Richard Community College
Quality Summary Report

Introduction
Since our June Systems Portfolio submission, Richland Community College has made progress in each of the Strategic Challenges identified in the Systems Appraisal. A collaborative and systematic process was used to include over 50 Richland faculty, staff, and administrators on nine Category Teams to create the 2013 Systems Portfolio. This framework for planning and sharing will continue through meetings with the Team Leaders semi-annually to continue to ‘close the loop.’

The work through our Action Projects, using the continuous improvement process, has allowed for improvements in four main areas: student learning and job placement; professional development; coordination, integration, and understanding of data for improvement; and enhanced communication regarding processes and results. Collectively, these recent improvements demonstrate a consistent commitment to AQIP and renewed focus on addressing those areas where Richland can improve.

At the Institutional Effectiveness Group (IEG) and Quality Council (QC) Retreat, dialogue around the four identified areas above occurred among a broad representation of faculty, staff, and administration. Four Action Projects resulted from the IEG/QC Retreat. Quality Council worked to refine the scope and approved the four Action Projects. In order to address the scope of these projects, Quality Council will create successive Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Teams to focus on “five-acre” components. Since, CIP Teams within each of the Action Projects completed the initial scope of their work and offered recommendations. Teams have begun to report out to Quality Council their findings and provide a list of recommendations as a result of going through the continuous improvement process. Their recommendations will determine next steps of the Action Project as well as potential CIP Teams. Team progress is discussed below.

Action Project #1 - Using Data for Improvement to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness

This Action Project, Using Data for Improvement to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness, is designed to enhance the systems designed for data collection and improvement at Richland. Richland Community College’s Systems Portfolio, submitted in June 2013, as well as the accompanying Systems Appraisal, received in September 2013, confirms that this Action Project will serve as opportunity for improvement regarding using data for improvement.

This Action Project will work to formalize current processes for division, discipline and service area planning reporting of results by

- Identifying institutional processes requiring data for evaluation and validation of processes and results;
- Identifying common data needs;
- Identifying and validating common data definitions;
- Identifying external comparison data, where appropriate;
- Identifying the frequency of data collection in terms of the institutional assessment plan; and
- Identifying training opportunities regarding use of data for improvement.
The first CIP Team created in Fall 2013 addresses *Using Data for Improved Institutional Planning: Program Review*. The Project Statement for this Team is to “streamline and centralize the process for program review, including Career and Technical Education Programs, Academic Programs, Cross-Disciplinary Programs, and Student and Academic Support Services.” This CIP Team will formalize processes for division, discipline and service area results reporting by

- Regularizing institutional processes requiring data for evaluation and validation of programs and services;
- Determining common data needs and developing common data collection modules;
- Validating common data definitions to include in the institutional glossary;
- Identifying external comparison data, where appropriate, and implementing a common rubric for comparison;
- Training stakeholders in the revised process, including the development of program improvement plans; and
- Determining program improvements through use of a developed process.

The CIP Team is comprised of six academic deans, three Vice Presidents responsible for academic programs and services, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and is facilitated by the Coordinator of Curriculum and Grants. The Team has met throughout the fall and spring semesters and has drafted the first template of Program Review for CTE programs. Other stakeholders for Academic Programs, Cross-Disciplinary Programs, and Student and Academic Support Services have met in focus groups to identify key components of the Program Review and the data needed for each area. These discussions have included representatives from the Administrative Information Systems (AIS) Office in order to identify what data is already being collected, potential data sources and what data can or cannot be obtained. As a result of initial discussion, common reporting programs have been created and are accessible not only by deans creating the program reviews but also by Program Directors looking for information such as enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. As templates are designed for all program categories, similar reporting programs will be created by AIS staff. A critical part of the planning has been the acknowledgement that while program reviews are completed to meet state requirements, they must also be designed to bring about meaningful improvement of programs and services. The team will also create a training module for the Review process to help stakeholders understand how to gather and interpret the data and information and then to create and act on recommendations for program improvement.

**Preliminary Recommendations**

The Team will present recommendations and timeline to Quality Council in late February. Preliminary recommendations include:

- Deans and program directors must follow the prescribed templates for each area;
- Designated deans, program directors/coordinators, and faculty must complete training on utilizing the templates and the data collection/reporting program Argos;
- Each program review must include a plan for program improvement, and report on improvements in the report; and
- A representative from Administrative Information Systems should be a resource for all CIP Teams to support team decisions utilizing data systems.
Action Project #2 – Improving the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The Action Project, Improving the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, will continue work on assessing student learning that came through the Outcomes Assessment Taskforce, completion of Richland Community College’s Systems Portfolio, and strategic opportunities identified in Systems Appraisal received in September 2013. College stakeholders confirm that this Action Project serves as opportunity for improvement regarding the assessment of student learning outcomes. This Action Project will formalize the course and program assessment process through the following:

- Assessment and achievement;
- Faculty identification of program metrics tied to student learning;
- Implementation of mechanisms for collection and reporting of identified metrics;
- Clarification of program, discipline, and service area student learning outcomes; and
- Implementation of Program/Discipline/Service Areas Improvement Plans, with regularized reporting plan.

This Action Project will work to formalize current processes for division, discipline and service area planning reporting of results by

- Actual identification and continued measurement of metrics identified by faculty;
- Mechanism identified and use of mechanism in collection of outcomes/metrics; and
- All departments have defined outcomes and have begun data collection to help inform improvement plans.

The current CIP Team, named Assessment of Cross Disciplinary Outcomes, builds on the work of the Outcomes Assessment Taskforce, which identified four general education learning outcomes for all degree-seeking students, developed an online matrix in which faculty identify which outcomes they address and assess in their courses and trained faculty in the use of the matrix. The goal of this CIP Team is to expand the current student learning outcome assessment process to document both cross-disciplinary (institutional) and program outcomes, to use the results for improvement, and to provide evidence of metrics in program review and other College reports.

The team consisting of six faculty, a dean, a librarian, and two staff reviewed student learning assessment plans at a variety of institutions, information gathered at the 2013 Assessment Institute and Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project from AAC&U. The team developed a general framework for Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment (see Figure 1) and a specific process with timeline for assessing the existing Cross-Disciplinary Outcomes (CDO) (see Table 1).

The proposed plan is a continuous improvement process that evaluates student artifacts (chosen from the Cross-Disciplinary Outcomes Matrix) using rubrics created by teams of Richland faculty from across divisions. Results are evaluated, improvement plans created, implemented, and reassessed. Each year, a different outcome undergoes this process, which provides evidence and quantitative data of student learning. It identifies areas of strengths and concerns that lead to improvement plans and reassessment. Analyzing data from the Cross-Disciplinary Outcomes Matrix will identify gaps in assessment and guide in the selection of appropriate courses to provide student learning artifacts.
**Figure 1.** Richland Community College Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Framework.

**Table 1.** CDO Assessment Timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Rubric Development</th>
<th>Artifact Evaluation</th>
<th>Analysis &amp; Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>CDO 1 Written Communication-Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>CDO 1 Oral Communication</td>
<td>CDO 1 Written Communication-Pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>CDO 4 Manage Technology and Evaluate Information</td>
<td>CDO 1 Oral Communication</td>
<td>CDO 1 Written Communication-Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>CDO 3 Professionalism</td>
<td>CDO 4 Manage Technology and Evaluate Information</td>
<td>CDO 1 Oral Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>CDO 2 Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</td>
<td>CDO 3 Professionalism</td>
<td>CDO 4 Manage Technology and Evaluate Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>CDO 2 Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</td>
<td>CDO 3 Professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>CDO 1 Written Communication</td>
<td>CDO 2 Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations
The CIP Team has reported its findings to Quality Council and proposed the following recommendations which were approved in February 2014:

**Recommendation 1:** To ensure that assessment is a faculty-driven continuous improvement process, the team recommends a standing committee be formed. So that assessment moves forward as proposed, the new committee should include the current Outcomes Task Force and members of the Improving the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes CIP Team along with administrators and perhaps additional faculty who can support the efforts. The main charge of the committee is to oversee implementation of the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment framework. This includes ensuring that assessment activities are completed and documented at the course, program, and cross-disciplinary levels as illustrated in the graphic above.

**Recommendation 2:** To promote assessment, an All-College Scholarship of Teaching and Learning day was held on January 8, 2014. Linda Suskie presented a keynote session titled “Why Are We Assessing?” followed by three one-hour mini-workshops on learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, and rubrics. In addition she met with the President’s Cabinet and deans followed by a meeting with Outcomes Assessment Task Force and this CIP Team. In those last meetings, this CIP Team shared the above plans, and Ms. Suskie responded that the plan is a sensible approach to assessing general education learning outcomes.

**Recommendation 3:** Another recommendation requires that CTE programs, under the direction of their deans and coordinators/directors, create and submit Program Student Learning Outcomes to the Assessment Committee using forms and the process created by the Program Review CIP Team. Academic Discipline Areas as defined in ICCB program review are as follows: written and oral communications, mathematics, physical and life sciences, humanities and fine arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Faculty from these areas must meet and develop Program Student Learning Outcomes, which will also be reported to the Assessment Committee using forms and the process created by the Program Review CIP Team. To build on the momentum of Ms. Suskie’s visit, this CIP Team recommends using Professional Development Day on February 25 to introduce the College to the SLO Assessment framework developed by this CIP Team, which includes course, program, and Cross-Disciplinary outcomes and to begin work on the written communication rubric and program outcomes.

**Recommendation 4:** The last recommendation is to investigate software options for entering and storing assessment data and artifacts and incorporate needed fund into the budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2014.

**Action Project #3 – Advancing the Completion Agenda**
*Addresses HLC Core Components: 4.A., 5.D.*
This Action Project titled, Advancing the Completion Agenda, will encompass several different areas that affect student completion. The goal of the Advancing the Completion Agenda Action Project is to achieve the benchmarks established in Richland’s Balanced Scorecard (Level 1) in the area of completion. To accomplish this goal, which will foster a culture of completion, Richland will address the following:
• Key components and best practices implemented by other community colleges to increase completion;
• Methods of student placement in developmental education, including alternative pathways;
• Curriculum alignment (both vertical and horizontal);
• Optimal course scheduling formats;
• Processes to improve student course completion; and
• Methods to improve student transitions to a career.

The Student Placement process was decided by the Vice President, Academic Services and Quality Council as the first “5 acres” to address. The vast majority of students who take a placement test are placed into at least one developmental course. Data for Spring/Fall 2012 showed that 82% of Richland students were required to take a placement test, and of those, 94% placed at least into developmental math. Students often repeat these courses, and may find that they exhaust their financial aid or resources before ever gaining eligibility for college level coursework. Finding alternative forms of placement that help students to succeed and progress through the sequence would have a broad impact on college completion rates.

Thus, the CIP Team’s goal is to develop alternate forms of placement in mathematics and English courses that increase the number of students taking higher level courses as measured by the percentage of students placed at each level of course work and by pass rates. The Student Placement CIP team consists of stakeholders from across all areas of the campus including the Vice President of Academic Services, the Vice President of Student Success, the Dean of Continuing and Professional Education, the Dean of Mathematics and Sciences, the Registrar/Director of Advising and Registration Services, the Director of the Academic Success Center, the Testing Specialist, the Curriculum and Grant Coordinator from Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, the Assistant to the Dean of Health Professions, and faculty members from Business and Technology; Mathematics and Sciences; and Communication, Education, Humanities and Fine Arts.

The CIP Team first considered all of the current methods of placing students. Based on information from conferences, research articles and contacts with peer institutions, the Team discussed that institutions are shifting to alternate forms of student placement, including analyzing course completion patterns in high school and placement retesting after completing a developmental course. According to the Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges Conference, high school GPA is the strongest predictor of success not placement tests or even ACT. The Team also discussed the use of supplements alongside the traditional placement test to make more predictive placement decisions such as writing samples or an ETS product that identifies students who could advance successfully to a higher developmental course. The team discussed the importance of considering other factors not measured by placement tests such as motivation, perseverance, and attendance as suggested by the College Board Report.

The team has identified the following four types of placement considerations: Pre-College Strategies, Strategies to Reduce Developmental Courses, Strategies for Struggling Students, and Strategies to Support Success. Additionally, the team identified non-placement considerations to
engage students in their coursework. Some of these ideas will serve as the foundation for projects for future CIP Teams.

The CIP Team will report in late February with recommendations on alternative placement options and will also recommend the next process for analysis by a CIP Team.

**Action Project #4 - Institutionalizing the Balanced Scorecard**


This Action Project, titled *Institutionalizing the Balanced Scorecard*, is a continuation of a previous Action Project. Richland Community College’s Systems Portfolio, submitted in June 2013, as well as the accompanying Systems Appraisal, received in September 2013, confirms that the institutionalization of the Balanced Scorecard (all three levels) is needed to integrate continuous improvement into Richland’s systems. Additionally, because of the success of the Balanced Scorecard and the opportunities for trend data, Quality Council recognized the need to continue this project and see it through to completion. The goal of this action project is to use meaningful data for decision-making by institutionalization of the Balanced Scorecard through the following:

1. Full operation and use of Scorecard Levels 1, 2, and 3;
2. Informational sessions to provide a general understanding of the measures/indicators in the Scorecard;
3. Formalization of the process of including additional outcomes measures to be placed into the Scorecard;
4. Formalization of the process for proposing definitions for institutional glossary;
5. Clarification of peer institutions and indicators to be used for benchmarking; and
6. Determination of an internal location for housing the completed Institutional Dashboard and Balanced Scorecard.

Ultimately, success of this project would be the use of data within the Balanced Scorecard by internal stakeholders for decision-making. Other measures include:

- Full operation and use of Levels 1, 2, and 3;
- A general understanding of the measures/indicators in the Scorecard by internal stakeholders;
- Use of the process to propose new outcome measures;
- Indicators identified for the purposes of benchmarking and used to make decisions;
- Peer institutions identified and indicators important for peer comparisons identified and used for decision-making; and
- Approval of existing definitions and formalization of process to propose new definitions for glossary.

The CIP Team, consisting of the Knowledge Management Team, decided its first course of action was to focus on “Communicating the Balanced Scorecard.” The Knowledge Management Team, facilitated by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning, includes representative Deans, four Vice Presidents, Director of Database Systems and Coordinator of Curriculum and Grants. The CIP Team project statement is “to coordinate processes related to the Balanced Scorecard leading to communication of components determined by past CIP Teams. Communication will be measured by tracking access of materials on myRichland
“Since this Action Project has started, several steps have been taken. The CIP Team has decided to use the Illinois Community College Board’s (ICCB) groupings of peer institutions for institutional purposes of benchmarking. Additionally, processes for proposing institutional definitions as well as outcome measures for the Balanced Scorecard have been formalized. Lastly, but most importantly, a page titled “Institutional Effectiveness” has been created on myRichland, the College’s intranet; the page house updates and pertinent information of the following areas: accreditation, assessment, institutional research, grant initiatives, and strategic planning. The Level 1 Balanced Scorecard will also be housed here. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning worked with Administrative Information Systems (AIS) to develop the page. KMT and the Director will be able to track how many people have accessed the information on the page.

**Recommendations**

Continued work on this project will ultimately lead to Institutionalization of the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard has begun to be integrated into the framework for strategic planning and budgeting. There is currently one preliminary recommendation that will be reported to Quality Council in late February. The recommendation is that the next focus of this project, along with measuring the analytics, is the actual documentation of improvements made using the data within the Scorecard.

Ultimately, the project will add to the concept of continuous improvement and lead to greater engagement of stakeholders. The project will support the "results" component of the Systems Appraisal and other required reporting for the College. Additionally, the team attending the Strategy Forum plans to address the category of “Measuring Effectiveness.” The work that results from the intense, 3-day forum will enhance this specific Action Project greatly.

**Conclusion**

Richland has implemented an intentional system centered on continuous improvement. Cross-functional teams within Quality Council, Institutional Effectiveness Group (IEG), standing committees, and CIP Teams all work to study processes that improve quality within the institution. While the Plan/Do/Check/Act cycle is embedded in everyday practice, we are continuing to work on closing the loop through institutionalization of systematic processes. As evidenced by the initial work of our current CIP Teams, we are going in the right direction.