught by full-time faculty
- Faculty to student ratios
- Departmental staff to student ratios
- Full-time retirements as percent of regular full-time employees
- Full-time departures as percent of regular full-time employees

4R2. Performance Results for Valuing People

While NICC has begun to set a clear path toward purposeful assessment of the results in valuing people, limited data are available at this time. The *College Wide Assessment Plan* includes three goals related to valuing people and includes a number of assessment measures with which to measure success on reaching the goals. The goals and assessment methods include:

- Focus on strong internal communications and opportunities for shared governance of the College
- Provide relevant opportunities for personal and professional development
- Expand diversity efforts across the College and throughout the district

The College requests employees who leave the college through retirement or resignation to complete an exit survey. As seen in Table 4-4, the results of this survey are overwhelmingly positive.

Measure of Satisfaction with NICC Experience	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
I had a good working relationship with co-workers.	100.0%	0.0%
I had a good working relationship with my supervisor.	100.0%	0.0%
Training or job development met expectations.	86.7%	13.3%
Work assignments were distributed fairly.	100.0%	0.0%
I had a clear understanding of my job duties.	93.3%	6.7%
Working conditions met expectations.	73.3%	20.0%
The pay was fair for the amount of work required.	73.3%	26.7%
The benefits were competitive.	86.7%	13.3%
My work schedule met my needs.	100.0%	0.0%
Overall, I was satisfied with my job.	93.3%	6.7%

4R3. Evidence of Employee Productivity and Effectiveness

NICC entered AQIP in 2003 with no institutional experience in quality improvement. In seven years, the College is nearing the second sequence of the AQIP process. The College created the QC to oversee and carry out the work of action projects. NICC has successfully retired five projects and has four active projects underway. Without the productivity and effectiveness of faculty, staff, and administrators, NICC not have met these sizeable goals.

4R4. Comparison of Performance with Other Institutions

NICC began participation in the NCCBP in 2007. While only a few measures in the NCCBP relate to this category, results can be found in Table 4-5.

Measure	NICC	Peer Mean	National Ranking
% credit hours taught by FT faculty	66%	61%	78%
% of sections taught by FT faculty	65%	57%	82%
Minority Employee/Population Ratio	0.3	0.6	3%
Minority Employees	1%	8%	3%
Minority Student/Population Ratio	1.0%	1.4%	42%
Training Dollars per FTE Employee	\$360.97	\$434.62	52%

Source: NCCBP 2009 Survey Results

Improvements (I)

4I1. Improvements for Valuing People

In joining AQIP, NICC made a commitment to the AQIP principles and criteria. A variety of groups will continue to be involved in the College's efforts to improve processes and systems for valuing people, including the following:

- NICC Higher Education Association
- NICC Support Staff Association

- Quality Faculty Plan Committee
- Faculty Development Committee
- PEC
- Performance Evaluation Task Force
- College Senate
- QC

412. Improving Processes and Target Selection in Valuing People

NICC will work to achieve the following results related to valuing people:

- Plan for a compensation and classification study and make necessary changes
- Conduct a bi-annual employee satisfaction or engagement survey and act on the results of the survey
- Conduct regular professional development needs assessments of faculty, administrators and support staff
- Design and implement a comprehensive staff development program
- Design and implement assessment tools that measure effectiveness of professional development & mentoring programs for online faculty and student satisfaction for online courses

**AQIP CATEGORY 5:
LEADING AND COMMUNICATING**

Processes (P)

5P1. Defining and Reviewing Mission and Values

The current NICC mission and value statements were written by the College Vision Team in May 2004 from input received from staff, faculty, administrators, and Board of Trustees to guide the first strategic planning process after the College joined AQIP in 2003. The mission and vision statements were incorporated into the strategic plan which was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2005 and reviewed again in 2008. The plan, titled V7, included data and input from College employees and other stakeholders and set goals for a three-year planning cycle (2005-2008). After the AQIP Strategy Team attended the second strategy forum in May 2007, one of their recommendations was to establish a new AQIP committee structure that would reflect a stronger commitment to continuous improvement and encourage individuals from across the College to participate in planning and improvement processes.

The result of this recommendation was the formation of the QC. Since its inception in 2008, the QC has been charged with oversight of the mission and value statements, the strategic plan and the planning process. The current strategic plan was written by the QC with input from across the college in 2008. It set goals for a two-year planning cycle (2008-2010).

The NICC Board of Trustees has scheduled a strategic planning retreat for January 2011. At that facilitated retreat, the Board will review the mission and vision statements and set goals that will inform the QC's 2011 revision of the strategic plan.

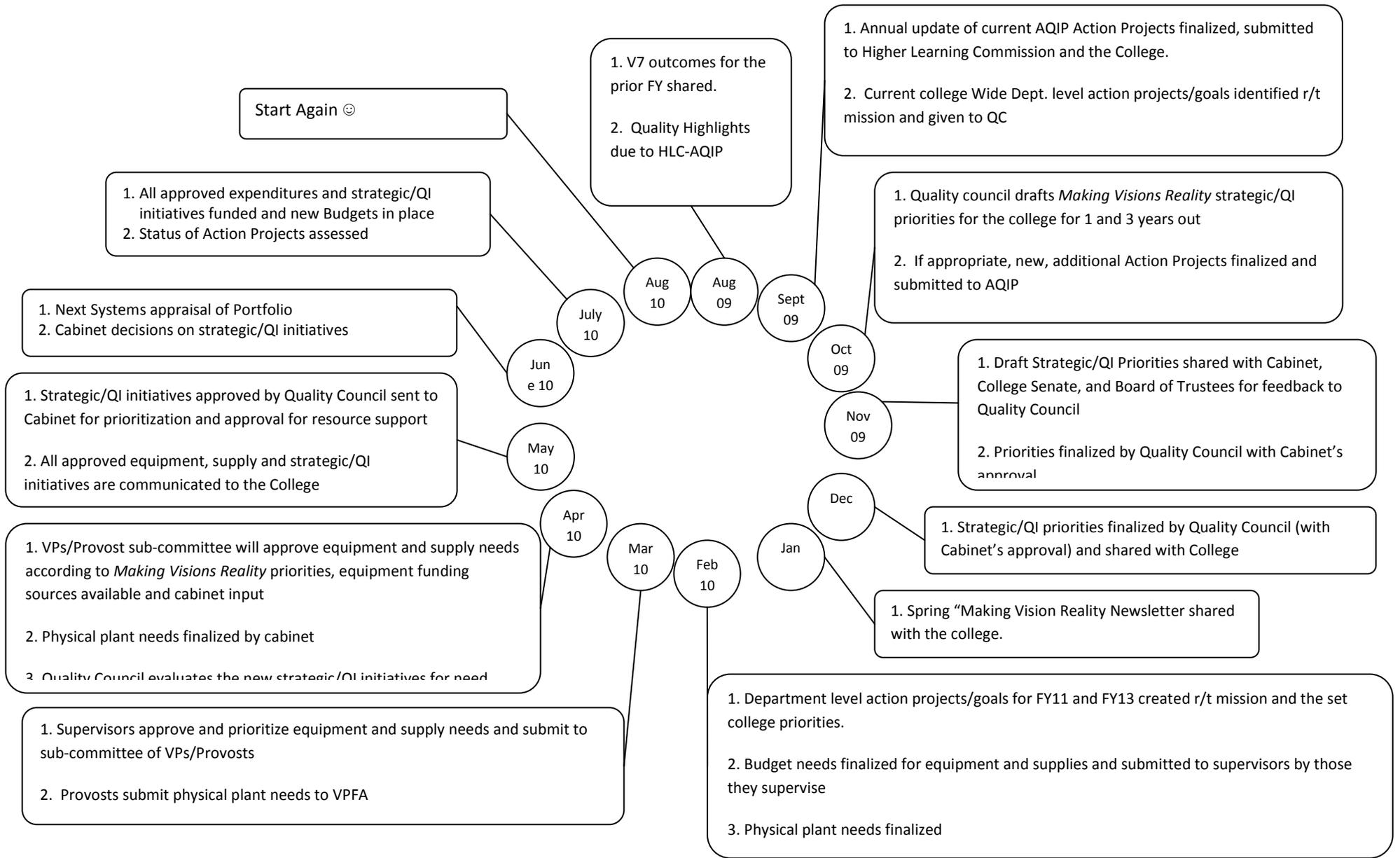
5P2. Aligning Directions with Mission, Vision, Values, and High Performance

The QC has developed a detailed planning cycle called *Making Visions Reality* that starts annually in August with sharing outcomes from the previous year's projects and IDE program reviews. This is followed by the annual update of the AQIP action projects, setting of department-level goals, and distribution of the IDE program review schedule. The QC then drafts the strategic/quality improvement priorities for one and three years forward. These priorities are then shared with Cabinet, the College Senate, and the Board of Trustees and feedback is requested. After the priorities have been established, they are disseminated College-wide.

In January, IDE program reviews are completed and departments are asked to submit their goals for one and three years out. These goals must align with the strategic/quality improvement priorities. Departments then submit funding requests for new strategic/quality improvement projects, including requests for new or replacement personnel positions. Budget managers must approve and prioritize these requests for them to be considered.

The approved requests for equipment and supplies are forwarded to a subcommittee made up of the three vice presidents and two campus provosts who make final decisions on funding these projects. Personnel requests are sent to the Cabinet for disposition and the QC subcommittees review all remaining requests, prioritize them based on need, feasibility, and alignment with strategic/quality improvement priorities and forward these requests to the Cabinet for final decisions.

At the conclusion of the process, the approved expenditures and strategic/quality improvement projects which have been funded are announced and the budget power is allocated to appropriate budgets to make the purchases or hire personnel approved through the process. Flow chart 5-1 is a schematic of the planning cycle in FY 2010 for FY 2011 or can be found at: http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/fy11_planning_cycle.pdf



5P3. Considering Needs and Expectations of Stakeholders

NICC engages internal stakeholders well in College decision-making. Employees have a voice, and they are invited to use it through participation in departmental action planning or by serving on the College Senate or QC and their respective subcommittees.

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

NICC involves other stakeholders as well, especially students. One way to the College has included students, with the intent of gauging their needs, is through surveys, such as SENSE and CCSSE. The results continue to guide decisions and to develop a clear sense of what students need.

5P4. Leadership Guidance Seeking Future Opportunities

When President Wills, Ph.D. came to NICC in 2004, she immediately looked at the issue of quality. One of her first steps was to initiate the development of a strategic plan. Another was to align activities to fit the strategic plan. A third was to insist that the most important activities of the College are to teach and train, which must be kept at the forefront when looking for future opportunities. The president also supported the *12 Common Student Learning Objectives* that are common to every student at NICC.

NICC leaders stay abreast of trends in higher education and opportunities at the local, state, and national level. They are involved in many collaborative activities. At the local level, they work closely with schools, colleges, and business and industry. Because of this active engagement, the College is often called upon when there is a community need or an opportunity to collaborate. Collaborative examples include the RAMS in Oelwein; the Iowa Workforce One Stop Center located at the Town Clock Center for Professional Development in Dubuque; new programs in Wind Technology, CNC Machining, and Entrepreneurial Cosmetology; and the small business incubator in Dubuque.

NICC leaders also participate in many activities at the state level. The president participates in the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents. And, as previously mentioned, a number of administrators take part in the Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC) and Leadership for a New Century (LINC) leadership programs hosted by Iowa State University.

Finally, NICC leaders are active at the national level. The president and other administrators travel to Washington, D.C., each year to meet with Congressional delegations to advocate for future opportunities for community colleges in Iowa and a number of College administrators take part in the Rural Community College Alliance.

Many opportunities arise from these local, state, and national collaborations and NICC is primed to respond when they match the College's vision, mission and strategic plan. In FY 2010, the college was successful in securing a \$300,000 earmark for renewable energy programs and in FY 2011, two earmark requests totaling \$1,800,000 were submitted to Congress for support of Chemical Technician and Veterinary Science Technician credit programs at the Calmar campus.

5P5. Organization Decision Making

In a large organization, decisions happen at many levels. The president, Executive Team, and Cabinet make daily or weekly decisions about issues affecting the entire College, such as organizational structure, programs, facilities and budget. Cabinet members either serve as department heads or supervise one or more department heads.

Department heads manage a budget, supervise faculty or staff, and ensure that the department is fulfilling its goals and operating smoothly.

Two Cabinet members and the provosts play a particularly important role in daily decision-making. Several years ago, the College turned to site-based management. This means that the provost on each campus supervises all site-specific issues, support services and daily operations.

As mentioned before, the president and Cabinet rely on the College Senate and QC to guide and participate in decision-making. However, there are many other teams and committees with more narrow but equally important roles. Table 5-1 lists two key standing committees and their purposes.

Table 5-2: Key Standing Committees	
Committee	Membership and Purpose
Curriculum Committee	<p>This committee involves the vice president of academic affairs, provosts, deans, and faculty from throughout the district. The committee meets bimonthly. The purpose is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve new curriculum, curriculum changes and curriculum deletions • Monitor all course revisions, new course implementation and annual course review. • Verify that all courses and degrees comply with state and local standards, courses have department or discipline approval, and issues regarding program and degree content are addressed by the appropriate parties • Lead local efforts in identifying areas of curriculum and instruction that should be developed
Faculty Development Committee	<p>This committee consists of two campus-based branches. Each branch of the committee has faculty representatives from all academic divisions. The campus committees meet monthly and hold occasional shared meetings to promote consistency. The purpose of these committees is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance in planning professional growth activities for faculty • Plan the fall faculty development workshop activities • Function as a hearing committee when a supervisor denies Continuing Education units, and a faculty member wishes to challenge that decision

5P6. Data Driven Decision Making

One of NICC's goals is to continue to improve on processes that reflect data-based decision-making. The goal is to use data not only to inform needs but also to document processes and outcomes.

NICC has taken several steps to improve the College use of data-based decision-making. An Institutional Research department was established and a director hired in 2005. This office analyzes data and generates reports for College decision-making processes. For example, NICC uses Datatel, SENSE, CCSSE and NCCBP data to provide direction for improved services for students. The data that have been collected by Institutional Research have proved invaluable in making the case and providing documentation in a number of important college projects and initiatives.

5P7. College-Wide Communication

The president has made open communication one of the most important items on her agenda. She is acutely aware of the need for communication to flow easily both vertically and horizontally. In a large institution, it is essential to have ways to reach everyone with the same information. The primary way to share information is to send a college-wide email or post an announcement on NICC Xpress, the college web portal.

External Relations plays a key role in college-wide communication. The department publishes an annual report, available to all employees. It posts news releases on the NICC website. It also produces weekly e-news alerts that highlight internal news, such as board decisions, new programs, new collaborations, new employees, and success stories involving students, alumni, employees and departments.

NICC also provides face-to-face opportunities for communication. Examples include All College Day; campus forums that are utilized throughout the year to address pressing issues; Campus Council, which meets monthly to communicate board and administrative decisions to all departments; monthly deans meetings, which set the future direction of academic and student services; and department meetings involving faculty and staff on both campuses.

An example of good communication between and among the levels and units of the College occurred during the tight economic times of FY 2010. In October 2009, Iowa's governor announced a 10% across-the-board reduction in state funding for FY 2010. With 25% of the budget year already past and many spending decisions already made, this situation presented a significant challenge to NICC. The fiscal impact was over \$2,000,000 for the College for the FY 2011 budget year.

The president acted swiftly by calling together first the vice presidents then the full Cabinet to discuss the situation and how the budget shortfall should be addressed. Her decision was to establish a Budget Task Force comprised of the president, the three vice presidents, the presidents of both collective bargaining groups, the chair of the QC, and the chair of the Fiscal Management and Resource Development QC subcommittee. The Task Force was facilitated by the director of human resources.

The charge to the task force from the president was to develop a list of recommended revenue enhancements and budget cuts prior to the end of the fall 2009 term. The president explained that she would then forward the task force recommendations to the NICC Board of Trustees for action in early 2010. The final recommendations that resulted in \$2,149,254 in reductions to the FY 2011 budget were presented to and approved by the Board in January 2010.

The remarkable thing about this process was not the speed with which it was carried out but, rather, the level of involvement across the College. In the eight week period, the task force met five times, an all-College survey made available via Survey Monkey was answered by almost 40% of the part-time regular and full-time faculty and staff, over 130 ideas submitted from across the College were reviewed, and cost savings or revenue estimates were made for the 86 that were deemed feasible by the task force.

The full results of the survey were shared with faculty and staff via Xpress. The president sent weekly all-College e-mails to update staff and faculty on the process and she held two all-College meetings to update faculty and staff and to answer questions and calm concerns. While some of the reductions were difficult, most staff and faculty expressed appreciation that the process was conducted in the open and information was made available to anyone who requested it.

5P8. Leadership Communication of the Shared Mission, Vision, and Values

NICC administrators seek to provide clear and consistent messages about the College mission, vision, and values. In fact, they share the mission and vision as often as they can, including publishing the mission and vision in the college catalog, the employee handbook, and on the college website. Administrators also refer to the mission and vision in direct communication with employees. It is common for the mission and vision to be used as a starting point for conversation with individuals and groups.

The College strategic plan sets clear and high expectations for individuals and the institution as a whole. The strategic plan has specific goals related to equity, access, success, learning, partnerships, and continuous improvement.

5P9. Encouraging, Developing, and Strengthening Leadership Abilities

NICC encourages everyone in the organization to be a leader by promoting a culture of excellence and innovation. The College supports employees in developing leadership skills in many different ways:

- Faculty can apply for funds to attend national and regional conferences to stay current on the best practices and innovative ideas in their fields.
- Faculty members have the opportunity to apply for a semester-long sabbatical to help them pursue professional growth opportunities in business, industry or education.
- Faculty and staff may enroll in credit and non-credit classes free of charge. Many take advantage of this opportunity to build new skills, pursue special interests or work towards a degree.
- Deans and other middle-managers participate in LINC.
- Administrators attend national and state leadership conferences. Some also participate in CLIC.

NICC provides many opportunities for individual skill development. However, the College is perpetually challenged by the distance between the campuses and centers, and practical impact this has to sharing leadership skills and practices with others. One of the most effective ways to share best practices in leadership skills is through online publications. The College distributes *Innovation Abstracts* online to all employees. This monthly publication offers information about innovations and their effectiveness in higher education. The College also subscribes to *Chronicle of Higher Education* and makes it available online for all employees. Other leadership journals are provided via the library or provosts.

5P10. Maintaining Mission, Vision, Values, and High Performance

NICC recognizes the importance of continuity during times of transition. When there is a change in leadership, it is essential to pass on the NICC mission, vision, and values. New Board of Trustee members participate in an extensive board orientation with the president of the Board, NICC president, and three vice presidents. New vice presidents or provosts are oriented individually by the president.

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

Results (R)

5R1. Measuring Leading and Communicating

NICC is considering the proposal of an employee satisfaction survey in spring 2011 from the College Environment and Diversity QC subcommittee.

5R2. Results for Leading and Communicating

The 2002 AQIP Constellation Survey provided a good baseline of measures for leading and communicating. When the new president arrived in 2004, she studied and used the survey results as the foundation for leadership improvement within the College.

In the survey, employees identified leadership and communication as being important but not being carried out as well as they could at the time. The survey showed that adoption of the following practices could have a significant impact on NICC:

- Communication that occurs effectively up, down, and across different units of the organization
- Fostering faculty and staff partnership with administrators
- Establishing a shared a vision of what NICC will be like within the next decade

Since the Constellation Survey, NICC has taken many steps to address these areas of opportunity. The following results have been accomplished:

- Adopted a revised mission and vision statement and shared it with all employees
- Completed and revised the planning cycle within the strategic plan and shared it with all employees
- Established a College Senate
- Developed a current AQIP action project to create a QC
- Engaged individuals in all departments in the annual V7 planning process

5R3. Performance Comparison with other institutions

NICC does not currently collect data in this area.

Improvements (I)

5I1. Improving for Leading and Communicating

One of the goals of the College Environment and Diversity QC subcommittee in the *College Wide Assessment Plan* is to increase and enhance opportunities for leadership development for NICC staff and faculty. Another is to assess employee satisfaction with and engagement in the NICC work environment.

Resource allocation affects the leading and communicating. One of the goals of the Fiscal Management and Resource Development QC subcommittee is to provide college-wide budget training via multi-media technology to all affected staff.

After assessing the first AQIP planning cycle—both in terms of decision-making and communication—the College made several revisions to the process. For example, ways to improve leadership and communication processes have been discussed. Discussion ideas include:

- A pilot of a 360-degree leadership satisfaction survey was completed by Cabinet in 2009 and 2010.
- Improved involvement of College and student senate in providing input into the strategic plan and the annual planning process.
- Improved implementation of the *College Wide Assessment Plan*.

5I2. Selecting Improvement Targets for Leading and Communicating

Implementing the *College Wide Assessment Plan* continues to be a key action project for NICC. The goal is for the College to be more data-driven in its decision-making processes. In creating the plan, the seven QC subcommittees developed measurable goals with the assistance of Institutional Research. The next step is to use the assessment plan to support the Board of Trustees in creating key performance indicators. The Board will have a strategic planning session in January 2011 and their work will guide this assessment work. The NICC Foundation Board also began its strategic planning in mid-October. Having the Foundation Board as part of the *College Wide Assessment Plan* is also important in serving stakeholders of the College.

AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Processes (P)

6P1. Identifying Support Service Needs

NICC uses a variety of methods to assess student support service needs, including the following:

- ACCUPLACER test scores showing student developmental course needs
- Self-reporting by students through Disabilities Services
- Faculty recommendations directing students to utilize counseling and advising services
- Academic Alert system
- Open-door culture that encourages students to drop in and talk to faculty and staff
- Student forums and focus groups
- CCSSE survey
- SENSE survey
- Institutional Research reports
- Program evaluations

In addition, meetings with the following groups also contributes to an understanding of student support service needs:

- Advisory Boards
- High school stakeholders
- Board of Trustees
- Executive Team
- Cabinet
- Campus Council
- Provosts and deans
- Departments
- QC
- iMPACT student senate
- Student clubs and organizations
- Honor societies
- Foundation Board

6P2. Identifying the Administrative Support Service Needs

There are several avenues through which faculty, staff and administrators may make known their support service needs. Formally, employees may express their needs to College Senate, within their annual performance evaluation, or by submitting a request through the V7 process. Informally, the president and her Cabinet are very accessible and if a need arises, it can be discussed and acted upon at a monthly Cabinet meeting.

6P3. Designing, Maintaining, and Communicating Safety and Security

NICC takes the needs of emergency situation preparation seriously. An Emergency Management Team meets monthly. Some accomplishments of the Emergency Management Team include:

- The development and distribution of emergency response manual to all employees
- The distribution and regular testing of walkie-talkies to key areas for emergency communication

- The maintenance of emergency supply buckets in disaster shelter areas
- The conducting of semiannual disaster drills to practice the ICS procedures

Many Continuing Education staff are also trained emergency responders and assist the College in maintaining its preparedness by providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator training to employees.

6P4. Managing Support Service Processes

One of NICC's goals is to provide strong student and administrative support services. The College's institutional operations have been organized around key processes. Some of these are designed to support students while others are designed to support NICC employees and the business side of operations. These services have been organized for easy access for students and each department and process links to the next. The goal is to provide a seamless support service system that helps students have a positive college experience. Table 6-1 shows management of NICC's student support services and can be found at

Table 6-1 Student Support Services	
Department	Service
High School Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of college courses for high school students • Recruitment
Tech-prep coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of vocational programs for high school students • Recruitment
Career outreach coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamless transition from high school to college to careers
Testing Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCUPLACER testing
TRiO, Student Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive support services for qualified students
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Admissions
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial aid • Scholarships • Student employment
Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Enrollment
Disability Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodations
Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts • Graduation requirements • Transfers
Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student invoicing • Tuition and fee payments
Distance Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of distance learning opportunities • Assistance with courses
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference materials, books, periodicals, and electronic resources • Assistance in locating and using resources
Learning Centers and Writing Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring • Academic assistance
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic, career, and personal counseling • Referral
Adult transition coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and career counseling • Personal support • Referral
Student Life, Diversity and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student leadership • Student government • Student newspaper • Recreational activities • Clubs and organizations • Diversity awareness • Student Engagement
Career Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career assessment • Job referrals • Resume and interview preparation
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning opportunities

6P5. Documenting Support Processes

Each administrative office maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that is available via Xpress. The Cabinet reviews these manuals annually.

Results (R)

6R1. Measuring Support Service Processes

NICC collects a variety of information to document student and administrative support services as outlines in Table 6-2, which can be located at

Table 6-2 Measures Documenting Support Services	
Service Processes	Measures
High School Relations, Tech-Prep, and Career Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school yield report
Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students and parents/spouses participating in new student orientation • New student orientation survey • SENSE • CCSSE
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment reports • SENSE • CCSSE • High school yield report • Event surveys
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial aid awarded • Scholarships awarded • Student employment and work-study records • SENSE • CCSSE
Testing Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCUPLACER test scores
Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENSE • CCSSE
Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment reports • Attrition reports • Graduation reports • Transfer reports • SENSE • CCSSE
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of holdings • Number and type of electronic resources • Circulation counts • Student satisfaction (ACT College Outcomes Survey, SENSE and CCSSE)
Learning Centers and Writing Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students requiring accommodations • Number of students served • Number of contact hours
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students served and/or contact hours

Adult transition coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students served
Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget records • Annual audit report • Lack of federal and state violations • Compliance with bid requirements
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus crime report
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder feedback on buildings and grounds
Computer Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of computers, printers, and other hardware maintained • Number of help desk calls
Institutional Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various institutional data
External Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICC Foundation income and expenses

6R2. Performance Results for Student Support Services

NICC gauges the results of student support service processes in a variety of ways, including the following:

High School Yield Rate—The percentage of high school seniors enrolling at NICC is an important measure of how well NICC provides services to high school students is. Category 3R3 provides detail on the yield rate.

New Student Orientations—New student orientations welcome students to NICC and inform them about important support services. Orientation topics cover academic programs, financial aid, technology services, learning resources, and academic support services, such as the learning centers and writing centers. NICC's orientation sessions for parents and significant others have been well received as shown in Table 6-3 located at. Evaluations from the student and parents and significant others orientations show a high degree of satisfaction. On both campuses, 95% of participants rated the sessions either "excellent" or "good," stating that they received valuable information.

Table 6-3 Parent/Significant Other Orientation Attendance		
	Calmar	Peosta
FY 2006		
Fall	70	42
Spring	0	2
FY 2007		
Fall	45	42
Spring	0	3
FY 2008		
Fall	45	41
Spring	0	3
FY 2009		
Fall	70	109
Spring	3	1
FY 2010		
Fall	35	41
Spring	2	0

Placement Scores—Placement scores are an important indicator of NICC students' need for developmental courses and student support services. Compared to fall 2007, students scoring in the developmental range fell by 2%, from 57% to 55%. NICC responds by referring these students to College support services and by creating enough

developmental courses to meet current need. Table 6-4 shows the breakdown of remedial placement scores according to category.

Table 6-4 Percentage of Enrolled Students With Remedial Placement Scores			
Enrollment Term	Writing	Reading	Math
Fall 2007	57%	38%	75%
Fall 2010	64%	33%	67%

Source: STTR 10th Day- Repeat Values; STUDENT.TERMS

Accommodations—Table 6-5 reveals the number of students requesting accommodations through Disability Services. In addition to standard accommodations provided, the Calmar campus initiated a STEP (Support Through the Encouragement of Peers) student organization to empower students with disabilities with life management and academic skills.

Table 6-5 Students Requesting Accommodations	
	District Totals
FY 2006	498
FY 2007	485
FY 2008	433
FY 2009	493
FY 2010	575

Source: FY MIS STUDENT FILE; Disability on File

Learning Centers and Writing Centers—NICC's learning centers and writing centers are in great demand, averaging in excess of 24,000 student contact hours annually. This usage measure is an indirect indicator of student satisfaction with these important student support services.

Libraries—NICC continues to expand NICC's learning resources for students. Again, usage data are an indirect measure of how much students rely on the College libraries. Table 6-6 shows circulation counts for print and non-print resources, access to EBSCOhost, and Information Literacy sessions and attendance.

Table 6-6 Learning Resources Statistics				
Year	Circulation	EBSCOhost	Info. Lit. Sessions	Info. Lit. Attendees
2009	14,370	9173 sessions	69	1,507
2010	17,333	7739 sessions	77	1,454

Distance Learning—Distance learning is a rapidly growing educational strategy at NICC. Typically, spring semester receives fewer student registrations overall; yet, spring 2010 indicates a large increase in distance learning course offerings and registrations. As a result of the high demand for distance learning, NICC changed its accreditation status to include the granting of online degrees. Table 6-7 shows programs of study NICC students are able to complete online.

Degree	Program	
Associate of Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Administration • Criminal Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Psychology
Associate of Applied Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ag Business • Business Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial Cosmetology • Health Information Technology
Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ag Business: Crop Advisor • Ag Business: Animal Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ag Business: Animal Science Dairy • Ag Business: Manager and Marketing
Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Transcriptionist

Distance Learning formalized its ongoing professional development and training opportunities to effectively prepare and support faculty for this important educational enhancement. The training process includes instructional design of online courses, creation of new online courses, development of converting face-to-face courses to online courses, and implementation of interactive multi-media technology in online courses. NICC recognized the need for an instructional designer and hired this position in the fall 2008. The director of distance learning works with the instructional designer to oversee training and progress.

Counseling—Table 6-8 reveals that the number of students utilizing counseling services continues to grow dramatically. More students are coming to NICC with pre-existing mental illness and multiple barriers to success. A full- and part-time counselor provide minimal triage for the growing student population needing counseling services. Both counselors indicate that they are only hitting the “tip of the iceberg” in terms of student personal counseling needs. They point to a need for alcohol and other drug awareness and prevention programming.

Sessions	FY09	FY10
Personal Sessions	732	941
Academic Sessions	338	290

Source: Counselors; data comes from tracking software

NICC also served 125 veterans in FY 2010, an increase from an average of 118 over the previous four years. Many veterans are returning from the Middle East and some of them have difficulties adjusting and need additional support to succeed in college.

Adult Transition Centers—NICC cares about non-traditional students, generally classified as age 24 or above. Many adult students have been out of school for years and have faced additional issues like being displaced workers, displaced homemakers, having dependants, working full or part-time jobs, or incarceration. For many of these students, the adult transition coordinators serve as a lifeline. Table 6-9, , shows the number of adult students seeking support from this office.

Year	Displaced Homemakers	Dislocated Workers	Single Parents	Criminal Offenders	Adult Learners	All Categories
2006	196	58	180	70	483	987
2007	134	46	185	46	428	839
2008	94	36	169	91	343	733
2009	76	57	188	83	325	729
2010	57	95	155	88	332	727

Satisfaction with Various Support Services—The College administered the CCSSE survey in 2006 and re-administered the survey in 2008. See Table 3-7 for results of the 2008 survey.

6R3.Performance Results for Administrative Support Services

NICC values administrative support services because they help employees serve students better. Examples of administrative support services include:

Business Services—Business Services manages the financial affairs of the College. The College's financial records are audited annually by an independent auditor who has consistently issued an opinion that the financial statements of the College fairly represent the financial position of the College. The strong financial health of the College is reflected in the A1 rating assigned by Moody's Investors Service in June 2009.

A major financial challenge facing NICC as well as other Iowa community colleges is the decline in State support and the resulting increasing reliance on tuition revenue. State funding has decreased from being 34% of unrestricted revenue in FY 2006 to 27% in FY 2010, while tuition and fees revenue as increased from 52% to 61% over the same time period.

To deal with this challenge, the College is both reducing expenses and increasing other revenue sources. The president formed a Budget Task Force with members from across the College, including the chair of the Fiscal Management and Resource Development QC Subcommittee. Two of the results of this task force were a reduction in postage and travel expenses by relying more heavily on technology. Offering an early retirement incentive, not filling some of the vacant positions, and freezing salaries for professional staff decreased personnel costs.

In terms of revenue, Grants has been very successful. In FY 2010, the College secured more than \$3.5 million in grant funds, including a \$750,000 grant from the State of Iowa's I-Jobs Infrastructure program and a \$2 million grant from the Department of Labor in partnership with ECIA and several other entities.

Human Resources—Human Resources provides many administrative support functions including, such as monitoring faculty compliance with the NICC *Quality Faculty Plan*, maintaining faculty development and credentialing records, sending renewal reminders to faculty members, working with the collective bargaining contracts and the negotiations process, and administering the employee benefits plans.

External Relations—Marketing has been working with Admissions on a number of initiatives designed to increase enrollment, including marketing specifically designed for adult students, online marketing using technology such as Twitter and Facebook, and incorporating e-marketing techniques such as development of e-brochures and program videos. This office has also assisted in marketing of new programs both in credit and non-credit, which have resulted in increased enrollment.

Grants and the NICC Foundation successfully supported unfunded or under-funded college initiatives. In FY 2010, these offices garnered \$3.5 million in additional public and private support. Additionally, the Foundation raised \$646,000 in individual and corporate donations to support student scholarships and other special projects.

External Relations also increased its alumni outreach efforts. In FY 2009, it implemented the Colleague Advancement module of Datatel to provide systematic recording of donor information. In FY 2009, the department also updated the names and addresses of 27,000 alumni and started an alumni e-newsletter. The first major alumni event was held for Calmar campus accounting alumni, raising nearly \$15,000 for a scholarship endowment for accounting students.

Legislative Affairs has increased activity over the past few years as well. In FY 2009, the president and the director of external relations traveled to the State capitol weekly during the legislative session and advocated for increased support through grassroots efforts in the district. Increased communications with federal legislators, staffers and agencies resulted in increased federal grants and congressional appropriations.

Computer Information Systems (CIS)—CIS continues to provide the hardware, software and networking access needed by students, faculty and staff. The department strengthens the security of NICC systems by both increasing the capacity of uninterrupted power supply and improving protection against viruses and spam. Through the *Information Technology Master Plan* and funding secured through a Title III grant, CIS continues to improve services.

Facilities—In 2007 the NICC district taxpayers approved a 10-year, \$35 million bond levy that has allowed the College to build a new building, and several additions to current buildings, and repair and refurbish existing space, and improve technology access. With improved facilities and additional space, NICC will expand programs. The first bond-funded construction began in summer 2008 and the final construction is anticipated to end in 2011.

In addition, the city of Waukon, Iowa passed a bond referendum to build an NICC Center in Waukon, which opened spring 2008. Also in 2008, development began on the Peosta campus' 20-acre Outdoor Learning Lab (OLL). The OLL is the first of its kind in the state and was made possible through multi-sourced grant funding. Additionally, two years of state Accelerated Career Education (ACE) funding enabled NICC to expand the Calmar Dairy Center to include two science labs and two classrooms to satisfy a growing need for increased science programming.

Campus Security—The need for campus security has become more evident with national reports of increasing incidents of violence at educational institutions. The College responded with the development of Emergency Management Teams and corresponding manuals. Monthly Emergency Management Team meetings are held and regular trainings and emergency simulations are practiced to improve awareness and preparedness of all staff.

6R4. Using Information and Results to Improve Support Services

NICC has always collected data on student and administrative support services. However, in the past, this data was used in a limited way. NICC's current goal is to use data-based decision-making in all areas of the college. The following steps have been taken to better use information to improve student and administrative support services:

- Improved NICC technology and the ability to collect, store and analyze data more effectively
- Adopted AQIP and engaged in a comprehensive self-assessment in 2002
- Used AQIP feedback to determine new action projects
- Merged the V7 with the AQIP process to form a new planning process focused on a culture of quality
- Formed a QC, administered SENSE and CCSSE surveys, analyzed results and made recommendations
- Joined the NCCBP, analyzed benchmarking results, and made recommendations for action
- Created an annual planning process that uses data for decision-making
- Hired a director for institutional research to coordinate and disseminates College data
- Completed the CLARUS Market Scans, analyzed results, and made recommendations for action
- Researched and will launch Lumens to facilitate the administration of Continuing Education programs
- Created a *Facilities Master Plan*
- Progressed on projects funded by the \$35 million bond levy
- Secured Title III grant to assist in implementing the *Information Technology Master Plan*
- Changed advising processes based on SENSE feedback

6R5. Performance Comparison with Other Institutions

The SENSE, CCSSE and NCCBP data provide the College with informative comparisons of similar institutions. For example, the ratios of students to professional staff in the student services area show that NICC is above average for testing and assessment services (99% rank) and financial aid (85% rank), but below average for career services (11% rank) and counseling and advising (17% rank). Table 3-7 provides comparison data for review. The ranking for dollars spent per employee on development and training, at 54%, shows that NICC is about average. Table 4-5 provides more data on this topic. When it comes to budget discussions about allocating money and positions, these comparisons can be helpful. NICC continues to improve utilizing this data toward planning for funding allocations.

Improvements (I)

6I1. Improving and Supporting Organizational Operations

NICC is constantly looking for ways to improve student and administrative support service processes and has taken steps toward improvement, including the following:

- Analyzed SENSE, CCSSE, CLARUS and NCCBP results to set new recruitment and retention goals and make recommendation for improved educational practices and student support services
- Administered CCSSE for the second time in the spring 2008
- Diversified revenues through External Relations
- Modified the NICC website and NICC Xpress web portal to better meet student and employee needs
- Examined Disability Services through a contracted consultant and visited with stakeholders to provide recommendations
- Continued progress on facilities updates through a \$35 million bond levy
- Melded the V7 strategic planning process with the AQIP process and initiated a new QC
- Used data to drive decision-making about student and administrative support services
- Created a College Senate that represents all levels of the College to reviews College issues
- Offered Workplace Lean to several NICC departments in an effort to streamline work processes
- Delivered Mastering the Art and Technology of Exceptional Services to Student Services staff
- Redesigned the Distance Learning web pages to enhance student support.

6I2. Selecting Improvement Targets for Supporting Organizational Operations

NICC's culture and infrastructure for communication and planning revolves around meetings. These meetings include those held by the Cabinet, campus and center administrators, faculty, academic departments, QC, College Senate and iMPACT student senate. Through these meetings and the use of data-based information and best practices, the College selected the following targets for improvement:

- Continue to imbed quality into the NICC culture
- Work collaboratively with credit and non-credit divisions to recruit, retain, and better serve constituents
- Improve high school yield, adult population base, and retention for all students
- Update the policy and procedure manual for the Business Services.

AQIP CRITERION 7 MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

PROCESSES (P)

7P1. Selecting, Managing, and Distributing Performance Information for Programs and Services

NICC is still in the early stages of using data for decision-making, though the College has made progress in the past several years. For example the College now employs a full-time director of institutional research. Data is used for decision making on new program development, need for additional faculty, grant applications, efficiency of operations of centers, and curriculum development that strategically support the needs of the NICC business districts and communities.

Data is provided to the QC, Cabinet, Board of Trustees and administrative staff of the College to aid in decision-making on a routine basis. College staff is made aware of data available to them on through the NICC Xpress portal and all campus emails announcing new data reports. Specific data is also requested from the director of institutional research by faculty and staff based on need for special projects, grants, business advisory meetings, community reports, and other stakeholders' requests as needed. The College looks forward to being fully operational in this exciting area—not only in collecting the “right” data, but also in managing and using the data to make decisions to further the V7 strategic planning process.

7P2. Selecting, Managing, and Distributing Performance Information for Planning and Improvement

NICC is currently implementing a *College Wide Assessment Plan* to manage and distribute performance information to support planning and improvement efforts. Since this is new for the College, the process has challenged the QC. Therefore, the plan has gone through several revisions. The director of institutional research is playing a key advisory role supporting this assessment work.

Once data is “mapped” to coincide with the *V7 Strategic Plan*, it will be much simpler to measure progress. Currently, data is selected, managed, and utilized in the following ways:

- NICC reviews quantitative research from the Community College Research Center, the Lumina Foundation, and the Teacher College Record Journal to stay abreast of national trends.
- The director of institutional research collaborates with other community college institutional researchers to identify pertinent issues regarding the generation, reliability and interpretation of data.
- NICC staff analyze quantitative data from IPEDS, National Center for Education Statistics, and Iowa College Student Aid Commission to compare NICC to other institutions.
- The Student Access and Success QC subcommittee monitors and sets goals for student recruitment and retention.
- The Cabinet uses data to identify important issues, set goals, develop strategies for data-driven improvements, ensure compliance with the strategic plan, and establish progress measures.
- NICC conducts program reviews at least every five years to assess performance.
- NICC reviews institutional data to inform curriculum improvements.
- NICC participated in the NCCBP survey, which measures students' performance for a variety of indicators and provides national benchmark and comparison data.

7P3. Determining Needs of Data and Performance

NICC is emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision-making at all levels of the institution. This means, of course, that data must be made available to departments to assist them in both planning and reporting. NICC recently implemented a new annual planning process of that starts at the department-level. This process is detailed

in 8P1. NICC administrators have instructed their departments to use data in their annual planning. Depending on their Datatel clearance level, staff can create new queries or use established queries to access data. NICC also has a Datatel support specialist who is ready and available to help with data queries. For instance, as part of their annual planning, departments may review enrollment trends, placement scores, program and course retention data, completion trends, graduate surveys, and employment trends. As departments become familiar with available data, they will be able to conduct more effective program reviews that use data to determine processes and outcomes.

7P4. Analyzing Performance Data and Information

The director of institutional research is the lead administrator working on data gathering and compilation. The director generates student profile fact sheets, trend studies and comparative data to help in decision-making. This position presents the reports to Cabinet regularly and assists in interpreting the data. After review by Cabinet, data reports are placed on the NICC network. All employees can access these reports and use them as part of their annual departmental planning process.

With the assistance of the director of institutional research, the QC is responsible for the oversight of the collection and maintenance of the *College Wide Assessment Plan*.

7P5. Determining Needs and Priorities for Comparative Data and Information

NICC regularly communicates data with outside organizations. When determining data needs and priorities, the College always asks, "Is it most helpful to compare us to ourselves or to other institutions?" When comparisons are necessary, the director of institutional research turns to resources like the National Association of Institutional Research (NAIR), Association of Institutional Research Upper Midwest (AIRUM), Iowa Community College Association of Institutional Research (IACCAIR), and IPEDS for assistance in choosing and prioritizing data, as well as internal sources like the CLARUS and NCCBP studies.

Every area of the strategic plan has measures that lend themselves well to comparisons with other institutions. When choosing sources of comparative data, the College first determines if it is a reliable source. Next, it must determine if the source allows the College to extract information about appropriate comparison groups.

For example, IPEDS is a powerful tool for creating comparative data. NICC can compare itself to all community colleges in Iowa or focus on those of similar size. NICC can also compare itself to a national group whose institutional characteristics are similar.

NICC is particularly interested in comparing enrollment, retention, student demographics, completion rates, persistence rates and graduation rates. Table 7-1 shows some of the sources NICC uses to extract comparison data.

Table 7-1 Comparison Data Sources					
Source	Name of Report/Database	Types of Data	College	State	Nation
Iowa Department of Education	Student Credit Enrollment Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student enrollment • Student demographics 	X	X	
	Tuition and Fees Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regent universities tuition/fees • Community college tuition/fees 	X	X	X
	Certified Budget Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenues and expenses 	X	X	
	Status Report on Community College Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenues and expenses • Tuition and fees • Financial aid • State general aid • Property tax revenue 	X	X	
	Iowa Adult Literacy Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic literacy skills • English language acquisition • GED testing • Post-secondary enrollment • Employment and job retention 	X	X	
	Condition of Iowa Community Colleges Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community college programs • Credit enrollment and awards • Non-credit enrollment • Success of students • Adult literacy • Economic development • Human resources • Financial aid and status • Tuition and fees 	X	X	
Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics	Various Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household and per capita income • Poverty rate • Unemployment claims • Mass layoffs • Employment trends • Employment by occupation • Wages and benefits 	X	X	X
Community College Leadership Program	CCSSE, SENSE, and CCFSSE Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and collaborative learning • Student effort • Academic challenge • Student-faculty interaction • Support for learners 	X	X	X
Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System	Various database reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional characteristics • Student tuition and fees • Enrollment • Completions • Graduation rates • Student financial aid • Faculty salaries • Full- and part-time faculty/staff 	X	X	X

American Association of Community Colleges	State-by-State Profile of Community Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student enrollment • Student demographics • Degrees and certificates granted • Employment data • Faculty and staff demographics 		X	X
	National Profile of Community Colleges, Trends, and Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty and staff salaries • Services provided • College expenses • College revenues • Tuition and fees 			
National Community College Benchmark Project	NCCBP Aggregate Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence • Enrollee Success • Completer Success • Market Penetration • Career Preparation • Cost per Credit • Goal Attainment 	X	X	X

7P6. Ensuring Data Alignment with Goals for Programs and Services

NICC continues to strengthen the way information and data is used throughout the College in the following ways:

- All department planning starts with reviewing the NICC mission, vision and *V7 Strategic Plan*.
- Departments use data to identify needs and gaps.
- Datatel Level One users assist departments by creating new queries.
- Datatel Level Two users assist departments by extracting already existing data reports from Datatel.
- The Datatel support specialist is available to assist departments in identifying available data and extracting needed data from Datatel.
- The director of institutional research helps Cabinet and deans by providing data and reports.
- All department proposals relate to one or more strategic plan goals and to one or more AQIP category.
- The QC reviews and monitors department initiatives, verifies the existence of measurable outcomes, and ensures that improvement plans align with the strategic plan and AQIP.

7P7. Ensuring Quality of Information Systems

NICC's information systems and technology services through the CIS department ensure the timeliness, accuracy and reliability of the College process through the following:

Additional Datatel Support—NICC reorganized CIS to give more attention to Datatel users. The Datatel support specialist is responsible for training and supporting Datatel users and assisting others in accessing data.

Infrastructure Robustness—The College invested significant funds to provide new power and UPS systems to enhance electrical reliability to critical systems including high-capacity/high reliability storage systems, wide-area network links and video conferencing systems.

The CAST Datatel Consortium—Established in 2005, this Consortium includes several Iowa community colleges that share a common server. Additionally, Ad Astra has been integrated with Datatel to provide vastly enhanced room scheduling capabilities.

Development of the College Wide Assessment Plan—This assessment plan allows for a systematic collection of data on which the College can build strategic goals that align with the AQIP categories.

Results (R)

7R1. Collecting and Analyzing Performance and Effectiveness Measures

NICC has many systems and processes in place to ensure accessibility, reliability, timeliness and user-friendliness of data. However, the College still needs to gain skills in fully utilizing data in decision-making. The *College Wide Assessment Plan* commits the College to addressing this issue.

7R2. Evidence for Measuring Effectiveness

NICC revised its mission, vision, and strategic plan in 2005 and is in the process of updating again in 2010-2011. The Board of Trustees is meeting for the first time to set their strategic plan for the College and will be using data from Institutional Research to set goals. The College has identified measures that support the goals in the plan and will be updating and incorporating the Board of Trustees' goals into the plan. The College is gaining an improved knowledge of institutional effectiveness through the measures of progress towards strategic plan goals and objectives. One area in which NICC was extremely successful in meeting these goals was in the External Relations department. In 2008, a full-time grant writer was hired. As a result, over \$3.5 million in grants was awarded to NICC in FY 2010 with a 69% grant success rate. The grant writer was able to use data made available from multiple institutional resources and partnerships. Furthermore, the College has started three new credit programs in the last two years in Wind Technology, CNC Machining, and Entrepreneurial Cosmetology. These programs were made possible through grant funding for curriculum development and supportive data proving the want or need for these programs by students and businesses.

7R3. Performance Comparison with Other Institutions

NICC's compares similarly to other institutions through the sources listed in table 7-1. For example, IDE data reflects that NICC students are similar to other Iowa community college students in the ratio of male to female students, first-generation students, and underprepared students. The IDE aggregated National Reporting System (NRS) report for FY 2009 shows that NICC's Adult Literacy program met or exceeded projected benchmarks in educational gains in nine out of eleven areas, which is comparable to other Iowa community colleges. The Community College Leadership Program's national CCSSE data reveals that NICC is in need of improvement on faculty and student engagement outside of the classroom as compared to other community colleges surveyed. Finally, the NCCBP confirms that NICC is ahead of other community colleges in fall-to-spring retention and slightly behind peers in fall-to-fall retention.

NICC views professional development in institutional research as the most effective way to stay abreast of the rapidly changing field of institutional research. By attending annual NAIR and IACCAIR conferences, the College hopes to stay informed about the procedures and techniques utilized by other institutions. NICC also continues to fine-tune the College's information management systems. The College works closely with other colleges using Datatel. By being active in the Midwest Datatel user groups, the College can learn and compare through the sharing of experiences with other institutions.

Improvements (I)

7I1. Improvements in Measuring Effectiveness

NICC is implementing several initiatives to improve collection, storage and use of data. Key participants include the CIS director, Datatel support specialist, director of institutional research, and QC members.

Improvements made in data collection methods made it possible for NICC to join the NCCBP and also to collect the data required for a comprehensive environmental market scan performed by the CLARUS Corporation.

712. Selecting Improvement Targets for Measuring Effectiveness

The QC reviews departmental goals for improvement to ensure compliance with the strategic plan. The QC also verifies the existence of measurable outcomes and data-based justification for V7 requests that emerge from the departmental goals. The Planning and Continuous Improvement QC subcommittee is beginning to assist in the current annual planning process with potential improvement in mind.

NICC continues to improve institutional systems for measuring effectiveness. This includes updating the infrastructure, finalizing the assessment plan, and improving the collection, storage, analysis, and use of data for decision-making. In the next three years, the College intends to meet the following improvement targets:

- Finalize collection of data to be used to document progress towards the strategic plan
- Finalize, implement, collect, and use data outlined in the *College Wide Assessment Plan*
- Set up consistent data collection processes throughout the College
- Transform appropriate data collection processes to an electronic format
- Continue training Datatel users in accessing data and creating reports
- Make reports available to all employees on the NICC Xpress portal
- Offer training and consultation to all departments on how to use data in planning and decision-making
- Implement the NICC *Information Technology Master Plan*.

NICC will communicate results and priorities to its members by using the following tools:

- President's emails
- Announcement on NICC Xpress
- CIS bulletins
- Technology meetings
- Training of Datatel users
- Technical assistance to departments in the annual planning process.

AQIP CATEGORY 8:
PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

PROCESSES (P)

8P1. Planning Processes

NICC has move towards a cycle of continuous planning and improvement. The process started when the College joined AQIP in 2002. This meant moving from external to internal assessment. NICC self-analyzed its strengths and weaknesses and charted a direction for the future. As a result, NICC’s reflects a commitment toward continuous improvement. The College believes that assuring that all administrators, faculty, and staff embrace continuous improvement buffers institutional risk. Key administrators, faculty, and staff received training in continuous improvement and learned how to serve as facilitators in institutional planning.

The president initiated the development of a strategic plan based, in part, on the needs identified through the AQIP process. Her most important concern was to complete the work that had already been done and put it to use for the benefit of the College. She clearly expressed that she wants the strategic plan to be active and fully utilized. Along with developing a new strategic plan, the president and her team assessed the College’s committee structure. A number of strong committees existed, but they did not support a process of continuous planning. The president kept the College Vision Committee and created the two new committees, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Budget Committee. However, after two years of implementation, the three-committee structure was deemed too cumbersome, and so a streamlined process was adopted. The QC replaced the three committees with the Cabinet retaining final approval. This structure remains in place today.

The annual planning process was also adjusted to reflect the following:

- **Goals**—Strategic priorities are identified, and the requested resources for new initiatives and/or equipment and plant fund needs are aligned with the College mission and vision.
- **Processes**—QC has oversight responsibility with Cabinet having final approval. Both short-term (within one year) and long-term planning is encouraged. This process is outlined in Table 8-1.

Timeline	Action
September	QC communicates with supervisors to solicit annual goals, in alignment with the NICC mission
	QC solicits goals from department and programs
October	QC reviews goals and consolidates them into broad strategic priorities for the next fiscal year
	QC presents strategic priorities to Cabinet for review and approval
November	Cabinet provides feedback to QC
	Cabinet shares the strategic priorities with Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting
	QC communicates approved strategic priorities with the College
December & January	Departments and programs begin to discuss strategic initiatives, in support of the strategic priorities, to submit for funding consideration for the next fiscal year.
February	Departments and programs submit strategic initiatives to QC
March	QC reviews the submitted initiatives and submits its recommendations to Cabinet
April	Cabinet reviews and prioritizes the recommendations from the QC and identifies funding sources Approval comes from the Cabinet, and in some cases, the Board of Trustees
May	QC communicates approved initiatives to the College
July	All approved initiatives are funded and the new budget in place for the fiscal year

8P2. Selecting Short and Long- term Strategies

NICC's *V7 Strategic Plan*, the V7 planning process, and AQIP action projects guide the selection and prioritization of short-term and long-term strategies. For example, in FY 2009 the career and technical education dean submitted an AQIP V7 request for a full-time faculty position to expand and enhance agriculture education. The Cabinet viewed the position as vital because it was linked to serving students through one of the first agriculture online degrees in the nation. The proposal was selected based on the fact that the application aligned itself with the V7 statement of Teaching Excellence and Innovation and goal one, ensuring the relevance of current programs and the timely and appropriate creation of new programs.

8P3. Developing Action Plans

The College develops action projects to support the institutional strategies by following the planning process. In making the case to the stakeholders in our district for the \$35 million bond levy, NICC formulated a strategic plan on how the bond levy would enhance the services provided. The one area identified was the need to upgrade our college-wide technology infrastructure to support instructional and institutional needs. The development of an *Information Technology Master Plan* became an action project.

Departments and programs develop annual goals and action plans. The College also relies on the program evaluation process to help in developing action plans. Every year, 20% of the career-technical programs complete a program review. Based on the program review, each program develops an action plan to address areas needing improvement. Currently, the program review and annual planning processes are interdependent. NICC would like to have programs accomplish two goals when they complete their program review. One is to meet licensing and certification requirements. The other is to develop an action plan that aligns with NICC's strategic plan.

8P4. Coordinating and Aligning Processes, Strategies, and Plans

NICC's planning process engages members at all institutional levels. It starts at the grassroots level with departments developing action plans and moves up to the QC for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The seven subcommittees under the QC include members from all institutional levels.

8P5. Defining and Selecting Objectives, Measures, and Targets

The strategic plan is general in nature in that it does not specify performance indicators. NICC is establishing measures and continuously improving on tracking progress and outcomes through the *College Wide Assessment Plan*. One of the AQIP action projects focuses on establishing an assessment cycle.

NICC's director of institutional research coordinates and provides access to data, both for reporting and decision-making. The director also collaborates on the *College Wide Assessment Plan* by collecting performance indicators to document progress towards goals.

8P6. Selecting Strategy and Action Plans

Budgeting is an integral part of the planning process. The QC and vice presidents or provosts (depending on the type of request) prioritize requests and forward them to Cabinet. Cabinet reviews include making decisions based on available resources. This may mean reallocating resources within the existing budget to allow for important projects to be funded.

8P7. Assessing and Addressing Risk

The College's focus on continuous improvement is more than just implementing a planning process, it also reflect a commitment toward continuous improvement. The College believes that training in this process helps buffer institutional risk. As a result, key administrators, faculty, and staff received training in continuous improvement and how to serve as facilitators in institutional planning and how to conduct focus groups. For example, at All College Day in April 2005, participants were trained how to identify and react to emerging trends in community colleges. This training helped raise district-wide awareness of trends and helped departments see how they could address these trends in their annual planning to prevent risk to the institution.

Additionally, an ad hoc committee developed a planning toolkit for use in the annual planning process. The toolkit suggests the following process:

- Identify an idea/project for improvement
- Form a team (if necessary)
- Identify current condition
- Identify goals (plan of action)
- Define measurable outcomes
- Create a time-line for implementation
- Submit project for budget/administrative support

It also includes techniques and ground rules to consider when working in a group. Tools highlighted for generating and working with ideas include Storyboarding, Paired Comparisons, Cause and Effect Diagrams, Structured Brainstorming, Affinity Analysis, and Focus Groups. The toolkit is available online, and committee members provide training or consultation to any group or department that requests it.

8P8. Ensuring Employee Ability to Change

NICC understands that it is extremely important to assess the effectiveness of the planning process itself. Annually, the Planning and Continuous Improvement QC Subcommittee reviews measures of effectiveness in the planning process and provides the QC with suggestions for adaptations to the process. Communication and participation are important in the nurturing process. By involving departments and programs to identify their goals and consolidate those into key strategic priorities for the College, the process and outcomes help faculty and staff see the direction to pursue in realizing the mission of NICC. Another way is to support faculty and staff development so that NICC keeps abreast of challenges and opportunities in higher education.

Results (R)

8R1. Measuring Effectiveness of Processes and Systems

NICC's measures of effectiveness of the planning process include the following:

- Survey of various stakeholders in the planning process
- Percentage of departments completing the annual planning process
- Percentage of departments using data
- Percentage of proposals linked to the College mission, vision, and strategic plan
- Percentage of projects funded and implemented
- Percentage of projects meeting performance benchmarks and outcomes

8R2. Performance Results for Accomplishment

NICC is still learning to harness the benefits of using continuous planning. However, even at this stage of the process, the important results listed below are evident. Since embracing AQIP, the College has:

- Revised the planning process of the strategic plan
- Replaced three district-wide committees with a QC to engage employees at all levels in decision-making
- Provided data for planning and decision-making through the director of institutional research.
- Developed a *Facilities Master Plan* with input from all college employees
- Expanded the use of the College's web portal, Xpress
- Created a College Senate
- Developed an *Information Technology Master Plan* to support instructional and institutional initiatives.

8R3. Performance Projections or Targets for the Next 1-3 years

NICC will continue to refine the planning process to implement many improvement goals, including the following:

- Review and update the strategic plan on an annual basis
- Use data in all decision-making processes
- Have all faculty certified or working towards certification under the *Quality Faculty Plan*
- Remain fully engaged in renovation and new construction as a result of a \$35 million bond levy
- Implement the enrollment management plan and set new targets
- Use the *Educational Master Plan* to guide all educational and training programs
- Continue to refine and implement the *College Wide Assessment Plan*.

8R4. Performance Comparison with Other Institutions

NICC joined the NCCBP specifically to access comparison data from other institutions. It follows that if overall student, faculty, and staff comparisons show that NICC is in line with or better than its peers on a variety of measures, that it's planning process is effective. Tables 1-9, 3-8, and 4-5 in this document reference NCCBP data comparisons.

NICC is in the process of completing its *College Wide Assessment Plan* to inform its current performance and guide its future direction. The Board of Trustees is engaging in their first strategic planning process in January 2011. NICC's Foundation Board also started its strategic planning process in mid-October 2010. Current efforts include tying the assessment plan to the key performance indicators of the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board. NICC's next steps will include benchmarking this performance against institutions similar to NICC.

8R5. Evidence for Measuring Effectiveness

NICC's movement from a three-committee structure to a QC is an example of an effective continuous improvement planning system. The QC oversees progress of the goals in the strategic plan and AQIP action projects and provides a communication link between AQIP and the College. At completion of the third cycle, the College has a strong sense that the process is working because College employees, at all levels, are engaged in the planning and decision-making process. Additionally, the College has accomplished several short-term goals, as outlined in 8R1.

Improvements (I)

8I1. Results for Planning and Continuous Improvement

NICC is focused on continuous quality improvement. In order to assure all College employees have the skills to support the College in this focus, a planning toolkit has been developed. The toolkit includes information about continuous quality improvement and the need for data-based decision-making. It refers to the NICC vision, mission,

and strategic plan, and also to AQIP categories. Finally, it offers a number of specific planning tools and guidance for how to use them.

In 2008, NICC was particularly focused on the V7 process of continuous improvement. During that year the College accomplished the following:

- Revised the planning process of the strategic plan
- Created the QC and the seven subcommittees
- Revised the project proposal form
- Published *Making Visions Reality* newsletters
- Held training for the QC
- Held information sessions for faculty and staff on AQIP, strategic planning process, and accreditation
- Provided training to all supervisors on the planning cycle
- Visited advisory boards to provide an overview of the College's accreditation through AQIP
- Planned for interface with College Senate
- Attended the AQIP colloquium at the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference and presented at the conference in 2009

812. Selecting Improvement Targets for Planning and Continuous Improvement

Given that NICC has had an annual planning process (see Table 8-1) in place for two years, the QC decided that a review is timely. The Planning and Continuous Improvement QC subcommittee is the logical body to do so. Group discussion on the topic held in early October 2010 yielding the following comments and questions:

- How easy would it be for a staff member to explain the entire process to a co-worker? There is a need to continue to grow the knowledge base of all employees involved in the process.
- The starting point of the process is the creation and submission of goals and visions from each department. NICC needs to have better consistency in the scope of the goals. Currently, the College goals range from very specific to very broad. One idea is to review the process with supervisors more than once per year.
- It would be helpful for the departments and programs to have a guide sheet to remind employees how their submitted goals should be linked to the strategic priorities of the College.
- The College community needs to be more informed about the review process after receiving the goals from departments and programs.
- Some departments and programs consist of different areas. Some submitted all the goals from all the areas, but others consolidated their goals and submitted broader ones. Which way is more appropriate?
- NICC can do better at bringing closure to the initiatives from the previous fiscal year before beginning the planning process for the new fiscal year.
- How easily can anyone locate the planning resources online? NICC's current shared files location can be overwhelming to navigate to search for the appropriate forms. Should the College use hyperlinks?
- How does the College educate the stakeholders of the different funding sources and their intended use?
- How does NICC reduce the paperwork involved in the process?
- How well does the rest of the College understand the role of the QC in the planning process?
- For all the submitted funding requests, how can the College help departments and programs measure outcomes?
- The College uses many channels (All College Day, president's annual address, president's emails, weekly e-news alerts, QC meetings, department and committee meetings, Xpress portal and College website) to communicate with its stakeholders. How effective are they?

**AQIP CATEGORY 9:
BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Processes (P)

9P1. Building Relationships with Educational and Other Institutions

NICC works closely with high schools in the following ways to create an effective secondary and post-secondary education system. The high school relations coordinator, tech-prep coordinator, and career connections outreach coordinator regularly travels to area high schools to develop opportunities for high school students to take college-level classes, to develop opportunities in the vocational area, and ease the transition to college by increasing career awareness. NICC admissions representatives also provide marketing materials to area high schools, including the NICC catalog and program-specific brochures and meet with students interested in attending NICC. Finally, NICC works closely with IWD, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other service agencies for receiving students referred by these outside agencies.

9P2. Building Relationships with Educational Institutions and Employers

NICC maintains communication with transfer colleges and universities in the following ways:

- NICC offers colleges space on its campuses to meet with students to discuss joint admission and transfer options.
- NICC works actively with transfer institutions to develop articulation agreements. This includes the Guaranteed Transfer Admission Contract, which assures students' acceptance as juniors at transfer institutions. NICC also maintains a number of joint admission agreements in specific program areas.
- NICC faculty and staff maintain relationships with counterparts at other institutions to share resources, participate in workshops, and engage in common initiatives that build bridges between institutions.

NICC prioritizes its educational partnerships by how well they match the College's mission, vision and strategic plan. Additionally, the College assesses how well the partnerships fit the needs of the communities and how feasible they are in terms of required resources and personnel.

NICC maintains communication with regional employers through invitations to serve on NICC's academic advisory boards, to partner on grant applications targeting specific industries, and to meet face-to-face or complete surveys regarding future job outlook, skills needs, and employment opportunities for students.

9P3. Building Relationships with Service Providers to Students

NICC maximizes students' opportunities for success by nurturing relationships that support students who need outside assistance to succeed in education and training programs. Examples of needed assistance include resources for dislocated workers, veterans, individuals on public assistance, and individuals with disabilities. NICC regularly meets with and partners with these agencies on initiatives and projects that aim to recruit, train, and place targeted individuals into educational training and job placement. For example, in 2008, the a one-stop workforce center was created on the second floor on NICC's Town Clock Center for Professional Development to provide services to a variety of clients seeking job training, career help/guidance, financial assistance, etc. Agencies like IWD, ECIA's Employment and Training Program, Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Investment Act are all housed at this center, and this location has strengthened the college's relationships with these agencies to better serve students.

9P4. Building Relationships with Service Providers

NICC works closely with business partners in the following ways to build a strong workforce and regional economy:

- The president and vice president for economic development attend chamber of commerce and economic development meetings throughout the region.
- Economic Development staff members serve as the College's consultants and salespeople. They assist more than 500 businesses and industries in the district to assess training needs and deliver job training.
- The deans and faculty maintain close contact with business and industry through advisory boards, which provide opportunities for business and industry to shape NICC programs.
- Faculty in the John Deere Ag Technology and Gas Utility Construction and Service programs maintain communication with their corporate sponsors, the John Deere Corporation and Black Hills Energy, to support program and student needs.

Business partnerships retain and expand jobs in Iowa and build a strong, qualified workforce. NICC values all business relationships but places a higher priority on those that directly impact the development of academic programming and student success.

The criteria in the State-funded 206E and 206F training contracts drive some of the College's priorities. NICC is limited by what it can provide in funds and prioritizes by greatest need and the where NICC can make the greatest impact for the greatest good. In some cases, this means helping a struggling company survive. To assist in this goal, in 2009 the College created a business training consortium, which provides small businesses with access to training services. This has helped many struggling business during difficult economic times.

9P5. Building Relationships with External Stakeholders

NICC maintains relationships with the agencies overseeing and providing funding for services. External Relations was created in 2008 to maximize the College's presence in the community, increase awareness, and maintain a consistent message and brand identity throughout the district. In 2008, NICC also hired its first, full-time grant writer and audited the Foundation/Resource Development. The audit advised staffing needs, an implementation schedule, facilities, equipment, and operating budget required for an effective advancement program. It also addressed strategies for prospect research and a major gifts campaign.

In addition, the president annually holds Perkin' with Penny events in each major community within the College district. Area business and community leaders are invited to attend and discuss issues important to their community and ways the college might partner with the community on new initiatives to address those concerns.

Over the next three years, NICC will continue to improve relationships with key partners by seeking out conferences, online sources, and peer colleges utilizing best practices in this area. The College will also further develop grant efforts, take advantage of new funding opportunities, and build strategic relationships. Improvement efforts include:

- Contacting accrediting agencies to stay abreast of changes in rules and regulations
- Hiring a grants financial coordinator to ensure grant compliance and the timely execution of grant reports
- Building relationships with key workforce, governmental, economic development, and student support agencies in order to give and receive feedback as needed
- Building relationships with administrative entities that can help set high standards in education
- Seeking new partnerships with business and industry, agencies, city and county officials and other community leaders to strengthen grant proposals and better meet the needs of the College's communities
- Continuing to seek private donors and foundations to support the College's efforts
- Continuing to build relationships with legislators, so they have a strong sense of the role of the community college and advocate for community colleges at the state and national level

9P6. Ensuring Partnerships Meet Needs

Educational Partnerships—NICC assesses the needs of educational partners in several ways:

- The high School relations coordinator meets regularly with high school principals and guidance counselors to ensure that NICC courses meet the needs of their students.
- The tech-prep coordinator meets regularly with high school principals and vocational teachers to determine interest in vocational academies and other opportunities.
- The deans meet regularly with high school principals to discuss shared funding of college-level courses. In some cases, this means having high school teachers teach dual credit courses as part of their load.
- High school instructors teaching college-level courses come on campus one evening per year to meet with NICC administrators and faculty. This helps them transition into teaching college classes in high school.
- Advisors meet annually with representatives from the Iowa Regents institutions and local colleges to determine ways to improve the coordination of collaborative services.

Business Partnerships—NICC assesses the needs of business and industry in several ways:

- The College monitors the success of business training by looking at benchmarks before and after training.
- Economic Development staff members participate in economic development efforts throughout the district. They meet with and survey business and industry representatives to assess their employee training needs.
- The 260E and 260F agreements with business and industry include elaborate evaluations required by the state. Students in these trainings fill out an evaluation, indicating if NICC has met their needs.
- Business and industry representatives inform the College of their needs during program advisory board meetings. They provide feedback about competencies needed for entry-level jobs and assist in designing program curricula that will meet their needs.
- Career Services assesses the needs of local employers by sending out the annual *Employer Survey*.
- NICC is scheduling business roundtables this fall, bringing different businesses within an industry together to discuss workforce issues.

Administrative and Legislative Partnerships—NICC uses the following methods to determine if the College meets the needs of administrative bodies:

- Successful applications for re-accreditation reflect meeting the standards of IDE and the Higher Learning Commission and AQIP.
- Accreditation, certification and licensing of programs reflect that NICC meets industry standards.
- Timely and accurate reports reflect that NICC meets the administrative needs of state and federal agencies.

NICC also works to meet needs of legislators by sharing and receiving feedback on the following data:

- Enrollment data and graduation rates
- NICC student success rates at transfer institutions
- Annual budget reports
- State reports, such as the Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Colleges

Resource Development Partnerships—Resource development partners' needs are assessed by sharing information related to how NICC spends their contributions to help students, including the following ways:

- Sending a *Foundation Annual Report* to all donors, which outlines income and expenses, including how NICC distributed funds to students through scholarships and financial support
- Nurturing relationships with alumni, donors, corporations and community members through the NICC Foundation
- Seeking out resource partners through the NICC Foundation who can assist the College in its efforts.
- Continuing to work with the credit and non-credit divisions of the College to develop grant applications for new programming and student supportive services
- Continuing to grow partnerships with business and industry, city officials, and other outside agencies

Other Partnerships—NICC meets the needs of public and private agencies in the following ways:

- Staying abreast of changes in legislation and funding for individuals with special needs
- Attending conferences and staying current on issues related to special student populations
- Respecting confidentiality rules and uses appropriate releases before discussing concerns about students
- Locating staff at the local IWD office to meet with clients and ensure that they are served well

9P7. Building Cross-College Relationships

NICC considers internal relationships as important as external relationships; they are the glue that holds the institution together. NICC works hard to build positive relationships among employees, both formally and informally.

NICC provides opportunities for all new employees to build relationships as soon as they start. They are given a tour of campus and introduced to their colleagues. Faculty receive an additional orientation intended to help new faculty get to know each other. Additionally, a faculty mentoring program links new faculty with seasoned instructors from a different department. This gives both parties an opportunity to expand their circle of relationships.

Each campus kicks off the school year with faculty and staff convocation and several workshop days. The president gives an annual address and promotes working together to achieve common goals. The ensuing workshops provide an opportunity to build skills, share ideas, and nurture relationships with colleagues. Additionally, faculty and staff workshop days, graduation ceremonies, All College Day, Phi Theta Kappa Inductions, Alumni Hall of Fame inductions, and the annual employee recognition event build connections and provide reasons to celebrate.

One of the biggest challenges is that the NICC district covers a large geographical area. The 100-mile distance between Calmar and Peosta sometimes makes it difficult to build relationships across the college. The College addresses this challenge in several ways:

- Holding meetings at Keystone Area Education Agency in Elkader, a half-way point between campuses.
- Using ICN meetings, video-conferencing, Skype conferencing, and phone conferencing
- Using the Xpress web portal as a district-wide communication tool

Results (R)

9R1. Measuring Collaborative Relationships

NICC continuously works to improve College measurement for building collaborative relationships and to collect those measurements district-wide. [Table 9-1](#) provides examples of data used to measure the overall success of NICC collaborations and can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/collaborative_measures.pdf

9R2. Performance results for Collaboration

Educational Partnerships—NICC can report a number of results from its educational partnerships. Tables 9-2, 9-3, 9-4, 9-5, and 9-6 demonstrated the success of TRiO Upward Bound students, high school enrollment over the last five years, high school students as a percentage of enrollment, and student participation in special high school programs. All of these tables can be found below. This data suggests that NICC's relationships with educational partners is strong, yet has opportunities for growth and improvement.

Another measure of the College's relationship with other universities is how well NICC students fare when they transfer. NICC students generally do well when compared to "native" students at transfer institutions. For more detail, see Table 1-8.

Table 9-2 TRiO/Upward Bound - Calmar Campus					
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
Number of Students Served	50	50	50	50	50
Percentage of participants who were both low-income and first-generation college students	92%	78%	82%	77%	73%
Yearly retention rate	90%	86%	85%	80%	84%
Percentage of participants graduating from high school and enrolling college	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9-3 TRiO/Upward Bound - Peosta Campus					
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
Number of Students Served	50	50	50	50	50
Percentage of participants who were both low-income and first-generation college students	84%	80%	88%	74%	78%
Yearly retention rate	84%	84%	88%	80%	80%
Percentage of participants graduating from high school and enrolling college	100%	98%	100%	100%	85%

Source: TRiO/Upward Bound Coordinators

Table 9-4 High School Enrollment By Term		
Students		
Fiscal Year	Fall	Spring
FY '06	1,541	1,489
FY '07	1,597	1,630
FY '08	1,634	1,648
FY '09	1,524	1,712
FY '10	1,712	1,783

Table 9-5 High School Students as Percentage of Fiscal Year Campus Enrollment		
	Calmar	Peosta
FY 2006	33%	22%
FY 2007	44%	25%
FY 2008	46%	26%
FY 2009	50%	33%
FY 2010	44%	22%

Source: FY MIS; HS Enrollment Types 1-3

Table 9-6 Special High School Program Participants	
Programs	Students
2008	
Health Consortiums	479
Auto Consortiums	164
Charter school	
2009	
Health Consortiums	405
Auto Consortiums	153
Charter school	

2010	
Health Consortiums	436
Auto Consortiums	134
Charter school	

Business and Community Partnerships—NICC can report a number of results from its business partnerships as well. Table 9-7 shows the number of participants and contact hours in 260E and 260F training. Again, these results demonstrate a strong relationship with the business community; nevertheless, NICC believes opportunities for growth exist among these partnerships as well. Likewise, Table 9-8 demonstrates the number of participants and contact hours NICC enrolled in Continuing Education in the past five years and shows a similar trend to the 260E and 260F agreements.

Table 9-7 Workforce Development Trainings		
Training 260E		
Year	Participants	Hours
2006	915	6,191
2007	382	5,097
2008	254	7270
2009	651	25,246
2010	761	30,627
Training 260F		
Year	Participants	Hours
2006	703	7,256
2007	872	16,319
2008	407	19,456
2009	777	16,272
2010	750	13,160

Table 9-8 Continuing Education		
Year	Student Count	Contact Hours
2006	38892	464863
2007	38945	490681
2008	36084	418613
2009	38735	504099
2010	37365	489068

Administrative and Legislative Partnerships—NICC's administrative relationships are best reflected in institutional and program accreditations. NICC maintains accreditation through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is working on re-accreditation through AQIP, as well as IDE. [Tables 9-9 and 9-10](#) show additional program accreditations and certifications and can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/accreditation_certification.pdf

One way to measure NICC's relationship with legislators is through the positive impact the College has on their district. NICC is pleased to report to legislators that the College is a good investment, demonstrated by the following:

- Enrollment data and graduation rates show that NICC is meeting the educational needs of its students, their constituents.
- NICC students' success rates at transfer institutions reflect that the College is providing a quality education.
- Budget figures show that NICC is providing a cost-effective education by balancing state and federal dollars with tuition, fees, grants, and other income.
- State reports, such as the Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Colleges, show that NICC is a good investment that provides multiple levels of return for the district.

The 2007 State of Iowa Socio-Economic Benefits of Community Colleges report reflects the following results:

- NICC pays \$21 million annually through college operations and capital spending.
- Taxpayers see real money “book” return of 10.5% on their annual investments in NICC and receive a cumulative return of \$2.70.
- Students enjoy an attractive 20.7% annual return on their investment of time and money. For every \$1 the student invests in NICC, he or she receives a cumulative \$7.60 in higher future earnings over 30 years.
- The State of Iowa benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment, and crime, saving the public approximately \$1.1 million per year.
- In total, the regional economy is \$215 million stronger annually because of the efforts of NICC.

Resource Development Partnerships—The NICC Foundation has increased the amount of money it raises and gives to students and programs every year. In 2010, the NICC Foundation reached \$1.7 million in assets up from \$1.3 million in 2004. In the same year, the Foundation dispersed more than \$377,000 in scholarships to NICC students. This is up from \$270,000 in Foundation-provided scholarships in 2004. A total of \$502,000 was given to students and programs in 2007 compared to a total of \$646,000 dispersed in 2010.

From 2008 to date, the College was successful in securing over \$8 million in grants, implementing a new database system, updating the names and addresses of nearly 27,000 alumni, and recruiting new Foundation board members. The college now regularly communicates with alumni through an e-newsletter and has inducted 32 members into its Alumni Hall of Fame.

Over the last year, the faculty and staff participation rate in annual giving to the Foundation increased from 58% to 75% and dollars raised increased significantly amongst all faculty, staff, retirees and boards.

Other Partnerships—One way to measure the success of NICC’s collaborative relationships with other agencies is to look at the number of NICC students that fall into specific categories. For example, Table 9-11 shows the number of students receiving Veteran’s Administration benefits. These students represent the relationship that NICC has with IWD’s Veteran’s Representative.

Table 9-11 Students Receiving VA Benefits	
Fiscal Year	Total Veterans
2006	125
2007	107
2008	44
2009	112
2010	42

Table 6-9 shows the number of students using the services of NICC’s adult transition coordinators. This category of students is chosen as a result because many of these students receive support from other partner agencies as well.

9R3. Performance Comparison with Other Institutions

The College does not have much comparative data on other institutions of higher education in the collaborative relationships category.

Improvements (I)

9I1. Improvements in Collaboration

NICC has improved the College's ability to use data in decision-making, through the use of Datatel. NICC continues to work toward fully utilizing Datatel capabilities toward measuring collaborative relationships.

AQIP has challenged the College to assess collaborative relationships and will continue to push the College to improve the processes used to build these relationships. The 2007 successful bond referendum campaign demonstrated how critical these partnerships are to the future success in meeting the College's mission.

The Partnerships and Collaborations QC subcommittee aims to ascertain the satisfaction level of key stakeholders of the College and to improve relationships with them through the development of surveys and measurement tools.

The hiring of a full-time grant writer has also created new improvements in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. Through the success of these grant collaborations, NICC is able to grow its Grants to include a full-time grant financial coordinator in 2010. Grants has also developed a model for tracking the grants results and return on investment, which will provide comprehensive comparative data in future years.

9I2. Selecting Improvement Targets for Collaboration

NICC works to improve methods for keeping track of its many collaborations. The College encounters new opportunities for collaboration every day, and it needs to carefully decide which ones will help achieve the mission and vision and promote the strategic plan. Improved dialogue and documentation have occurred in recent years, but continued improvement in this area is necessary.

The director of institutional research is helping to quantify the success of the College's collaborative relationships. Currently many measure focus on process. The College measures number of students, number of credit hours, number of articulation agreements, and number of accreditations and certifications. These are important measures, but NICC wants to measure outcomes. For instance, the College needs to look more closely at high school students' success in college courses, transfer rates, and transfer students' success at transfer institutions.

Targets for improved performance results in building collaborative relationships include:

- Increasing the percentage of high school students taking college-level courses who eventually enroll in a degree or diploma program at NICC
- Increasing innovative collaborations with high schools, such as academies and charter schools
- Increasing the number of joint admissions agreements with other colleges and the number of students enrolling in joint admissions programs
- Increasing the number of accredited programs at NICC
- Increasing the number of new programs responding to local workforce needs

Examples of how NICC's internal culture and infrastructure is used to select processes for improvement and to improve performance results include the following:

- Staff were involved throughout the CLARUS Market Scan and were involved in the presentation of results and in later planning to address issues and concerns identified.

- NICC involved faculty and staff through surveys and in-person interviews to identify problems and key initiatives that should be addressed in the *Information Technology Master Plan*
- NICC held forums and sent out surveys soliciting ideas and participation at all levels to determine what budget cuts could be made to alleviate a \$2 million budget shortfall in FY 2011.
- The NICC Xpress web portal provides the necessary infrastructure to communicate better between committees, campus groups and departments. Faculty and staff can make use of message boards, committees, shared files and email to better communicate with one other.
- NICC has plans to implement an employee satisfaction survey to measure the satisfaction of relationships with internal stakeholders.

Northeast Iowa Community College

Index to Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion One – Mission and Integrity - The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 1a - The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

- NICC's goals for student learning are reflected in the College's mission/vision/strategic plan (V7) which are published on the website and in the Catalog. [Overview – Mission/Vision, 5P8, <http://web.nicc.edu/files/market/v7summary.pdf>]
- Institutional leadership, communication, decision-making and communication processes are aligned with the College mission and vision. [Overview – Category 5, Category 6]
- NICC is working to continuously improve data collection, distribution, and management. All planning proposals are evaluated in relationship to NICC's mission/vision and recommendations for acceptance are made for both instructional and non-instructional strategic needs. [Overview – Category 7, 2P5]
- NICC has seven strategic plan goals (V7) and has established a number of measures that support the goals [2R1]

Core Component 1b - In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

- The Quality Council (QC), which includes representation of all members of the College community, proposes revisions to the Strategic Plan. The V-7 process and structure of the QC subcommittees ensure a unified voice when activities regarding new initiatives are executed. [2P6, 2I2]
- The Board of Trustees meets monthly to discuss issues and carry out strategic planning for the College. [3P3]
- All-College Day provides an opportunity for all employees to gather for a full day of planning and learning once each year. [3P3]
- NICC is engaged in collaborative ventures that meet the needs of our communities. [3R5]

Core Component 1c - Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

- The College Senate holds monthly meetings to provide a forum for discussion of the College's mission and strategic plan. [3P3]
- NICC orients employees to the college's history, mission, and values in multiple ways. [4P4]
- The Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the entire V7 document (mission, values, strategic plan) in the Spring of 2005 and again in 2008. [5P1]

Core component 1d - The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

- NICC melded the Strategic Planning process with the AQIP process and initiated a new QC. [6R4]
- Engagement is promoted throughout the College. All are invited to participate in departmental action planning and/or by serving on the College Senate (CS) or QC. [5P3]
- NICC developed an assessment plan that identified goals/benchmarks, including timelines, to assist in College-wide decision making (2008 Action Project). [2I1]
- The QC has proposed an assessment plan. Further refinement and data gathering are in progress. [2R4]
- Extensive orientation of new Trustees focuses on College's mission and V7. [5P10]

Core component 1e - The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

- NICC makes a concentrated effort to understand the needs of students and other stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and citizens. [3P6]
- A student complaint form was developed in 2008 to collect and document concerns. It is available to all members of the community on Xpress, the College's portal. [3P6]
- NICC makes clear to employees its commitment to and requirements for ethical practices in a variety of ways. [4P7]

Criterion Two – Preparing for the future – the organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill the mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Component 2a - The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

- The QC has taken significant steps to improve student, instructional, and administrative support services. Examples include Master Technology Plan (MTP), National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), and Master Facilities Plan. [6R4]
- NICC recently implemented a new process of annual planning that starts at the departmental level. [8P1, Table 8-1]
- NICC is particularly interested in comparing enrollment retention, student demographics, completion rates, persistence rates, and graduation rates. [Table 7-1]
- In 2008, NICC focused on V7's continuous improvement goal. Accomplishments included: revising planning process; creating the Quality Council; information sessions for the college community including advisory boards, the Board of Trustees, and the Foundation Board; and began interface with College Senate. [8I1]
- NICC collects a variety of information to document student and administrative support services. [6R1, Table 6-2]
- V7 Strategic Plan is aligned with AQIP. [7P7, <http://web.nicc.edu/files/market/v7summary.pdf>]

Core Component 2b – The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

- NICC's mission includes a value of Stewardship as well as quality education and training. [Overview – Mission/Vision]
- Development, full-funding, and initial implementation of the MTP began in 2009. [1P12]
- An objective of V7 is Fiscal Management and Resource Development. [Overview – Accreditation & AQIP]
- Facing severe budget reductions, a Budget Taskforce was formed to reduce budget using the mission and goals as guidelines. [6R3]
- NICC implemented strategies for increasing revenue sources through a reorganization creating a division of External Relations (includes grant writing, advancement, legislative liaison). [6R3]
- College successfully passed by super majority a \$35 million capital bond levy. [6R3]

Core Component 2c – The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

- Periodic program and course evaluations study the effectiveness of academic programs. [1P4, 3P6]
- Accuplacer is a primary assessment tool which is required for placement in reading, writing, and math. [1P5]

- Effective teaching is measured and documented in several ways including review by the Online Committee, full/part-time faculty evaluation, and student course evaluations, and program reviews. [1P11]
- Performance evaluations of both faculty and staff support professional development. [4P8,4P9, 4P10]
- Programs are reviewed continuously to determine if they meet program goals such as national and state board/licensing exams, average GPA for transfer students, Department of Education approval of new programs, and employment rates. [1I2]

Core Component 2d – All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

- The V7 Planning and Continuous Improvement subcommittee annually reviews measures of effectiveness in the planning process. [8P8, 8R1]
- The QC is responsible for the maintenance and revision of the strategic plan including the development of a comprehensive assessment plan. A working draft of the assessment plan can be found at http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/assessment_plan.pdf. [7P2]
- Continue to improve the process for measuring effectiveness including updating the infrastructure, finalizing the assessment plan, and the collection, storage, analysis, and use of data for decision making. [7I2, 8R3, 8R4]

Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching - The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Core component 3a - The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

- The 12 Learning Objectives are common to every student at NICC. In addition, program specific learning objectives are maintained. [1P1, http://nicc.edu/files/portfolio/common_learning_objectives.pdf]
- Perspective and current students are made aware of the expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives. [1P6]
- When assessing students, faculty use both formative and summative assessment. [1P18, 1R1]
- Both SENSE and CCSSE report satisfaction rates for support services. [1R5]

Core component 3b - The organization values and supports effective teaching.

- NICC sets clear and consistent expectations for employees regarding credentials, skills, and values. All faculty are required to meet the criteria in the Quality Faculty Plan (QFP). [4P2, Table 4-1, http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/NICC_QFP_July_2009.pdf]
- The mentoring subcommittee of the QFP committee has developed a structured mentoring program. [4P3]
- The Faculty Development Committee plans professional development for faculty including an annual faculty workshop day. [4P9]
- The College supports faculty in developing leadership skills by encouragement to apply for funds to attend national and regional conferences; to apply for a semester long sabbatical to help them assume professional growth; and to enroll in credit and non-credit classes free of charge. [5P9]

Core component 3c - The organization creates effective learning environments.

- The results from CCSSE, SENSE, and NCCBP assist in focusing efforts that promote student learning and retention. [1P15, 1R5, Table 3-1, 6P1, 6I1]
- Course management system (precision scheduling) is continuously assessed to meet students' needs. [1P12]
- NICC seeks to educate the whole person through student life and campus engagement activities. [1P16]
- Measures documenting Support Services. [Table 6-2]
- Distance Learning is a rapidly growing educational strategy. [6R2, Table 6-7]

Core component 3d – The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

- Through bond levy funds, both libraries will expand in space, resources, and engagement opportunities. [1P15]
- Learning and Writing Centers are in great demand. [6R2]
- President has appointed a Task Force on effectively utilizing the Learning Centers to promote student success. [1R5]
- Disability Services, created in 2009, is overseen by two campus-based coordinators. [1P10]
- New science labs are being constructed on both campuses. [1I1, 6R3]

Criterion Four – Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge – The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Core Component 4a - The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

- NICC promotes and models the value of life-long learning in many ways. [4P9]
- The College supports employees in developing leadership skills in multiple ways. [5P9]
- CCSSE and SENSE data guide faculty and staff in their student engagement. [112]

Core Component 4b - The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

- NICC embraces the 12 Common Learning Objectives as well as program-specific objectives. [1P1, http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/common_learning_objectives.pdf]
- The College recently revised the student club structure (student clubs, professional associations, and honor societies). [1P16]
- The College has recently adopted a college-wide Assessment Plan. [http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/assessment_plan.pdf.]

Core Component 4c - The organization assesses the usefulness of its criteria to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

- All vocational programs receive regular input from advisory committees and program evaluations. [1P4]
- Following graduation, two surveys are conducted – Alumni Survey and Employer Survey. [1P11]
- Two measures of student success are success rate on licensure/certification exams [Table 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 1-7] and performance in regional and national competitions. [1R5]

Core Component 4d - The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- NICC makes clear its commitment to and requirements for ethical practices. [4P7]
- NICC continues to strengthen the way information and data are used throughout the College. [7P6]

Criterion Five – Engagement and Service – As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Core Component 5a – The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

- NICC collaborates with accrediting and licensing agencies, transfer institutions, and business and industry partners. [1P2, 1P3]
- “Partnerships and Collaboration” is a key goal in V7.
[\[http://web.nicc.edu/files/market/v7summary.pdf\]](http://web.nicc.edu/files/market/v7summary.pdf)
[\[http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/assessment_plan.pdf\]](http://web.nicc.edu/files/portfolio/assessment_plan.pdf)
- NICC assesses needs of constituents (educational, business, legislative, etc.) and seeks effective partnerships. [9P6]
- In 2007, Clarus Corporation was hired to conduct a series of five district-wide market scans. [3P1]
- “Perkin’ w/ Penny” is a series of coffees with local constituents to exchange college updates and community needs/perceptions. [2P3]

Core Component 5b – The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

- NICC has two comprehensive campuses and six centers to serve the needs of our constituents. [Overview – History]
- The College Senate engages all members of the college community. [611]
- Strong participation in Continuing Education programs [Table 9-8] and/Workforce Development training. [Table 9-7]

Core Component 5c – The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

- Major campus construction and remodeling funded by Bond Levy passed in 2007. [Overview – Bond Levy, 111]

- The new One Stop Workforce Center was created and housed at NICC to better serve constituents. [9P3]
- A new Waukon Center, Peosta Community Center, and Town Clock Center in Dubuque are some of the examples of community collaboration. [3R5]

Core Component 5d – Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

- NICC secured passage by a super majority of a \$35 million bond referendum in December 2007. [Overview – Bond Levy]
- Results of CCSSE and SENSE (2006, 2008, 2009) indicate high levels of satisfaction in many areas. [1P11]
- The results from CLARUS Market Scans in 2007 indicate strong support for the College. [3P1]