

**Criterion 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives**  
**Core Values: Commitment, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Diversity**  
**Strategic Plan Goals 2 & 3: Enhance, Strengthen, and Advance Collaborative**  
**Relationships and Institutional Operations**

**2C1 Explicit institutional objectives**

RCC has maintained the word “community” in its name because of its strong commitment to the citizens and communities within the District. Since its founding in 1972, the College has worked to establish and maintain a positive presence through public service activities and connections with business and industry. In addition, the College works to create “community” internally, helping employees to grow both personally and professionally. In fact, along with the first goal in the Strategic Plan, **to enhance strengthen and advance teaching and learning**, the other two primary goals are **to enhance, strengthen, and advance collaborative relationships and institutional operations**.

As outlined in other sections of the Systems Portfolio, the College has participated in a broad array of community activities and encourages all employees to become involved in projects in their local communities and neighborhoods. This link to the District has served to strengthen the role of the College in the District.

One unit of the College that will be critical in advancing collaborative relationships is the Center for Business Training and Community Education. Over the last year, the College has invested in additional staff and marketing dollars to increase training opportunities in the District and to increase visibility of non-credit programming. With the increased emphasis on connections with businesses and industries, the CBTCE is working to improve relationships with all communities in the District.

**2C2 Aligning distinctive objectives with mission, vision, and philosophy**

In the development of the Strategic Plan in 2003, the Taskforce also worked in collaboration with the Board of Trustees to create a new vision for the College. This vision was adopted in 2003, along with the Core Values of *commitment, respect, excellence, accountability, and diversity*. The vision statement is *to be the premier source for education, workforce training, partnerships, and economic development*. The mission and vision are included in College publications, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees recites the mission, vision, and core values at the beginning of each monthly Board meeting. Divisions developing initiatives to support the Strategic Plan also connect them to the vision and mission, and presentations about the College in the District often include these as well.

**2C3 Support or complement processes and systems for Helping Students Learn**

The College’s Organizational Chart 2C3 shows students in the center of the plan, and this philosophy is integral in the work done by the College. Collaborative relationships and institutional operations have at their heart connections to the primary mission of student learning. Fiscal decisions are based on their support of the educational mission, and the core of the



continuous improvement training has been to examine processes that directly or indirectly support student success or employee development, both of which eventually lead to student success.

## **2P1 Determining other distinctive objectives**

The Strategic Plan was developed by a Taskforce of individuals representing various sections of the College. The three goals and supporting subgoals outlined in 8C2 were developed as the results of external and internal scans, focus groups, demographic research, and examination of previously created plans and reports. All relevant divisions of the College were included in developing strategies to support the goals, and town meetings and focus groups were held to determine these strategies. As the College moves to the next phase, examining achievements for this year and building strategies for the coming year, stakeholder meetings of divisions and other units will offer input for the Plan.

In addition, the College will incorporate into the Strategic Plan some of the recommendations from the REACH public engagement initiative. This year-long project brought community members onto campus for a series of meetings related to key issues including job training and retraining, K-16 educational connections, serving diverse populations, and financial stability. Participants at each session generated ideas that were ultimately combined into a series of 6 main recommendations:

- ❖ Expand transfer and occupational programs to meet demands for contemporary and future career and job needs.
- ❖ Strengthen positive relations and connections with K-12 systems in the District.
- ❖ Develop program and continuing education initiatives to serve the District's diverse populations.
- ❖ Enhance job training and retraining initiatives to continue the College's flexible model of service.
- ❖ Develop initiatives to serve the District's undereducated citizens, those who lack a high school diploma or GED.
- ❖ Increase activities that build a positive sense of community for current students, alumni and friends, and the District.

Each of these recommendations is supported by additional focused recommendations that will serve as part of the Strategic Plan for the coming year and beyond. In addition, Board of Trustees meetings were held in two area communities in 2004, preceded by presentations on the results of REACH and conversations about how the College can serve those particular communities.

## **2P2 Communicating expectations**

Ongoing communication methods include broadcast e-mails, information at All-College meetings and division meetings, Annual Reports to the District, information on the College website, and press releases and feature stories in local media. Deans and area supervisors outline expectations in meetings, and some divisions have created their own goals and objectives supporting the Strategic Plan. Participation in community activities is included in the tenure

process, and non-teaching faculty may include participation as a part of their Action Plan included in the Annual Performance Appraisal. College employees also are encouraged to participate in community activities such as the Race for the Cure, American Cancer Society Relay for Life (held on the RCC campus), Decatur Celebration, the United Way campaign, and the Decatur Park District Community Challenge. Membership on boards for non-profit organizations and service clubs is also encouraged.

### **2P3 Determine faculty and staff needs**

As a part of any new initiative, a tentative budget must also be presented that includes both human and equipment resource needs. When the College budget is developed in the spring, all divisions must present priorities for funding and relate them to the Strategic Plan goals and strategies. Special attention is paid to support for continuous improvement projects that cross division lines as well as initiatives related to AQIP criteria, process reviews, and AQIP Action Projects. Faculty and staff funding is considered as a part of the “big picture” of the budget, and requests to fill openings that occur during the budget year are also weighed by program needs, relationship to Strategic Plan, and job responsibilities. The flexibility of programming for the CBTCCE also allows a constant review of staffing needs based on training requests.

### **2P4 Assessing & reviewing objectives assessed and reviewed**

Since this is the first cycle of the new Strategic Plan using continuous improvement strategies, the College is just beginning its review process and recognizes that the planning process will evolve to become more efficient. Administrators will meet to look at goals and strategies, determine the completion of tactics by divisions, and determine any new strategies for the coming year based on CIP Team recommendations, committee and taskforce work, REACH recommendations, and other initiatives started as a result of previous planning. To involve a broader spectrum of the College, information will be disseminated either through division meetings or at an all-college meeting, as well as by print materials in broadcast e-mail or memos distributed in mailboxes, and feedback will be solicited. The IEG, the President’s Cabinet, and the Deans will then work to finalize the plan for the coming year, and the Board of Trustees will hear a presentation at the January Board meeting. The updated Strategic Plan will then be posted on the College website and included on division, committee, and other unit meetings.

### **2P5 Measures of accomplishing other distinctive objectives**

Measures established for this Strategic Plan cycle are currently being collected. These include

- ❖ Number of external events using College facilities
- ❖ Number of participants in these events
- ❖ Number of training sessions held on and off campus
- ❖ Number of participants in training
- ❖ Growth in new contacts for use of College facilities
- ❖ Contributions to scholarships and establishment of endowments to the RCC Foundation (external contributions)
- ❖ Number of presentations to off-campus organizations by College staff

## **2R1 Results in accomplishing other distinctive objectives**

The College has become involved in a number of new partnerships in the last year, including

- ❖ Collaboration to bring the Farm Progress Show to Decatur
- ❖ Cooperative agreement with Millikin University to share Human Patient Simulation Lab and Lab Coordinator
- ❖ *Decatur, We Like It Here* Million Flower Project (Phase I)
- ❖ Distance Learning via Internet with area high schools
- ❖ Site designated for RCC in new grade/middle school in inner city

Additional accomplishments over the last year that relate to collaborative relationships include

- ❖ Increase in the number of scholarships awarded to RCC students by Foundation
- ❖ Successful completion of REACH program with recommendations to the Board
- ❖ Increased communication with local and state legislators
- ❖ Increased positive media exposure of activities occurring at the College
- ❖ Renewal of partnerships with area hospitals for clinical sites for health professions students
- ❖ First All-College Reunion

These new “friends” join the other relationships with Project READ, Partners in Education, the Chamber of Commerce of Decatur and Macon County, and many others to strengthen the District and impact its citizens.

## **2R2 Comparisons with peer institutions**

Because of the nature of these collaborations, comparisons with other institutions are difficult. However, the willingness of external agencies to partner with RCC is a sign of acceptance in the District and of recognition of the positive contributions that RCC makes to the District.

## **2R3 Strengthening overall institution and enhancing relationships**

With a 32-year history in Central Illinois, RCC has contributed much to the lives of District citizens. Positive responses to a Fall 2003 survey (88.6%) indicate a “strong record of public credibility” described the College, and 89.6% described RCC as a “source of pride for the community.” These responses continue the positive reaction to the College as reflected in a 1996 tax referendum with almost 75% of voters supporting the initiative. Citizens recognize the role of the College in the District as a source of employment (the 5<sup>th</sup> largest non-manufacturing employer), a source of affordable education, and a partner in the advancement of the economic development of Central Illinois.

## **2I1 Improving systems and processes for accomplishing other distinctive objectives**

This fall, the College will evaluate the two goals in the Strategic Plan to determine what additional strategies might be developed to support collaborative relationships and institutional operations. This work will be completed following the processes outlined in 2P2. Additionally,

surveys will be administered to participants in non-credit classes, training sessions, and other activities conducted by the CBTCE; these will also serve as directions for modifications in programs and services. A follow-up session will be held in the spring for the REACH participants to gauge their satisfaction with the implementation of recommendations from that project.

**2I2 Setting targets and priorities and communicating results and priorities**

The College will focus in the coming year on projects identified in *2R1* and measure their effectiveness. If these are continued, the data collected will be used as a baseline for next year to establish new measures and outcomes.

Additionally, the College will explore expanding delivery of courses through distance learning, equipping a mobile computer training center, and determining the feasibility of identifying community representatives in the K-12 systems in the RCC Districts. All of these concepts were identified as priorities through REACH.