Systems Appraisal Feedback Report

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

September 3, 2014

for

The Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

Contents

Elements of NorthWest Arkansas Community College's Feedback Report

Welcome to the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*. This report provides AQIP's official response to an institution's *Systems Portfolio* by a team of peer reviewers (the Systems Appraisal Team). After the team independently reviews the institution's portfolio, it reaches consensus on essential elements of the institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by AQIP Category, and any significant issues related to accreditation. These are then presented in three sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*: "Strategic Challenges Analysis," "AQIP Category Feedback," and "Accreditation Issues Analysis." These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating institutional performance, surfacing critical issues or accreditation concerns, and assessing institutional performance. Ahead of these three areas, the team provides a "Reflective Introduction" followed closely by an "Executive Summary." The appraisal concludes with commentary on the overall quality of the report and advice on using the report. Each of these areas is overviewed below.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team has only the institution's *Systems Portfolio* to guide its analysis of the institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the team's report may omit important strengths, particularly if discussion or documentation of these areas in the *Systems Portfolio* were presented minimally. Similarly, the team may point out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving widespread institutional attention. Indeed, it is possible that some areas recommended for potential improvement have since become strengths rather than opportunities through the institution's ongoing efforts. Recall that the overarching goal of the Systems Appraisal Team is to provide an institution with the best possible advice for ongoing improvement.

The various sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* can be described as follows:

Reflective Introduction & Executive Summary: In this first section of the *System's Appraisal Feedback Report*, the team provides a summative statement that reflects its broad understanding of the institution and the constituents served (Reflective Introduction), and also the team's overall judgment regarding the institution's current performance in relation to the nine AQIP Categories (Executive Summary). In the Executive Summary, the team considers such factors as: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback; and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that each AQIP

Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

Strategic Challenges Analysis: Strategic challenges are those most closely related to an institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Teams formulate judgments related to strategic challenges and accreditation issues (discussed below) through careful analysis of the Organizational Overview included in the institution's Systems Portfolio and through the team's own feedback provided for each AQIP Category. These collected findings offer a framework for future improvement of processes and systems.

AQIP Category Feedback: The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* addresses each AQIP Category by identifying and coding strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Through comments, which are keyed to the institution's Systems Portfolio, the team offers brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by AQIP Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is often considered the heart of the *Feedback Report*.

Accreditation Issues Analysis: Accreditation issues are areas where an institution may have not yet provided sufficient evidence that it meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. It is also possible that the evidence provided suggests to the team that the institution may have difficulties, whether at present or in the future, in satisfying the *Criteria*. As with strategic challenges, teams formulate judgments related to accreditation issues through close analysis of the entire Systems Portfolio, with particular attention given to the evidence that the institution provides for satisfying the various core components of the *Criteria*. For purposes of consistency, AQIP instructs appraisal teams to identify any accreditation issue as a strategic challenge as well.

Quality of Report & Its Use: As with any institutional report, the *Systems Portfolio* should work to enhance the integrity and credibility of the institution by celebrating successes while also stating honestly those opportunities for improvement. The *Systems Portfolio* should therefore be transformational, and it should provide external peer reviewers insight as to how such transformation may occur through processes of continuous improvement. The AQIP Categories and the Criteria for Accreditation serve as the overarching measures for the institution's current state, as well as its proposed future state. As such, it is imperative

that the *Portfolio* be fully developed, that it adhere to the prescribed format, and that it be thoroughly vetted for clarity and correctness. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution following this review, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Reflective Introduction and Executive Summary For NorthWest Arkansas Community College

The following consensus statement is from the System Appraisal Team's review of the institution's *Systems Portfolio Overview* and its introductions to the nine AQIP Categories. The purpose of this reflective introduction is to highlight the team's broad understanding of the institution, its mission, and the constituents that it serves.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) is a comprehensive community college located in Bentonville, Arkansas. The College has five additional locations and serves nearly 17,000 students annually. NWACC has been an AQIP institution since 2007. A new president took over on July 1, 2013, and NWACC acknowledges that this has led to a review of the College's direction. NWACC developed a new five-year Strategic Plan with yearly measurable goals, objectives, and ends which will be implemented on July 1, 2014.   NWACC is in one of the fastest growing areas in the United States and is home to the corporate offices for three international Fortune 500 companies.

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight NWACC's achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

- **Category 1**: NWACC has placed a special focus on student learning, focusing resources and time to improve student outcomes. The program review process was recently revised. A new Assessment Committee provides leadership for the assessment of student learning. During the 2013/2014 academic year, the Assessment Committee was asked to provide leadership for the College's assessment of student learning initiatives and activities by evaluating their alignment with the mission and goals of the institution. NWACC is aligning process, procedures and decision-making efforts in support of the Learning College model.

- **Category 2:** NWACC is one of 18 community colleges in Arkansas with a separate foundation. The Foundation annually reviews goals and objectives that align with the College's Strategic Plan. The Foundation enlists advocates to raise funds to support the College's mission. NWACC's non-instructional areas provide partnerships for training and

learning with area agencies and businesses, as well as the infrastructure to support the academic areas of the College. Workforce training is provided through NWACC's Corporate Learning and Adult Education programs as well as through the College's partnership with the Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC). Key community partners include K-12 institutions, the NWACC Foundation, area museums, cultural institutions, chambers of commerce, Northwest Arkansas Council, other colleges and universities and area businesses and industries.

- **Category 3:** NWACC has developed a Strategic Enrollment Management plan which drives all of the College's processes and contacts with students. The entire career of a student at NWACC is categorized into one of three paths: Entry, Persistence/Retention, and Transition.

- **Category 4:** NWACC understands that hiring qualified and committed individuals and providing up-to-date, relevant professional training helps the institution to accomplish its mission, vision, core values and Strategic Plan.   In April 2013, NWACC surveyed employees about quality of work life topics, and identified four categories needing focused attention: (1) Compensation, (2) Leadership, (3) Communication, and (4) Appreciation. The Human Resources department works with hiring managers to identify specific credentials, values, knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, and abilities required to perform job duties. Employees receive annual performance-based evaluations. A new process designed by the faculty was established 2010 and was to be evaluated at the end of the year for its success and improvement. HR will administer a new evaluation process beginning in FY 2015 for academic deans, vice presidents, and the President.

- **Category 5:** In response to earlier opportunities, NWACC has implemented changes designed to make leading and communicating more systematic and measurable. This includes a new Strategic Plan.

- **Category 6:** The recently modified Strategic Plan provides guidance for College operations to evaluate long-term planning. Nationally normed surveys, such as the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI), provide additional methods of systematically identifying student and stakeholder needs. In day-to-day operations, direct observation of processes affecting students, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders often results in the initiation of new goals and objectives at the department and division level. These goals are later reflected in future strategic and budgetary planning conducted by members of NWACC's leadership team.

- **Category 7:** NWACC uses its Strategic Plan, performance measures, and the NWACC

Report Card to determine what measures of effectiveness are needed. Data request processes have been streamlined and prioritized by student need, federal and state reporting needs, and administrative needs. A Quality Council has recently been tasked with evaluating current processes and developing measurable goals that align with the College's Strategic Plan.

- **Category 8:** The Master Plan was developed in 2004 by a coalition of stakeholders and was revised in 2009 with the expectation that future revisions would occur every three years and possibly on an annual basis. NWACC's participation in AQIP, along with its ends and goals and Strategic Plan, form the framework for its culture of continuous improvement. Short and long-term strategies are selected either directly or indirectly through the strategic planning process. Long-term strategies are also based directly upon the Strategic and Master Plans. Internal and nationally-normed surveys from sources such as Noel-Levitz, in addition to AQIP Action Projects, help NWACC to identify new priorities and initiatives.

- **Category 9:** Collaborative relationships are tied directly to NWACC's strategic goals, mission, and vision. While the College collects a variety of formal and informal measures of the effectiveness of its collaborative relationships, NWACC acknowledges that these could be more systematic and measurable.

Note: Strategic challenges and accreditation issues are discussed in detail in subsequent sections of the *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report*.

Strategic Challenges for NorthWest Arkansas Community College

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the Systems Appraisal Team attempted to identify the broader issues that would seem to present the greatest challenges and opportunities for the institution in the coming years. These areas are ones that the institution should address as it seeks to become the institution it wants to be. From these the institution may discover its immediate priorities, as well as strategies for long-term performance improvement. These items may also serve as the basis for future activities and projects that satisfy other AQIP requirements. The team also considered whether any of these challenges put the institution at risk of not meeting the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. That portion of the team's work is presented later in this report.

Knowing that NorthWest Arkansas Community College will discuss these strategic challenges, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified the following:

- **Introduction:** NWACC has recently revised its Mission, Vision, and Goals and Strategic Plan using an inclusive and comprehensive process that is commendable. The College has also gone through a recent change in leadership.

  While the College's Strategic Plan is mentioned as the driving force behind its improvement efforts, it is not clear from the descriptions in the Portfolio how this plays out in practice. In many cases there is no clear link among the goals developed in the process phase, the data collected to measure progress in meeting those goals, and how the analysis of the data led to concrete changes. Without those clear linkages it is difficult to determine if the improvements listed were random acts or part of a purposeful improvement process. Given that this is NWACC's second Portfolio, these linkages should be clearer. The Portfolio review team believes that all the pieces are in place for the College to move quickly to the next level, including its new Strategic Plan, strong committee structure, and addition of more measures of results including nationally-normed assessments. The strategic issues identified below are intended to assist the College in progressing along its AQIP journey.

- **NWACC AQIP Journey – 2nd Portfolio:** This is NWACC's second Portfolio which offered the Portfolio review team an opportunity to assess NWACC's progress along its AQIP journey. Expectations are understandably higher for institutions who are further along in the continuous improvement process. As presented in the Portfolio, NWACC processes, results, and improvements, and the linkages between them would not be surprising for an institution new to the process. As noted above, however, NWACC is not new to AQIP. Evidence of a systematic process that includes the development of measurable outcomes clearly linked to the College's Strategic Plan, collection of relevant data including historical trend data, analysis of the data, clear gap analysis, and improvements meant to close the gaps should be clearly evident in this Portfolio. The review team found limited or no evidence of these comprehensive improvement processes. The remaining strategic issues are designed to provide the College with some direction as it works to improve its overall continuous improvement processes. While the analysis is divided into the different stages of the continuous improvement

process, it is important to emphasize that the linkages between and among each and all phases needs to be clearly evident.

- **Processes:** NWACC has processes in place for planning that are inclusive and linked to the Mission, Vision and Goals of the College. It is unclear from the description in most sections of the Portfolio, however, what specific goals and targets have been identified through these processes. The next step for NWACC will be to ensure that planning processes lead to specific goals and/or targets with measurable outcomes. As the institution collects and analyzes more data related to accomplishments, the process descriptions and actions should reflect the usage of data and data analysis including trend analysis.

- **Results:** The College is to be commended for its work in collecting more data, including data from nationally normed assessments. However, in most sections of the Portfolio, NWACC does not list actual results (such as charts, graphs, models, etc.). In addition there is little or no discussion or analysis of results and their relationships to specific targets or measures. The College is well positioned to close the loop by linking outcomes to data and data analysis to improvements.

- **Historical Data:** Throughout the Portfolio there is limited or no historical data listed and/or analyzed. With its improved data collection processes, NWACC has the opportunity to examine the data for historical trends and patterns.

- **Improvements:** NWACC lists many positive changes in the Portfolio. For most of the Portfolio, however, it is not clear if the improvements listed grew out an analysis of data results. The College has an opportunity to link the data collected to specific measurable goals and outcomes and to clearly explain the link between the data results and improvements.

- **Core Components:** Some of the core components were not addressed in the Portfolio or alluded to sections or charts which did not exist.

AQIP Category Feedback

In the following section, the Systems Appraisal Team delineates institutional strengths along with opportunities for improvement within the nine AQIP Categories. As explained above, the symbols used in this section are **SS** for outstanding strength, **S** for strength, **O** for opportunity for improvement, and **OO** for outstanding opportunity for improvement. The choice of symbol for

each item represents the consensus evaluation of the team members and deserves the institution's thoughtful consideration. Comments marked **SS** or **OO** may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn*. This category identifies the shared purpose of all higher education institutions and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. It focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet it also addresses how the entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to learning objectives, mission-driven student learning and development, intellectual climate, academic programs and courses, student preparation, key issues such as technology and diversity, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 1.

NWACC appears to be an institution trying to find equilibrium with its student assessment program. The College has adopted the Learning College model (p.1) and is striving to become more learner-centered in its activities and processes. Some of the processes identified in this category appear to be a bit disconnected from one another and not as integrated as they would in a more mature organization. The College does report that a recent change in leadership has resulted in several changes for their assessment program. "The assessment processes have undergone several changes in order to respond to changes in administrative leadership and provide a more focused response to accreditation standards" (1P17, p 17). It is not clear from the Portfolio if the College has a comprehensive student assessment plan in place. In particular, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive assessment techniques tied to specific goals. An opportunity exists to expand the outcomes assessments for general education beyond course level assessments. Finally, the College listed no actual improvements for this area, a critical omission.

> **1P1, S.** NWACC has identified eight General Education Learning Outcomes that serve as the foundational core for all students. The degree programs are built to allow students to transfer to neighboring four year institutions upon completion of their associate degrees. A General Education Student Learning Assessment Committee comprised of nine faculty and two staff members periodically reviews the Learning

Outcomes. Recommendations for changes are submitted to the faculty and to the VP of Learning. The effort is designed to ensure activities are aligned with NWACC's core mission.

1P2, S. Program learning objectives are established by faculty program coordinators with input from a wide variety of stakeholders including discipline faculty, alumni, employers, students, and advisory boards. The advisory boards, which include industry representatives, assist in determining appropriate learning outcomes and measures for each program. When appropriate or required, the program level objectives follow guidelines established by external licensing agencies and professional organizations.

1P3, O. NWACC receives proposals for new programs and courses from a number of sources, including students, faculty, and advisory boards. The approval process for course changes involves the institution's curriculum committee and faculty senate. The College also has established processes for new program approval and new concurrent enrollment courses. However, it is unclear what criteria the curriculum committee or others use to ensure the courses facilitate student learning. Additionally, 1P3 does not address why a new program should be developed. It is also unclear how external stakeholders are involved. The process does not appear to be comprehensive.

1P4, SS. NWACC has several systems and processes in place to ensure its programs are responsive and relevant. These include regular review by advisory committees, program review processes, review of student results on national licensure, student feedback, and much more. The institution uses a formalized program review process for those programs not governed by an external licensing or accrediting agency. Data are used to inform the program review process, allowing NWACC to modify its programs to achieve student success.

1P5, O. NWACC is an open admission institution, and students must have a high school diploma or GED for general admission. Incoming students are assessed, and those not ready for college are offered developmental coursework. Prerequisites are determined during the course development process. Enrollment is restricted in college-level English and math courses as well as in a number of other courses where the institution has determined prerequisite scores or courses are necessary to ensure student success. However, NWACC does not appear to have in place a systematic process that identifies required preparation based on program goals and objectives or anticipates needed changes in the curriculum to meet student needs.

1P6, O. NWACC's admission and advising staff communicate to current and prospective students the expectations of the programs. The College has a structured advising process with clear mission, goals, and responsibilities. Advisors use a common syllabus and work with students to not only develop a high level of knowledge related to academic planning but engage collaboratively as students work toward successful completion. However, it is unclear how information is provided to students who do not actually meet with Admissions and Advising staff. It is likely that potential students have access to information through the college's website or printed publications, but the institution does not address this in its answer to 1P6.

1P7, OO. NWACC has established a Career Center offering career assessments and allowing students to explore academic majors and career options. The College also has a process for directing entering students to select courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. However, the Portfolio does not explain how *students are helped to select programs of study that match their needs, interests, and abilities.* Opportunity exists to show how career services relate to the student advising model outlined in 1P6.

1P8, S. NWACC offers GED, ESL, and ABE courses for those who do not have a high school diploma or language skills. NWACC also offers Successful First Year classes to students for credit, a learning lab, the Writing Center, which is staffed by composition instructors, and the library, which subscribes to Learning Express Library. The Academic Skills Reading and Writing department supplies one level of developmental instruction for students according to their ACT and COMPASS placement scores in reading and writing. Students are required to pass the Intermediate Writing course prior to enrolling in the transfer-level English Composition course. The Developmental Math department provides multiple levels of instruction, which students are required to progress through prior to enrolling in transfer-level College Algebra.

1P9, O. NWACC offers online and hybrid classes from early morning through the evening, including weekends. The College uses various instructional delivery methods and provides professional development opportunities for faculty to develop alternate instructional techniques and to identify student learning styles. However, it is unclear how the faculty detects and addresses different learning styles after receiving the professional development. More information regarding the content and duration of the professional development would help address this question.

1P10, S. NWACC offers a variety of services and options for special needs students and subgroups. The College has a Disability Resource Center that assesses student disability needs and provides appropriate services. Several student clubs focus on specific subgroups. The institution's Early College Experience program provides options for high school students to earn college credits while still in high school.

1P11, O. All new part-time and full-time faculty are "strongly encouraged" to attend a new faculty welcome and in-service development day, where they learn about their roles within NWACC. They are also given examples of a learning-centered syllabus and are provided with an overview of the faculty performance review process. All full-time faculty participate in an annual performance review, the purpose of which is to ensure individual faculty objectives are consistent with NWACC's institutional goals and objectives. It is unclear exactly how the college develops and revises its expectations for effective teaching and learning and who is involved in the process.

1P12, O. NWACC offers courses in a variety of locations and times to meet the needs of the students, with collaboration extending beyond the main campus to all satellite locations. The College also offers online and hybrid programs and courses. However, the Portfolio does not address how goals and objectives related to course delivery are articulated, how the course delivery system is addressed to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, or how assessment is done to ensure students' needs are being met.

1P13, O. NWACC uses student feedback, advisory committee input, and some surveys to determine if course changes are needed. However, the process as described in the Portfolio appears to be dependent upon the initiative of the individual faculty member and not part of a larger comprehensive improvement process.

1P14, O. The final decision for discontinuing programs rests first with the College Cabinet, then the Board of Trustees, with notification to the AHECB. Program changes can be recommended by the faculty and/or program coordinators and must then be approved by the Division Dean. The Dean's Council Meeting discusses the proposal, and final approval is given by the Vice President for Learning. Discontinuation of courses is approved by the Dean, the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, and the Vice President for Learning. However, the process as described in the Portfolio does not appear to be part of a comprehensive, program improvement process.

1P15, O. The College collects data from a variety of sources to determine students' learning support needs, including the Academic Success Center, Testing Center, and

Library. These units use the data to tailor the support that they offer to students. It is unclear how the need for the centers was determined and if they are part of a larger process to improve student learning. NWACC does not mention use of Student Learning Outcomes or General Education Outcomes as a basis for determining learning support needs, and this data would be beneficial in locating and addressing gaps. In addition, 1P15 does not address how the College determines and addresses the learning support needs of its faculty.

1P16, OO. Students and faculty collaborate to extend learning beyond the classroom in support of common goals, and the Co-Curricular Activities and Judicial Affairs Director oversees the clubs and organizations offered. However, the Portfolio does not describe how the College aligns co-curricular and curricular goals so that students can learn effectively within and beyond the classroom.

1P17, O. NWACC tracks the success of its transfer students to the University of Arkansas. The College also uses national assessments and/or licensure to help determine if students in selected career program areas have met the program requirements. These activities appear to be dependent upon the availability of an outside licensure or assessment. There is no description in 1P17 of a comprehensive program review process or student success tracking to insure that all programs are meeting expectations and that student learning outcomes are being met.

1P18, S. NWACC uses a faculty driven process to assess student learning through the Student Learning Assessment Committee. The College's assessment processes have undergone several changes to respond to changes in administrative leadership and now provide a more focused response to accreditation standards. Results are communicated and documented. Additionally, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board requires programmatic review every 7 to 10 years.

1R1, O. While the Portfolio does describe the collection of data, it is unclear if this collection is part of a comprehensive assessment plan. It is difficult to determine from the results presented in Figure 1R1-1 exactly what is being measured and how that fits into the overall assessment plan. In addition, it is unclear if the general education outcomes are being assessed using already existing assessments or if an attempt has been made to use more comprehensive measures tied to an overall assessment plan.

1R2, O. The institution provides performance results from its common student learning outcomes, including retention rates, enrollee success rates, and completer success

rates. It is unclear how these performance results are integrated with or complement the general education outcomes. Additionally, NWACC does not provide goals for any of these results. Without targets for improvement as well as historical trend data, the institution will not have a foundation upon which to make decisions for improvement.

1R3, OO. The Portfolio listed data results in Figure 1R3-1 but provided no analysis or narrative to explain how these results relate to the College's goals and contribute to the overall improvement process.

1R4, OO. NWACC states that the majority of transferring students attend the University of Arkansas, and data from those students is provided as evidence that they have attained the necessary knowledge to be successful after transfer. However, no comparative data are provided showing how *other* students (either native to U of A or transferring from other institutions) do after their first semester at U of A. Neither does the institution provide historical data or targets to provide a frame of reference to the data provided. No evidence is provided from employers showing that career and technical students have the skills required to succeed in the workplace. There is no analysis of how the transfer data fit into the college's overall assessment goals. There is no discussion of program outcomes results for any other area.

1R5, OO. No response is given.

1R6, OO. No response is given.

1I1, OO. No response is given.

1I2, OO. No response is given.

AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives. This category addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of its mission. Depending on the institution's character, it examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of other distinctive objectives, alignment of other distinctive objectives, faculty and staff roles, assessment and review of objectives, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 2.

NWACC has recently engaged in several initiatives relative to accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives, including reviewing and operationalizing strategic initiatives, formalizing policies, identifying measures, and summarizing improvements. Opportunity exists to systematize processes and develop and implement a long-term system of tracking and assessing performance results. Opportunity also exists to provide additional means of benchmarking for improvement of non-instructional objectives. Finally, opportunity exists to review processes, measures, and results and to identify new targets for improvement in Other Distinctive Objectives.

2P1, O. NWACC's new president started in 2013. In January of 2013, the Board of Trustees set the strategic goals for the College for the next 3-5 years and then reviewed them again at the January 2014 retreat. While the goals have been operationalized, opportunity exists to develop and associate processes with these goals. Significant restructuring has occurred, and a college-wide Institutional Review Board (IRB) was established in 2012.

2P2, S. NWACC uses formal and informal processes to determine major non-instructional objectives for external stakeholders, including advisory committees, needs surveys, focus groups, involvement in regional boards, and service groups. Division leaders meet with teams to review feedback and set objectives. Those objectives requiring funding are forwarded to the President's Cabinet for prioritization within the budget structure.

2P3, S. The College uses a variety of communication methods including traditional and social media to communicate expectations concerning non-instructional objectives. Internal communications channels include the Faculty Senate, the Staff Council, fall and spring forums, and other college-wide committees.

2P4, O. NWACC discusses the upcoming Action Project focused on communications processes. There is an opportunity to directly link this Action Project with the assessment of Other Distinctive Objectives.

2P5, OO. The Portfolio discusses changes made in policy development and how college-wide input led the College to split the position of Vice President of Learning/Learner Support Services into two separate positions. This action occurred in 2011. However, there is no discussion of how the college identifies faculty and staff needs. The College has an outstanding opportunity to describe how faculty and staff needs are identified as related to non-instructional objectives and how resources are

aligned to support these needs.

2P6, O. NWACC incorporates faculty and staff input into the College's goals and objectives through the Quality Council. The Portfolio lists the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and AQIP Action committee as ways input and feedback are obtained, but it is unclear how these committees fit into the overall process for readjusting objectives or the processes that support them.

2R1, S. NWACC identifies a number of specific measures in figure 2R1-1 that are used to document outcomes for non-instructional objectives.

2R2, O. NWACC references the list of performance measures included in figure 2R1. The College also provides an additional example of how performance results were used to continue the summer schedule pilot. However, the results shown provide only a snapshot in time. Inclusion of historical trend data and performance goals are crucial for analyzing the data, drawing meaningful conclusions, and setting realistic targets for results.

2R3, OO. The College presents very limited data benchmarking outcomes for non-instructional objectives to other institutions (data are derived from the National Community College Benchmarking Project). It is unclear how the Noel-Levitz data relates to non-instructional objectives. The College has an opportunity to develop specific measures that can be benchmarked, collect data on those measures, and evaluate NWACC's performance in comparison to other institutions.

2R4, O. NWACC specifically cites its corporate learning area as an example of how its processes strengthen the institution. Limited data are provided to support this assertion. An opportunity exists for the College to more clearly describe its goals in this area and the actual data related to those goals including trend data. Finally, the institution has the opportunity to present clear examples of how specific data results led to specific improvements.

2I1, O. NWACC is to be commended for hiring a Dean of Workforce Development and strengthening its institutional effectiveness processes. However, the improvements cited in 2I1 are not aligned with the distinctive objectives cited in the Process questions in this category. As a result, it is difficult to see continuous improvement through processes to data collection and finally, to process improvement based on the data.

2I2, O. NWACC uses AQIP action projects, process improvement teams, and advisory boards to improve its distinctive objectives. However, in this Category, the College does not clearly define processes regarding how it determines and designs other distinctive objectives. Neither does NWACC provide evidence that measures are used to identify needs. Based upon an apparent lack of systematic data-informed processes, it is unclear how strong the culture of continuous improvement is at the college.

AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs. This category examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to student and stakeholder identification; student and stakeholder requirements; analysis of student and stakeholder needs; relationship building with students and stakeholders; complaint collection, analysis, and resolution; determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 3.

NWACC has placed a strong emphasis on student success by creating a process that is designed to support students from initial intake to graduation. NWACC is well respected and supported within the community it serves and is supportive of its students. However, the College appears to be challenged in its efforts to measure the results of its engagement activities. NWACC participates in several nationally recognized programs without a consistent strategy. The College collects data on student and other stakeholder satisfaction, but it is unclear if these are part of an overall, comprehensive improvement process or simply individual departmental initiatives. In addition, there is no discussion of how the institution determines emerging student or other stakeholder needs.

3P1, O. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed throughout the College to improve the student experience. The data are collected using various surveys, student tracking software, student technology helpdesk data, and the Student Government Association. NWACC conducts a combination of nationally benchmarked and in-house developed instruments that measure satisfaction of students and other stakeholders. It is unclear, however, how the institution closes the loop by selecting appropriate courses of action based on the information obtained.

3P2, S. NWACC uses social media, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Vine, and YouTube to build and maintain relationships with students. In

addition, the College uses the NWACC App, the My NWACC connection portal, and the NWACC webpage to communicate with students. One of the more successful programs for building and maintaining relationships in the entry phase is the Learning Improvement Fun Empowerment (LIFE) program, which brings high school students from underrepresented populations to campus.

3P3, O. NWACC uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis of stakeholder needs which vary depending on the stakeholder group. The College-wide goals and objectives from the Strategic Plan provide a system for meeting the changing needs of key stakeholders as outlined in Figure 3P3-1. Opportunity exists to demonstrate that applying the systematic assessment approach in each area of the College will create objectives and measures that align with the goals provided through the Strategic Plan.

3P4, S. NWACC builds and maintains relationships with its key stakeholders through various activities, including cultural enrichment activities, an annual scholarship gala, scholar donor lunch, a community resource fair, workforce training, adult education (GED, ESL), staff membership on area boards, student internships, career workshops, career information sessions and fairs, local high school counselor and superintendent breakfasts, high school Senior Day, return to learn event for non-traditional students, and memorandums of understanding agreements with other agencies, partner institutions of higher education, and area high schools.

3P5, OO. The institution lists a number of tools used to obtain data, including the collection of census data from high schools and the CCSSE and SSI surveys. However, it is unclear how the data are analyzed and used to make decisions about targeting new student and stakeholder groups. The institution does not appear to have a process in place to ensure that this occurs.

3P6, S. NWACC provides multiple avenues for students and others to register concerns including anonymous online forms and formal complaint processes. The College collects and analyzes complaints received using the Advocate software program. In addition, the College has created a Behavioral Review Team to review complaints, look for patterns, and recommend improvements. This data allows NWACC the ability to distinguish patterns of behavior important for maintaining a safe student environment.

3R1, S. NWACC used CCSSE on a bi-annual basis and recently switched to using the Noel-Levitz SSI instrument. NWACC participates annually in the National Community College Benchmarking Project. The institution also uses graduate surveys, Learner

Services surveys, and surveys of local Chamber of Commerce members. Additionally, NWACC uses focus groups of students, advisory boards, and community members.

3R2, O. NWACC uses both national and local assessments to judge student satisfaction, and these indicate positive results for the College. Only one year of data and two examples are provided, however, so the historical trends are unclear. In addition, there is no discussion of how these results are tied to specific initiatives and/or how the institution assesses specific interventions designed to improve student and stakeholder satisfaction.

3R3, O. NWACC collects a variety of performance results for building relationships with students, including data comparing the retention rate of those in the PASS program with the rate of those who are not in the program. However, limited historical trend data are presented, and the institution does not include performance targets. These additions would provide the institution with information that would help it make data-informed decisions regarding the success of its relationship-building activities.

3R4, O. The Portfolio lists student satisfaction results for one year, and these show strong student satisfaction with key institutional services. NWACC does not provide any historical data or analysis to explain any trends and/or how these results are tied to initiatives. In addition, the College mentions that it collects some information from business and industry and end of course surveys from its training, but no actual results or analysis are provided.

3R5, O. The Portfolio mentions a community survey conducted more than 10 years ago that showed strong positive community perception of the College, but no more recent or follow up results are provided. One year's worth student satisfaction with the orientation process is also listed, but it is unclear if this represents improvement or not. NWACC has an opportunity to more systematically gather data to measure performance results for building relationships with its key stakeholders on a college-wide basis, then act on that data as appropriate.

3R6, OO. The institution presents data from the CCSSE survey (which was discontinued in 2011) and the SSI survey, which was first administered in the fall of 2013. While both show that NWACC scored higher in most categories than the peer group, the CCSSE data are several years old. Selected results presented are only for one year and there is no discussion of historical trends or how these results are used to drive improvement. An opportunity exists for the College to develop a more rigorous

benchmarking process which will provide it with a clearer understanding of the efficacy of its processes for understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs.

3I1, O. NWACC lists several recent improvements in supporting students' needs, including changes to advising for veterans and dependents, creation of a veterans' lounge, creating the Student Government Association, and use of the Noel-Levitz SSI survey. However, the College does not address the extent to which its processes and performance results are systematic and comprehensive. Without this information, it is difficult to assess the overall improvements that NWACC has made in this category.

3I2, O. While there is mention of the Strategic Planning process and the Quality Council, it is difficult from the brief discussion to determine how impactful these committees are on the College's overall culture as it relates to continuous improvement.

AQIP Category 4: Valuing People. This category explores the institution's commitment to the development of its employees since the efforts of all faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 4.

NWACC has a structured employee orientation process. Initial data collection for this area is underway. It does not appear, however, that there is a comprehensive system in place for this area that includes the setting of clear improvement goals, the collection of relevant data to measure progress, the analysis of the data and structured improvement connected to the data analysis.

4P1, S. NWACC's Human Resources department recently added a Compensation Analyst position. This individual completes desk audits that define position-specific job tasks and is working to better establish required staff credentials and skills based on the Arkansas Department of Finance Administration and the Office for Personnel Management Classifications. Using standard hiring guidelines and job analysis software

and market analyses, Human Resources determines appropriate job classifications for faculty and classified and professional staff. Work with hiring managers, supervisors, and committees also helps with identification of specific credentials.

4P2, S. NWACC's hiring committees have membership representing diversity and compliance partners, as well as the hiring managers, and individual(s) with job specific knowledge. Selected candidates must successfully complete background checks which include verification of degree(s). Candidates for administrative positions at director or above are required to participate in a public forum.

4P3, O. NWACC follows all state and federal guidelines when budgeting, recruiting, and hiring employees. However, while the College indicates its desire to hire the right people into the right positions, it does not outline any specialized recruiting or hiring practices that support this philosophy.

4P4, S. NWACC has a structured employee orientation program that covers important aspects of the College and the specific position. The President hosts new employee luncheons. New employees are evaluated within 90 days of hire. The College offers a supervisor training program that includes an orientation from the President and covers 14 modules that are important for managers and supervisors.

4P5, S. NWACC prepares for changes in personnel through cross-training, employee evaluations, and succession planning. Mentoring, phased retirement, and "stretch" assignments are also used. In preparation for the state's Biennium Budget and Personnel Request process, Human Resources meets with division heads to discuss the division's existing organizational structure. Succession planning, career development opportunities, and future personnel needs are identified in these meetings. Policies exist for separation of employment.

4P6, O. NWACC automates processes whenever possible and is striving to align processes and procedures with the College's mission, vision, and values. Additionally, the institution uses Kaizen methodology to review the student intake process. However, the College does not describe how it designs work processes to enhance organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.

4P7, S. NWACC uses a third party provider for its mandatory ethics training. In addition, the College maintains an anonymous Ethics Helpline where stakeholders can report potential violations. The College has published an Employee Code of Conduct and

Ethics Compliance policy that outlines acceptable and unacceptable employee behaviors and the consequences of non-compliance.

4P8, O. NWACC refined its process for determining and implementing training needs by creating the Professional Development and Faculty Development departments. These departments work with Human Resources as well as individual departments throughout the institution to identify training needs and facilitate implementation of the training. It is unclear how the College aligns training with long-range organizational plans. Neither does NWACC address how its process for determining training needs strengthens its instructional and non-instructional programs and services.

4P9, O. The Senior Vice President for Learning & Provost recently reorganized the faculty development committee and changed the committee's charge. Staff Development is currently working with Information Technology on a project to generate annual employee training and development reports to support annual performance evaluations. An opportunity exists to monitor and demonstrate the effectiveness of these changes.

4P10, O. NWACC recently implemented the PeopleAdmin performance management module, hoping to enable the College to develop, monitor, and measure individual goals and objectives and tie those into the College's Five-Year Plan. Human Resources is designing a new 360° evaluation process within PeopleAdmin that will be administered beginning in FY 2015 for academic deans, vice presidents, and the President. A new process designed by the faculty for evaluation was established in 2014 and will be evaluated at the end of the year for success and improvement. An opportunity exists to monitor and determine the effectiveness of these approaches, and their alignment with College goals.

4P11, OO. Although NWACC lists several changes that it has made to its employee recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits system, it does not appear to have a standardized plan in place for employee recognition and reward. NWACC does not address how its recognition, reward, compensation, and benefit systems align with instructional and non-instructional programs and services. Employee recognition, reward, compensation and benefits systems as described in the Portfolio do not appear to be part of comprehensive improvement process.

4P12, O. Although the institution has administered three climate surveys in the past four years, it is unclear how NWACC analyzed the results and made improvements based on the data. NWACC is planning to administer a nationally-normed employee satisfaction

survey in the fall of 2014. While the College identified areas in need of improvement, it is unclear what actions were taken to operationalize any of the recommendations.

4P13, O. NWACC has implemented improvements related to employees' satisfaction, health, safety, and wellbeing, including hiring an Executive Director of Policy, Risk, and Compliance and having an HR staff member dedicated to employee wellness. However, there does not appear to be a process for determining what activities need improvement or a process for overseeing activities.

4R1, O. NWACC recently completed an AQIP Action Project for Valuing People as a result of their 2011 Strategy Forum, and action plans were implemented to address the employee concerns in May 2014. However, the success is yet to be measured through a semi-annual quality of work life survey. While the College is scheduled to conduct a nationally normed employee satisfaction survey in the fall of 2014, efforts made thus far are limited. The College has not collected any longitudinal data that would allow the institution to measure the impact of any changes it has made.

4R2, OO. NWACC has developed and presented baseline employee data (demographics, turnover, retention and diversity) that can be used moving forward. The College plans to participate in the Chronicle's *Great Colleges to Work For* study and states that it will use the nationally normed results. While the College self-identified that 73% of its employees feel stressed at work, it failed to indicate what step(s), if any, were being taken to remediate the problem. An opportunity exists to develop processes and systems to regularly track and assess performance results. NWACC also has an opportunity to set guidelines to improve employee satisfaction.

4R3, OO. The Portfolio describes the use of some surveys to measure progress in this area but does not provide a clear description of how these measures are tied to specific goals. The example of the follow-up survey to measure employee satisfaction does tie data results to specific goals, but only for a limited area which was not identified as one of the College's key goals for this area.

4R4, OO. NWACC has some data available from the SSI demonstrating comparative results in valuing students and student feedback, and the College participates in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), which yielded additional results. The College recognizes this as an area in which improvements can be made. An opportunity exists to develop additional comparative measures in this area that are tied to concrete, measurable goals.

4I1, O. NWACC lists several improvements that it has made in the area of valuing people. However, NWACC does not appear to have any systematic processes in place for collecting and analyzing data, identifying improvements, and implementing changes. An opportunity exists for the institution to describe how systematic and comprehensive these improvements are.

4I2, OO. NWACC cites its Cabinet structure as the venue for selecting processes to improve and set targets for improvement results. However, it is unclear how this structure specifically relates to valuing people. Additionally, the College has presented no evidence of targets for improvement in this category. An opportunity exists for NWACC to create a system for collecting and analyzing data related to Valuing People. The College can then track performance results and set performance targets to evaluate processes, leading to continuous improvement.

AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating. This category addresses how the institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide planning, decision-making, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to leading activities, communicating activities, alignment of leadership system practices, institutional values and expectations, direction-setting, use of data, analysis of results, leadership development and sharing, succession planning, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 5.

NWACC has repeatedly emphasized its five-year Strategic Plan as driving the direction of the institution and its quality journey. While NWACC collects data from a variety of sources, the Portfolio does not explain how the institution uses data in its decision-making processes or how it connects this data to the Strategic Plan. Also, while the Portfolio demonstrates the communication of mission, vision, and values internally and externally through multiple means, the Portfolio does not explain how the College's Ends and Goals deepen and reinforce the characteristics of high performance. The Portfolio states NWACC currently has no results regarding Leading and Communicating within the institution, lacks comparative results, and does not identify key targets in this category. The College has an opportunity to identify performance measures of Leading and Communicating and to collect and analyze these regularly.

5P1, S. The College's Mission, Vision, and Values were reviewed in an open meeting hosted by the Board of Trustees in 2012. The Values are reviewed annually by the President's Cabinet and Board of Trustees. The College continually references the Mission, Vision, and Values when setting priorities or making strategic decisions.

5P2, S. The College is guided by a five year Strategic Plan which is reviewed and refined by the stakeholders. The plan is used to further define the College's Goals and Ends throughout its lifecycle.

5P3, O. The Portfolio lists a series of activities, inputs, surveys, and assessments, but it is unclear how these are all tied together into a comprehensive plan to ensure that the needs and expectations of current and potential students and other stakeholders are met.

5P4, S. NWACC's leaders maintain a strong focus on existing students while seeking future opportunities by relying on the five-year Strategic Plan. This plan, created with input from all constituents, includes an environmental scan to identify future opportunities. The College also participates in the North Arkansas Two-Year College Consortium, which enhances all of the colleges' participating through strong goals to better meet the needs of the region.

5P5, S. NWACC has a well-established committee structure that provides opportunities for various stakeholders to have input into the planning and operations processes. The leadership of the College incorporates ideas from these committees as well as other sources in setting the direction of the College.

5P6, O. The institution collects data from many surveys and provides examples of how these data were used to make decisions. However, the College recognizes that it needs to strengthen its process for making data-informed decisions. An opportunity exists to develop a process to collect, analyze, and use performance results and other data in the decision making process.

5P7, S. NWACC uses various processes for communicating between and among levels at the institution. Processes include emails, open forums, daily announcements, meetings, dissemination of meeting minutes, and social media postings.

5P8, O. NWACC communicates the shared mission, vision, and values to faculty and staff and external constituents in a variety of ways. However, NWACC has an opportunity to more systemically communicate its shared Mission, Vision, and Values to

all stakeholder groups. It is unclear how the Mission, Vision, and Values of the institution are communicated to students.

5P9, S. NWACC uses multiple options to encourage, develop and strengthen faculty, staff and administrators by offering several development opportunities. These include regularly scheduled activities that help to communicate and share leadership knowledge, skills, and best practices throughout the institution. Faculty present workshops to their colleagues on topics that model best practices in learning-centered education. The College has a Staff Development Day, and conversations on student learning occur in monthly informal sessions among faculty, staff, and administrators.

5P10, S. NWACC and its Board of Trustees have developed several processes to identify and support potential leaders, and these will be incorporated into a formalized succession plan. The Board, for example, has adopted an Emergency Presidential Succession Policy and identified a line of succession. The College conducts leadership training for advancing and emerging leaders. As a result, several participants have been tapped to move into advanced leadership roles.

5R1, O. NWACC cites the Noel-Levitz SSI survey and Quality of Life survey as its primary performance measures. Another survey measuring leadership and communication was last administered in 2010. The College has an opportunity to enhance its sources for measuring Leading and Communicating beyond what is described in 5R1. An opportunity exists to collect and analyze data for Leading and Communicating that include regular historical trend data and targets for improvement.

5R2, OO. The Portfolio provides a few examples of one-time results related to its performance measures for Leading and Communicating, but these do not appear to be part of comprehensive process to regularly collect and analyze relevant data. An opportunity exists for the College to more clearly identify potential data sources, regularly collect and analyze the data, and use this data to implement improvements.

5R3, O. The Portfolio states that NWACC currently has no results regarding Leading & Communicating within the institution and lacks comparative results in this category. The College recently participated in the Chronicle's *Great Colleges to Work For*, and it plans to participate in the Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey, both of which will provide comparative data and insights regarding strengths and weaknesses in this area.

5I1, O. The Portfolio lists a few examples of improvements in this area. However, there

is no discussion of how these examples grew out of a comprehensive improvement process that included clearly identified, measureable goals, the collection and analysis of relevant data, and the implementation of improvements as a result of the data analysis.

5I2, O. NWACC's culture and infrastructure for Leading and Communicating shows a level of sophistication in regard to the processes described in this Category. However, the institution has failed to close the loop by measuring the success of these processes over time, analyzing this data, setting realistic goals, and using the data as a basis for improvements.

AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations. This category addresses the variety of institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to student support, administrative support, identification of needs, contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives, day-to-day operations, use of data, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 6.

While the Portfolio identifies support processes and responsible offices or parties involved in implementation, it has not explained how NWACC designs, maintains, and communicates support processes. A closer review suggests that these activities are very narrow and fall short of measuring process outcomes in a fashion that supports setting objectives and a commitment to continual improvement. It is unclear if the College has a comprehensive improvement plan for this area that includes measurable goals, the collection and analysis of relevant data, and improvement tied to the analysis of the data. The institution would benefit from the creation of measurable performance outcomes in each of these areas which include realistic, yet aggressive performance targets. Finally, communicating how these processes are designed, maintained, and disseminated as well as how the services are assessed could enhance stakeholder confidence and help them understand performance improvements.

6P1, O. The College utilizes a variety of survey methods to support service needs of students and other stakeholders. Assessment tools include the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, student focus groups conducted by the Student Government Association, business and industry assessments, and alumni assessments conducted by the College foundation. However, NWACC uses a decentralized approach to planning in

this area; various departments/divisions do their own planning and assessment. It is unclear from the Portfolio how systematic the planning is for Supporting Institutional Operations and how it fits into the College's strategic planning efforts.

6P2, O. NWACC utilizes multiple internal and external methods for determining the administrative support needs of faculty, staff, and administrators. The primary method involves the annual budget review process which gathers data on operational needs and activities. Standing committees also serve to facilitate communication concerning administrative and operational needs. It is unclear, however, how the data are aggregated to identify trends or incorporated into the College's strategic planning and budgeting processes.

6P3, S. NWACC's Office of Public Safety and Emergency and Risk Management provides a multi-faceted approach to the College's safety and security. The Behavioral Review Team responds to concerns regarding students' behaviors, and the Enterprise Risk Management Team is responsible for identifying risks to ensure that an emergency does not occur. The College provides employees with several educational opportunities through a comprehensive campus emergency preparedness and education program. The institution disseminates safety and security related information to employees in several ways including posters, a safety and security guide, and a desktop reference.

6P4, O. The Portfolio gives some examples of managing day-to-day support services but does not explain how the College addresses stakeholder needs. NWACC provides a brief description of its tools but provides little detail regarding how the information is used to improve campus outcomes. An opportunity exists to build a more robust feedback mechanisms that will allow the College to measure the impact of its innovations. Additionally, an opportunity exists to explain how the College manages its key student, administrative and institutional support service processes on a day-to-day basis to ensure that they are addressing the needs that the College intends for them to meet.

6P5, O. The College has in place some methods of knowledge sharing, innovation and empowerment, most notably the TracDat software program. In addition, the College utilizes a variety of software platforms to document key processes and to encourage knowledge sharing. However, the level of engagement various staff and leaders have with the systems and whether or not the systems are actually utilized by those seeking information is unclear from the information provided.

6R1, O. NWACC reports that it uses four data sources to measure support services, but it is unclear exactly how these data sources are used as part of the improvement process or even how they are relevant. Additionally, the information provided does not actually address the question of what measures are collected. The College has an opportunity to better describe the specific measures that are evaluated to determine the effectiveness of support services. The opportunity exists for the College to more clearly develop and/or describe its overall process for ensuring quality in this area.

6R2, O. The Portfolio provides limited data relative to performance results for support services processes. Some data are provided from an in-house learner support services survey and from the SSI. These data are clearly relevant and seem to show that the College is doing well in the student support area. However, since only one year of data is presented, it is difficult to determine if these results represent an improvement or a decline. AN opportunity exists to expand performance results and to demonstrate the use of data for performance improvement in institutional support services.

6R3, OO. The information provided relates primarily to student support services and comes from a survey completed by students. The data are extremely favorable; however, it is just a snapshot and has little relevance without context. The College has an outstanding opportunity to develop measures related to administrative support services, to collect data from a variety of stakeholders in the process, and to report results for those processes.

6R4, O. The College is actively engaged in collecting data, but it is unclear how it uses the data to make operational improvements. An expanded and consistent data collection process could help NWACC demonstrate how its support services align with planning efforts and demonstrate improvements in key support areas.

6R5, O. NWACC measures itself against other institutions, and the results provided show that the institution is doing well in these areas compared with other colleges. However, the opportunity exists for NWACC to identify additional data collection processes and to use this data to identify and target areas for needed improvements.

6I1, O. NWACC cites several noteworthy improvements in its support processes, including the implementation of new billing and payment software, new shared network servers, and safety improvements. However, the institution does not provide evidence to support its claim that it measures improvements through setting targets for improving performance results. Building a culture of evidence dedicated to data-informed decision

making is fundamental to continuous quality improvement. The addition of TracDat planning and assessment software may provide the College with an opportunity to more clearly define and develop a comprehensive improvement process for this area that includes measurable goals, data collection and analysis, and improvements tied to the data analysis.

6I2, O. NWACC clearly articulates that it supports and encourages institutional growth, change and continuous improvement. However, the supporting data and other evidence that these beliefs are incorporated institutionally is noticeably absent.

AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness. This category examines how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data both at the institutional and departmental/unit levels. It considers institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 7.

NWACC appears to collect, analyze, and distribute significant amounts of data and operational information. What is unclear is how these data are collected and analyzed as part of an aligned set of processes. Although frequent reference is made to national surveys and benchmarking, little direct evidence from these surveys is presented to support the College's assertion that it is, in fact, moving forward. The consistent lack of longitudinal information makes it virtually impossible to determine if the institution is moving ahead or backwards in terms of declared objectives. An opportunity exists to explain how data distribution systematically supports performance improvement. The College has an opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of these comparison results for supporting improvements and highlighting best practices in Measuring Effectiveness. Although NWACC describes processes which have resulted in recent improvements and suggests a developing quality culture, this portion of the Portfolio identifies no targets for improvement for Measuring Effectiveness.

7P1, S. NWACC's Mission, Strategic Plan, state reporting requirements, and "Learning College" principles drive data management in informed decision-making, facilitating teaching and learning, and measuring effectiveness. The College uses Banner to mine

data and makes it available online in print and upon request. NWACC uses its Office of Institutional Research as its data clearing house and primary communication hub. The number and type of data managed by the OIR is varied and can support the College in its planning efforts.

7P2, O. Information and data access are readily available to faculty, staff, and administration of the College. The Portfolio lists some examples of decisions or actions that make use of data. It is unclear, however, how the data collection and analysis process is tied to the Strategic Plan and annual goals. NWACC has a relatively new 3-5 year Strategic Plan developed in 2011 with goals reviewed in 2013; new yearly measurable goals, objectives, and ends will be implemented July 1, 2014. An opportunity exists to demonstrate how the College selects, manages, and distributes data and performance information in support of its systematic planning and improvement efforts.

7P3, O. NWACC's OIR is very reactive and changes its process based primarily on customer satisfaction *("The level of satisfaction is of prime concern…")* with the process. It is unclear from the Portfolio what role the OIR plays in the College's strategic planning process or how the data provided is used by the requester. An opportunity exists for the OIR to lead the effort to improve the College's continuous improvement processes.

7P4, O. While institutional-level data are collected and analyzed including standard and ad hoc OIR projects, locally produced and nationally-normed surveys, staff evaluation surveys, budgeting, student and community service evaluations, and Banner data extracts, an opportunity exists to explain how data distribution systematically supports performance improvement. Data are reviewed by the President and Executive Cabinet and are shared with the BOT. It is unclear, however, how the data were used to set goals and if those goals were met and/or led to significant improvements. The Portfolio does describe in detail an action project designed to reduce the College's carbon footprint and increase its efficiency.

7P5, S. The President's Cabinet's and Board of Trustees' determination of the Ends and Goals, state initiatives, and the current institutional focus determine the priorities for comparative data and information. NWACC developed a report card to offer comparisons of key measures to peer colleges using IPEDS and college-specific data. Nationally-normed surveys include the NCCBP, CSRDE, and Noel-Levitz. Department

and division data analysis is informed by the Strategic Plan and academic assessment plans.

7P6, OO. The College has an outstanding opportunity to describe how the available reports and supporting analysis by individual units are aligned with institutional goals and objectives. The information provided describes the nature of the reports and the accessibility of the reports, as well as how various analyses are shared across campus. The information provided falls short of describing how the institution assures itself that each analysis is aligned with institutional goals and objectives.

7P7, S. NWACC's IT department is primarily responsible for ensuring the timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and security of information systems (and related processes). IT monitors all information systems' uptime, resource utilization, resource capacity, security, data redundancy and data integrity through a collaboration of operating system based software and third party applications (Figure 7P7-1). All NWACC faculty and staff who have access to the Banner student information system complete online FERPA training each year so that they can continue to have access to the system.

7R1, O. The OIR assessment plan includes a survey of internal customers using OIR services. Snapshot results for these surveys suggest positive levels of internal satisfaction with OIR services, although the information is not presented across time. The College has an opportunity to outline a set of measures that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the information and knowledge management system that extends beyond customer satisfaction. In addition, there is an opportunity to provide benchmarked trend data to determine effectiveness over time.

7R2, OO. The College describes the nature of the reports and information collected and notes how the faculty and staff are able to evaluate the adequacy of the measures. However, the College does not describe specific evidence showing that the processes for measuring effectiveness are supporting the institution in accomplishing its mission.

7R3, O. OIR uses results from nationally-normed surveys such as the NCCBP and the Noel-Levitz to create comparison results externally, and internally through a student satisfaction survey. The College has an opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of these comparison results for supporting improvements. For example, the cohort default rate for NWACC is currently 20.9% while the 2010 three-year national average cohort default rate is 14.7%. NWACC has an opportunity to improve the default rate as well as

an opportunity to gather additional data points to measure performance of its processes for Measuring Effectiveness.

7I1, O. At the request of NWACC's new President, the Quality Council is developing measurable goals that align with the College's Strategic Plan. In response, the College has developed core indicators and measurable goals that align with the Strategic Plan and improve the related processes at the institutional level. It is unclear, however, how any of these changes are part of an overall improvement process that included measurable goals, the collection and analysis of relevant data, and improvements designed to target identified gaps.

7I2, O. NWACC is committed to creating a culture of data-driven decision-making and has increased the number of professional development opportunities available to employees in support of this initiative. While NWACC describes processes which have resulted in recent improvements and suggests a developing quality culture, this portion of the Portfolio identifies no targets improvements for Measuring Effectiveness.

AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement. This category examines the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping to achieve the institution's mission and vision. It examines coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; analysis of performance projections and results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 8.

NWACC has in place several key foundational components necessary to develop a culture of continuous improvement as evidenced by the recent revision of the College's Mission, Vision, and Values statements and use of these to help drive the strategic planning process. However, a lack of specific measureable goals tied to results, improvements, and the setting of new targets makes it difficult to determine if the continuous improvement process described in the Portfolio actually works. NWACC has been on the AQIP pathway for several years, and it would be expected that a second Portfolio would evidence continuous improvement through a set of processes clearly aligned with results, improvements tied to these results, and the identification of new targets to continue the cycle of Planning Continuous Improvement.

8P1, S. Using an inclusive process that included input from major stakeholders, NWACC recently revised its Mission, Vision, and Values. These statements drive the

College's planning, including the development and review of the Strategic Plan and annual strategic goals.

8P2, S. The Portfolio describes the selection of short- and long-term goals as part of the strategic and master planning processes at NWACC. Departments set short-term strategies, while long-term strategies receive approval through a formal process that includes the Cabinet and Board of Trustees.

8P3, O. While the Portfolio briefly describes the strategic planning model and includes a rough outline in figure 5P3-1 of a process used to develop action items, little or no detail is provided to explain how the process operates in practice to support organizational strategies.

8P4, O. The Portfolio describes plans, strategies, and processes linked to strategic planning and planning groups, but it does not explain how systematic, coordinated, or aligned these processes are throughout the institution. NWACC has an opportunity to coordinate and align these planning processes, strategies, and action plans across organizational levels to enhance its developing culture of continuous improvement.

8P5, O. The Portfolio explains that NWACC has recently adopted a set of 16 Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges but does not describe the process used to adopt these indicators. In addition, the Portfolio does not present a process or processes used to define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets for the College's organizational strategies and action plans.

8P6, OO. The Portfolio states that strategy selection and action plans for the institution are determined by the strategic planning and budgetary processes, but the brief description provided does not make clear how systematically the institution links and aligns these strategies and actions with other organizational processes and with long- and short-term goals.

8P7, S. With the creation of the Office of Policy, Compliance and Risk, NWACC has taken a proactive step toward creating a centralized process for identifying – and thus preventing or mitigating – risks that might negatively impact the institution.

8P8, O. Human Resources recently implemented a Quality of Work Life task force, revised its new employee orientation, and developed surveys relative to employees' needs. The Portfolio, however, does not describe how systematic these activities are or how they link or coordinate with the institution's overall planning processes.

8R1, O. NWACC collects and analyzes a great deal of data, but many of the measures identified in 8R1 do not clearly measure the effectiveness of the institution's planning processes. An opportunity exists to show how these measures and others demonstrate the effectiveness of the College's overall planning processes.

8R2, OO. The Portfolio provides minimal performance results for accomplishing organizational strategies and action plans, citing students' satisfaction with facilities and with parking. An outstanding opportunity exists to demonstrate the strategic planning process is producing the intended outcomes stated in the College's strategic goals.

8R3, OO. NWACC provides no projections or targets for improving its strategies and action plans over the next 1-3 years. The College recognizes that further development of its Core Indicators will improve its ability to evaluate the performance of its quality program.

8R4, OO. NWACC provides no data comparing the performance of its results for Planning Continuous Improvement with the performance results of other higher education institutions and organizations. The Portfolio explains that the College recently began participating in the Baldrige Quality Award.

8R5, OO. While NWACC has a strategic planning process, identifies quality as a key focus area, and requires all action plans to include an evaluation component paired with the corresponding Core Indicator (s), the College does not have in place a process by which it measures and evaluates the effectiveness of its planning processes.

8I1, OO. NWACC has in place several key foundational components necessary for a strong system for planning continuous improvement, including its Strategic Plan and five focus areas. The Portfolio does not make clear, however, whether this represents an actual change and/or improvement that grew out of a comprehensive improvement process.

8I2, OO. NWACC has strengthened the committees charged with steering all the College's continuous improvement efforts through the Quality Council. However, it is unclear from the brief description in the Portfolio how systematic the planning and improvement process is, why these changes were implemented, or how they improve

planning. The College has not set any specific targets for improvement in Planning Continuous Improvement.

AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships. This category examines the institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution accomplishing its mission. It examines the institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, and building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas. The Systems Appraisal Team identified various strengths and opportunities for NorthWest Arkansas Community College for Category 9.

NWACC has partnerships in place for Building Collaborative Relationships, including K-12 institutions, community colleges, universities, adult education providers, businesses, and accrediting bodies. The limited results presented in the Portfolio suggest the College compares favorably with peers in building and maintaining collaborative partnerships, but a lack of historical data and detailed analysis makes it difficult to determine whether these relationships are improving. An opportunity exists for the College to develop a systematic and comprehensive improvement plan that includes measurable goals, the collection and analysis of relevant data, the identification of improvements tied to data analysis, and identification of new improvement targets.

> **9P1, S.** NWACC creates, prioritizes, and builds relationships with key partners that serve the College's students. The College has developed processes for assessing the success of these activities. Partners include area community colleges and universities, adult education programs, K-12 education, and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The High School Relations department maintains relationships with K-12 institutions. The Workforce and Contract Training Programs develop and maintain relationships with area businesses.
>
> **9P2, O.** While the Portfolio lists several significant activities with transfer institutions, it does not make clear the degree of structure and coordination of these activities. The Portfolio does not describe, for example, how these activities align with the College's Mission, Vision, and Values and Strategic Plan. In addition, the Portfolio does not explain how goals for Building Collaborative Relationships are developed and measured.
>
> **9P3, O.** While the Portfolio lists a variety of relationships with organizations, it does

not explain how systematic and structured these activities are or how they tie into the Strategic Plan.

9P4, O. NWACC uses the State of Arkansas regulations to determine bid processes and vendor approval. Other structured processes and policies exist for key interactions with organizations that supply materials and services to the institution. The Portfolio, however, does not discuss a systematic process for creating, prioritizing, and maintaining relationships with its suppliers that is tied to the College's Mission, Vision, and Values and/or Strategic Plan.

9P5, O. NWACC has many relationships with key organizations and entities. The Portfolio explains that the College creates and prioritizes relationships as part of the Strategic Plan, but it does not explain how the institution uses its Strategic Plan to drive and monitor these relationships.

9P6, O. The Portfolio states that the College uses a variety of methods to measure whether partnership relationships are meeting the needs of those involved. The Portfolio does not indicate that a specific and comprehensive process is in place to ensure that partnerships are mutually effective.

9P7, O. Although the Portfolio describes various communication initiatives for building internal relationships, it does not describe an intentional and formal process for creating, building, and assuring integration and communication across these relationships.

9R1 O. The Portfolio lists a variety of measures for building collaborative relationships, including surveys and assessment designed to collect results for building collaborative relationships, but it does not explain how these tools provide relevant data or how they help to improve relationships. An opportunity exists to tie data collection to clear goals for improvement in Building Collaborative Relationships.

9R2, OO. As evidenced by the Portfolio, NWACC has limited results for Building Collaborative Relationships. The Portfolio lists only a one-time survey of principals, counselors, and teachers on the Early College Experience. An outstanding opportunity exists to create a systematic process for identifying and tracking performance results for building internal and external relationships.

9R3, OO. With the exception of two tables with one-time results for student completion and training dollars spent, the Portfolio presents no actual results to

demonstrate that its results compare favorably with the performance results of other higher education institutions in Building Collaborative Relationships.

9I1, O. While positions and policies have been implemented to create a centralized process for collecting and analyzing relationship data, the Portfolio does not explain these improvements as growing out of a comprehensive improvement process for Building Collaborative Relationships.

9I2, OO. The Portfolio identifies no improvement targets for Building Collaborative Relationships. The institution has a significant opportunity to create consistent, repeatable processes for building partnerships, measuring the effectiveness of each partnership through the collection and analysis of data, and using this data to identify processes needing improvement and setting improvement targets for each improvement.

Accreditation Evidence NorthWest Arkansas Community College

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Systems Appraisal Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, or that it may face difficulty in meeting the Criteria and Core Components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Systems Appraisal process affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Criterion 1	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.				X	
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.					X
Adequate but could be improved.	X	X		X	
Unclear or incomplete.			X		
Criterion 3	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X				
Adequate but could be improved.		X	X	X	X
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4	Core Component				

		4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.		X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.						
Unclear or incomplete.						
Criterion 5	Core Component					
	5A	5B	5C	5D		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.		X	X			
Adequate but could be improved.				X		
Unclear or incomplete.	X					

Core Component *1.A The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.*

Strong, Clear, well-presented.

NWACC's mission states that it is "a comprehensive two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living." The mission was developed through an inclusive process which included input from all stakeholders. The 5 year strategic plan guides the institution as current and proposed programs and services are considered by the President's Cabinet and the Expanded Cabinet.

Core Component *1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.*

Strong, clear, and well-presented

NWACC communicates its mission, vision, and core values in a variety of ways, including its website, posters, catalogs, schedules, and through various meetings throughout campus. The mission was revisited by the Board of Trustees in 2012, and the mission clearly states that the institution is a "comprehensive two-year college." Annual goals are also aligned with the mission, vision, and values.

Core Component *1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.*

Strong, clear, well-presented

NWACC offers many services and activities to serve its diverse student population. The Disability Resource Center and Career Pathways program serve disabled or at-risk students. The Early College Experience program is designed to support concurrent education students. The institution also offers a wide variety of clubs and organizations which provide students with opportunities to network with others with similar interests.

Core Component *1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.*

Adequate but could be improved

…
…

NWACC is aware of its mission as a public, open-access institution. The College is committed to helping students succeed. More detail on how the college impacts the larger community is not provided.

Core Component *2.A The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC requires all new employees to complete an ethics training. Policies and processes are in place to ensure faculty, staff, and students act ethically. There is no discussion in the portfolio of policies and procedures in this area for the governing board.

Core Component *2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.*

Adequate but could be improved

The college has a well-structured advising system that includes a clear mission, goals, and responsibilities. Advisors are tasked with communicating to prospective and current students the required preparation and learning objectives. The Component does not address how students are provided with information on faculty and staff costs nor accreditation relationships.

Core Component *2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.*

Unclear or incomplete

The role of the Board of Trustees is not addressed in 5P2. The portfolio notes that this component is discussed and underlined in 5P2, however there is no underlining in 5P2 and no discussion of this topic. It is unclear from the section how the board is constituted and how it maintains its independence.

Core Component *2.D The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC has a written statement of faculty and students rights and responsibilities in its catalog. The college supports the policy on Academic Freedom formulated by the Association of American Colleges and the Association of University Professors. 1P11 does not address how the institution ensures it is committed to the freedom of expression nor the pursuit of truth.

Core Component *2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

The college has an Academic Standards committee which is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, which reviews policies on academic honesty and student integrity. New faculty members (full-time and part-time) have an opportunity to attend a new faculty welcome and in-service development day. Full-time faculty members participate in an annual faculty performance review.

Core Component *3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

All programs are expected to develop a culture of program assessment and continuous improvement to ensure its students gain relevant knowledge and experience that prepare them for success in a highly competitive job market. NWACC offers a variety of special services to meet the needs of various subgroups, including students with disabilities, veterans, seniors, international students, low-income students, and various other student subgroups. NWACC has various Clubs and Organizations, including ALPFA, to build effective leadership and communication skills for Latino students, DREAMers, a support organization for undocumented students, Gay-Straight Alliance, Hmong Culture Club, International Student Club, Latin Culture Club, Pacific Islanders Club, Saudi Student Club, and Vets on Campus.

Core Component *3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC has identified eight general education learning outcomes that include a focus on higher order thinking and the application of knowledge. The college has established a general education learning outcomes committee to review the general education learning outcomes. There is little or no description of how intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills is encouraged and evaluated in program courses.

Core Component *3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC has a structured hiring process that includes the use of screening criteria, review by committee and additional requirements depending upon the position. Job descriptions and faculty qualifications are consistent with Arkansas State requirements. There is no discussion in the portfolio of current staffing numbers, whether this is sufficient to meet needs and any succession plans.

Core Component *3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC provides a variety of services to its students from supplemental instruction in Reading and Writing to Career Services. Depending upon the specific course, these supplemental instruction may be required. Students provide evaluations of the courses. These data are used by academic administration in reviewing the courses and the faculty.

Core Component *3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC provides many opportunities for enrichment to students and faculty. This includes the International Theme Semester and International Education Week. No process is listed for insuring co-curricular activities contribute to providing an enriched educational environment.

Core Component *4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

NWACC maintains a practice of regular program reviews, evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including experiential learning and other forms of prior learning, has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer, maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes, and evaluates the success of its graduates.

Core Component *4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

NWACC has identified eight General Education Learning Outcomes that serve as the foundational core for all students. A General Education Student Learning Assessment Committee, made up of nine faculty members from all five academic divisions and two staff members, periodically reviews the GS Learning Outcomes. Recommendations for changes are submitted to the faculty and the VP of Learning.

Core Component *4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Core Component *5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.*

Unclear or incomplete

Core component 5.A. is not addressed in 8P6.

Core Component *5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.*

Strong, clear, and well presented

College leadership, including members of the President's Cabinet and expanded cabinet, establish operating policies for the institution. NWACC consistently uses committees and task forces to recommend decisions to senior leadership and to assist in the implementation process. The primary driver in providing direction for the institution is the NWACC 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Core Component *5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.*

Strong, clear, well-presented

NWACC has a comprehensive strategic planning process that includes input from all stakeholders. The College strives to align all short-term and long-term plans with the mission of the institution through the Ends, Strategic Goals, and Goals of the institution. Both the Strategic and Master Plan are being realigned in 2014.

Core Component *5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.*

Adequate but could be improved

NWACC has a relatively new 3-5 year strategic plan developed in 2011, with goals reviewed in 2013; new yearly measurable goals, objectives, and ends will be implemented July 1, 2014. These developments demonstrate the College is beginning processes of selecting, managing, and distributing data and performance information in support of its systematic planning and improvement efforts. NWACC appears to need more time to collect data, review trends, and take action as appropriate, as they move towards developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Quality of Systems Portfolio for NorthWest Arkansas Community College

Because it stands as a reflection of the institution, the *Systems Portfolio* should be complete and coherent, and it should provide an open and honest self-analysis on the strengths and challenges facing the organization. In this section, the Systems Appraisal Team provides NorthWest Arkansas Community College with constructive feedback on the overall quality of the Portfolio, along with suggestions for improvement of future Portfolio submissions.

While the team had some major concerns about the Portfolio as noted below, there were a few items that were appreciated. Clearly labeling the Core Components within the sections was helpful, and the team also appreciated that NWACC highlighted the category questions.

The team had some major issues with the content of the Portfolio as noted in the Strategic Issues. Some parts were very choppy, and cross references were often missing. Some Core Component questions were omitted from the Portfolio, and for others, the cross references listed did not lead to the expected information. In many cases there was no clear connection between the goals described in the Process sections and the results reported in the Results section. In addition, in most cases it was not clear how the improvements listed were connected to the goals, results, or data analysis. These admissions are particularly glaring since this is NWACC's second Systems Portfolio. While the systems appear to be in place for the College to make great strides in its quality journey, the team wishes to emphasize the importance of linking Processes to Results to Improvements. Please see the Strategic Issues section for more on this opportunity.

Using the Feedback Report

The AQIP Systems Appraisal process is intended to initiate action for institutional improvement. Though decisions about specific actions rest with each institution, the Commission expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement and to inform future AQIP processes.

Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of this report may include: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned? How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration, and integrity.

The Commission's goal is to help an institution clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities in ways that will make a difference in institutional performance.