

Criterion 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

Core Values: Commitment, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Diversity

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Enhance, Strengthen and Advance Collaborative Relationships

9C1 Key collaborative relationships

With a 32-year presence in Central Illinois, RCC has established strong collaborative relationships with a number of organizations through direct College partnerships and individual contacts by faculty and staff. The following list outlines primary College collaborative relationships:

Feeders:

- ❖ 10 local public P-12 School Districts—number has declined from 16 due to mergers in the last 10 years; 3 parochial P-12 School Districts
- ❖ Home schooled students—While the number of home-schooling families in the District is difficult to estimate, many home-schooled students attend Richland for enrichment experiences and for foreign language, upper level mathematics, and science lab classes.
- ❖ 11 Illinois community colleges for Cooperative Occupational Educational Programs
- ❖ Apprenticeship programs with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Illinois Power, Inc.
- ❖ Adult Education/GED program—housed on RCC campus; also connection to GED program sponsored by the Macon-Piatt County Regional Superintendent of Schools Office
- ❖ Business and Industry short-term training—conducted by the RCC Center for Business Training and Community Education

Receivers:

- ❖ Transfer colleges and universities—Illinois Articulation Initiative; RCC transfers students primarily to 4 area colleges and universities
- ❖ 2+2 transfer program for occupational degrees—Currently 13 programs in 5 colleges and universities
- ❖ 11 Illinois community colleges for Cooperative Occupational Educational Programs
- ❖ Area employers, some of whom also serve on Occupational Advisory Boards

Community Support:

- ❖ *Decatur We Like It Here* Initiative—collaboration of community leaders in promotion and development activities for Decatur and Macon County
- ❖ Partners in Education—Non-profit educational entity that facilitates business and education partnerships to provide opportunities for diverse students to interact with the world of work; since summer 2003, located on RCC campus.
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce of Decatur and Macon County, Clinton Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce—membership in each Chamber; participation in Chamber-sponsored activities.
- ❖ 20 Advisory Committees for Occupational Programs with employers and College staff (listed in 3P3)

- ❖ Education and Training Center—operated by the Decatur Area Technical Academy (Decatur School District 61) and located at the local shopping mall—offer non-credit and credit classes; College registration

Major Outsourcing Contracts (required for purchases or contracts over \$10,000):

- ❖ Food Service—contract bid every five years
- ❖ Bookstore—contract bid every five years
- ❖ Custodial Services—contract bid every five years
- ❖ CDL truck lease—contract bid annually
- ❖ Security—contract reviewed annually

In addition, the College participates in FACTS tuition management and employs an auditor and legal counsel, all with Board of Trustees’ approval.

External Agencies:

- ❖ Illinois Community College Board; Illinois Board of Higher Education; Higher Learning Commission/AQIP
- ❖ Health Professions Accreditation:

Agency	Program
American Heart Assoc.	CPR
Ill. Dept. of Public Health	Nurse Assistant Training EMT – B; EMT – I; EMT - Paramedic
Pharmacy Technician Certification Board	Pharmacy Technician
American Society for Clinical Pathology	Phlebotomy
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission	Registered Nurse Program
Illinois Dept. of Professional Regulations	Practical Nurse Program
Commission of Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs	Surgical Technology
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists	Radiologic Technology

- ❖ Millikin University—Cooperative program for Human Patient Simulator Lab Facilitator and shared training for faculty and students
- ❖ Workforce Investment Board—membership and cooperative program for training
- ❖ Illinois Department of Corrections, District 487—2 occupational programs
- ❖ Decatur Memorial Hospital (DMH)—4 nursing faculty positions funded; St. Mary’s Hospital—2 nursing faculty positions funded
- ❖ Health professions clinical sites—21 sites for Health Professions students in all programs
- ❖ Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District located on campus—one of two cooperative relationships like this in the state

9C2 Reinforcing institutional mission

Goal Two of the Strategic Plan adopted in June 2003 is to **enhance, strengthen, and advance collaborative relationships**. These collaborations directly and indirectly support the College mission of educating students both vertically from admission to graduation and horizontally

through community education, training, and support to the District communities. In addition, these connections to the business, industry, and higher education communities assure that students have the required skills and abilities needed for a smooth transition to their next level of achievement. These relationships also promote the mission, vision, and core values of RCC, focusing on accountability, excellence of programs and services, and commitment to the citizens of the RCC District.

9P1 Creating, prioritizing, and building relationships

RCC uses a variety of strategies to prioritize and promote relationships with organizations, employers, and educational entities. The following outline just a few of these strategies:

P-12 School Districts and Students:

Partners in Education 8th Grade Career Fair brings to campus all 8th graders in the District in January each year. In January 2004, approximately 1600 students listened to practitioners from the District representing 6 occupational clusters.

“I’m Going to College” introduces middle school students to college requirements and programs; since 1995, over 300 students have participated in this summer program.

The Director of Recruitment and Outreach Services makes regular visits to area high schools, coordinates registration for dual credit courses in fall and spring, and oversees New Student Orientation on campus.

An annual Articulation Breakfast, planned by College staff and representatives from local school districts, brings together high school counselors, principals, superintendents, and College staff to share ideas on transitions from high school to college and gives the College staff the opportunity to outline program and student support changes.

Businesses:

An Annual Job Fair is held on campus each April. Seminars on topics such as resumé writing and interviews are presented to students prior to the Job Fair. In 2004 50 employers participated, and over 300 people attended.

RCC participates in the annual local Small Business Expo by sponsoring workshops and seminars and staffing a booth outlining both employment opportunities and programs of study leading to new employment.

Colleges and Universities:

A College Fair is held on campus each fall, and a special fair for members of the Independent Private Colleges and Universities is also held in the fall. In addition, representatives from local colleges and universities visit campus throughout the year. In 2003-04, 25 representatives came at least once.

RCC participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to assure smooth student transfer and aligns new courses and programs to assure compliance with IAI.

The Richland Opportunities Technology Center, located in a residential area in Decatur, offers various workshops to all District residents and houses a free public access computer lab. Services focus on helping individuals enter the job market and/or explore career programs at RCC.

Beyond these collaborations, individual faculty and staff serve on non-profit service boards, school boards and parent-teacher organizations, participate in the RCC Speakers' Bureau by presenting personal and professional growth information to area clubs and organizations, and volunteer in community activities. In an employee survey conducted in spring 2003, faculty and staff indicated regular contact with over 90 agencies throughout the District. In addition, RCC's President serves on a number of Boards and represents the College at major functions throughout the District and state.

9P2 Meeting varying needs of those involved

RCC uses a number of methods to examine current and projected needs:

- ❖ The Occupational/Technical Division administers Needs Assessments to local businesses and industries when reviewing current curricula and planning new programs.
- ❖ Enrollment and Retention Services staff review Articulation Agreements with colleges and universities on an annual basis, and these agreements are available on the College's Intranet service.
- ❖ Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey is administered in the spring semester, and the ACT Faces of the Future survey is administered in the fall semester, both in even years.

In the fall of 2003, the RCC Board of Trustees authorized a new public engagement opportunity, the Richland Educational Advisory Committee for Higher Education, known as REACH, coordinated by a 15-person Facilitating Team that included 6 Community Chairs. For this initiative, community members were invited to a series of monthly meetings that focused on topics of interest to the community, including job training and retraining, serving diverse populations, lifelong learning, awareness of Richland, and a finance primer on community college funding. In August 2004, the Facilitating Team presented a series of recommendations based on input from these meetings, and the Board adopted the recommendations and authorized RCC personnel to develop a plan to implement these recommendations. This community-driven initiative supported several strategies in the Strategic Plan and will allow planning for the next few years.

9P3 Creating and building relationships within the institution

In the last two years College administration has increased efforts to build relationships and increase communications throughout the College. A new committee structure, recommended by two Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Teams in the Fall 2003 semester and implemented in January 2004, encourages stakeholder representation on committees and taskforces and also encourages involvement through calling for agenda items through broadcast e-mail announcements, publishing agenda prior to the meetings, and posting minutes after approval, available on the College Intranet. Individuals were encouraged to volunteer for service on these committees and taskforces with approval of their supervisors. Broadcast e-mail to staff and

faculty, including adjunct, is the current all-campus method for communication, and e-mail is free. Additional communication initiatives recommended by a CIP team are being studied, with reinstatement of a weekly calendar and *Inside Richland*, a quarterly internal news publication, under review. Some divisions and areas publish newsletters, including Student Success/TRIO, Student Services, and Adult Education.

While some of these communications methods have been used in the past, clearer and more regular communications from committees and taskforces have helped with information dissemination and clarification of roles and responsibilities of these groups. More attention is needed to assure availability of information to all employees, and employees need time to adjust to this availability.

The following chart outlines a meeting schedule for committees, taskforces, and other groups:

Meeting	Time	Stakeholders	Information Dissemination
VP, Student & Academic Services Team Meeting	Bi-monthly	Deans and Directors reporting to VP of SAS	Done by each Dean and Director
Division Meetings	Regularly scheduled	Open to Full-time and Adjunct Faculty	Done by each Dean and Director
Academic Standards Committee	Every two weeks	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes/agendas
Placement Standards Taskforce	At least two per semester	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes and agendas
Outcomes Assessment Taskforce	Every two weeks	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes and agendas
Employee Relations and Development Committee	Every two weeks	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes and agendas
Policy and Communications Committee	Every two weeks	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes and agendas
Institutional Effectiveness Group	Bi-monthly	Open to College community	Intranet access for minutes and agendas
President's Cabinet	Bi-weekly	President's immediate staff	Minutes to Cabinet members only due to confidential topics
Board of Trustees	Monthly	Open	Press releases to District media; Board agenda and materials available for review prior to meetings
All-College meetings	Beginning of each semester	Open	Meeting dates and times announced in advance

RCC had another opportunity for increased communication when the Richland Federation of Teachers' contract was set to expire in Fall 2004. In spring 2004 a team of 16 people, 8 from the Union and 8 from the Administration, participated in a hybrid interest-based bargaining process. This intensive negotiation process utilized communications and continuous improvement techniques to reach a 5-year contract without the presence of legal counsel or Illinois Federation of Teachers regional representation.

Since the prior contract agreement in 2000, faculty union representatives and administration have met quarterly to discuss items of mutual interest and concern. The Adjunct Faculty Union Contract was settled in Fall 2002, and meetings between adjunct faculty and administration are held when needed, based on the contract.

Joint meetings between the Richland Foundation and the Board of Trustees allow the two groups to share common interests in the College and facilitate planning for fundraising and friend-raising initiatives. A liaison from the Board of Trustees also sits on the Foundation Board, and the Executive Director of the Foundation reports regularly to the Board of Trustees.

9P4 Measures of building collaborative relationships

An All-College Survey is done every two years at the beginning of the Fall Semester to evaluate satisfaction in a number of areas. This information is used in planning, and information from the survey in 2002, for example, led to the examination of the committee structure and the need for additional communication. An external company conducted a community telephone survey in Fall 2003 to elicit responses to questions about satisfaction with RCC and its programs and services. In addition, town meetings and faculty forums are held on a variety of topics each semester. For example, three town meetings were held for input about the Strategic Plan, and forums were held in August 2004 on Institutional Outcomes Assessment, Plagiarism and Cheating, and FERPA.

The REACH initiative also allowed College staff to gauge community reaction to recent initiatives and to the information available in the District.

Additional analysis is done on the following data:

- ❖ Job placement data
- ❖ Student Satisfaction Surveys
- ❖ Graduation Follow-up surveys
- ❖ Occupational Follow-up surveys
- ❖ Number of new and continuing partnerships
- ❖ Number of stakeholder opportunities to participate in College activities
- ❖ Annual reports to Illinois Community College Board and AQIP

One of the recommendations from a CIP team is to create a more coordinated process to store data in a central location. The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness will work with a team on this process in the coming year.

9R1 Results in building key collaborative relationships

RCC has built a positive reputation for service, flexibility, and accountability in the District. In the Fall 2003 survey, 77.6% of the respondents gave the College an “A” or “B” for the “overall quality of education provided to the community” and 88.6% praised the College’s “strong record of public credibility.” The survey results show that RCC District residents understand the contributions of the College to the District and believe that it is a “source of pride for the community” (89.6%).

Collaborative relationships are one of the bases for these responses. Through these relationships, the College has been able to

- ❖ Expand program offerings
- ❖ Make positive connections with potential employers and transfer colleges and universities
- ❖ Support the concept of higher education for all in the community
- ❖ Enhance community involvement
- ❖ Increase scholarship contributions and donations to the Richland Foundation
- ❖ Improve learning opportunities both on and off campus

9R2 Comparing results

RCC currently has no formal comparative process in place. The College administration gathers information through state reports, AQIP information, and state and national conferences and meetings attended by other community college and university representatives. Through these contacts RCC seems to compare favorably in many areas, including

- ❖ Continuous Improvement Process training of faculty and staff
- ❖ RCC Foundation funding
- ❖ Employer feedback
- ❖ Tuition and fee structure
- ❖ End-of-course evaluations in Community Education workshops
- ❖ Transfer reports from colleges and universities.

To address this area, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and a team will create a process for identifying collaborative relationships and compiling data on satisfaction in these partnerships and how they fit with the College's mission and vision. Data to be collected will include number and nature of partnerships, revenues and in-kind contributions generated, institutional flexibility, demographic information on participants, and sustainability of relationships.

9I1 Improving current processes and systems for building collaborative relationships

While RCC prides itself on responding to requests from community agencies, educational entities, and organizations, no systematic process is in place to determine what partnerships might be the most beneficial for the College in the short and long term. Requests generally come through individuals and divisions to the Vice Presidents and the President's Cabinet, and discussions about connection to Strategic Plan, mission, and vision take place at the lowest decision-making level unless Board approval is required. While individual faculty and staff participate in activities, RCC's institutional participation sometimes occurs because the project has been "sponsored" by someone in the College.

9I2 Setting targets and improvement priorities and communicating results

Based on strategies from Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, additional friend-raising and fundraising activities are planned, including a reorganization of an Alumni Association and increased opportunities for alumni to hear about College activities. In addition, recommendations from the

REACH initiative will be incorporated into the next version of the Strategic Plan. The administration is investigating the recommendations to establish community representatives, expand dual credit courses, reinstitute distance learning, and promote continuing education courses and training for niche markets in the District.