

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 37-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:

| Organization | Population | Notes |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 12 local public P-12 school districts | Potential students; adjunct faculty; partners for community initiatives | Number of schools has declined from 16 due to mergers in the last 10 years; 9 dual credit agreements |
| 5 parochial P-12 school districts | Potential students; adjunct faculty; partners for community initiatives | |
| Home-schooled students | Potential students | Many home-schooled students attend Richland for enrichment experiences and for foreign language, upper- level mathematics, and science lab classes. |
| Other Illinois community colleges | Cooperative Occupational Educational Programs | |
| Apprenticeship programs | Local trades and labor organizations | |
| Adult Education/GED program | Partnerships with two other local Adult education programs | |
| Local business and industry | Short-term training opportunities | |

Receivers:

| Organization | Population | Notes |
|---|---|--|
| Transfer colleges and universities | Students | Students transfer primarily to 4 area colleges and universities. |
| 2+2 transfer programs | CTE & Baccalaureate students | 13 programs in 5 colleges and universities |
| Cooperative Occupational Educational Programs | CTE students | 29 community colleges |
| Area employers | Graduates and non-credit training recipients; incumbent workers | Some employers also serve on Occupational Advisory Committees. |

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

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Food Service & Vending | 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.

Community Partners and External Agencies:

| Organization | Description | Notes |
|---|---|--|
| Workforce Investment Board | membership and cooperative program for training | Grant partners Prescribed partner through WIA |
| Illinois Department of Corrections, District 487 | 5 sites offering a total of 6 occupational programs | |
| Area Hospitals | Clinical Sites for Health Professions; 21 sites in region | Staff serve as preceptors for Richland students |
| Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District | located on campus | one of two cooperative relationships like this in the state |
| 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 | Recently became a part of Richland and re-located on Richland campus |
| Greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce, Clinton Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Zion Chamber of Commerce | College membership in each Chamber | Participation in Chamber-sponsored activities |
| Advisory Committees for Occupational Programs | Includes employers and College staff (listed in 3P3) | |
| Illinois Community College Board; Illinois Board of Higher Education; Higher Learning Commission/AQIP | Accreditation and recognition; policies; program approval. | |
| Farm Progress Companies | Farm Progress Show | Held every other year on the Richland campus, bringing thousands of people to Decatur and Macon County |
| Decatur Public Schools District 61 and Other K-12 Schools Districts | Dual credit; Decatur Area Technical Academy; College fairs; scholarships | |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| University of Illinois Cooperative Extension | Shared training; will lease space in new Center for Sustainability and Innovation | |
| Richland Foundation partners | Collaboration with groups in community supporting specific initiatives | Ex—local medical group purchased equipment for Human Patient Simulators for health professions students |

Many of these collaborations are described in other locations in the Systems Portfolio.

Program Accreditation and Certification:

| Agency | Program |
|---|---|
| American Heart Assoc. | CPR |
| IL Dept. of Public Health | Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) EMT– B; EMT – I; EMT - Paramedic |
| Pharmacy Technician Certification Board | Pharmacy Technology |
| National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission | Registered Nurse Program |
| IL Dept. of Professional Regulations | Practical Nurse Program |
| Commission of Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs | Surgical Technology |
| American Registry of Radiologic Technologists | Radiography |
| National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) | Automotive Technology |
| Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity | Medical Transcription (online) |

A recent partnership among educational institutions and other organizations came from a group of educators and community leaders who began meeting in 2005 to form an organized response to the issue of student performance. Studies and assessment projects conducted by the Economic Development Corporation, the United Way, the Community Foundation of Decatur/Macon County, the Greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce, the Decatur District 61 Board of Education, and Richland Community College began to focus attention on improving academic achievement. The complexity of the problem called for a systematic, community-wide, sustained approach to achieve improvement. To facilitate this approach, the group has organized a community support infrastructure called the Decatur Area Education Coalition. Three goals have been identified to make the vision a reality:

- Every child is fully prepared for success when entering Kindergarten.
- Every student masters grade-level work.
- Every student graduates from high school with the skills and resources to enroll in college or join the workforce.

Richland has become a key participant in the Education Coalition. The President serves as the leader of the Young Scholars & Workers Team; other administrators serve on the other two teams, the Kindergarten Readiness Team and the Student Achievement Team. The three goals of the Education Coalition tie not only to Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan (Collaborative Relationships) but also to the Plan’s strategies of encouraging college preparedness and supporting student success.

9C2 Reinforcing institutional mission

Goal Two of the Strategic Plan adopted in February 2008 is to **enhance, strengthen, and advance collaborative relationships**. These relationships 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. Richland designs programs and services to educate students both vertically from admission to graduation and horizontally through community education, training, and support to the District communities. In addition, 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. The Strategic Plan Priorities, determined annually, include specific actions that develop collaborative relationships with a variety of stakeholders. For example, the 2009 priorities include the following actions:

- Expand and promote dual credit courses and programs in area high schools.
- Institute 2 events that bring high school students to campus.
- Identify and complete two new university degree completion opportunities for students.
- Offer the Workforce Readiness Program for targeted cohorts.
- Offer customized training for two new partners.
- Deploy an internal “rapid response system” to accommodate displaced workers.
- Hold two REACH activities.
- Hold three alumni events.
- Hold ribbon cutting for Early Childhood Education Academy, Fairview Park Plaza Center, and the Center for Sustainability and Innovation.
- Offer additional student recognition opportunities.

Progress reports on these actions are given to the Board of Trustees and to the College community and are posted on the College website quarterly.

9P1 Creating, prioritizing, and building relationships

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.
- ❖ Career and Technical Education Advisory Committees meet at least annually to discuss changes in skills and abilities for new and incumbent workers; faculty and administrators use this information to analyze and adjust program requirements.
- ❖ Articulation Agreements with colleges and universities are reviewed on an annual basis, and an Articulation/Transfer Guide is available on the College’s Intranet service for use in advising students.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ The Environmental Scan, compiled as a part of the Strategic Planning Process, offers trending information in a variety of areas, including regional demographics, employment trends, enrollment patterns, and human resources.

- ❖ Regular meetings with personnel from transfer institutions keep staff informed of changes in admissions requirements, new majors, online education opportunities, and success of Richland transfer students.
- ❖ Regular meetings with high school personnel and administrators are critical in assessing potential needs of incoming students, including interest in dual credit classes and in specific career and technical education pathways.
- ❖ Student and stakeholder focus groups.
- ❖ DACUMS and charrettes.
- ❖ Regular meetings with partners outlined in 9C1.

In the fall of 2003, the 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.

Since the initial REACH activities, the Board of Trustees has annually coordinated two public Board meetings to be held at off-campus locations in the Richland District. Prior to the Board meeting, a “mini-REACH” offers citizens in that community the opportunity to meet staff and faculty, hear about recent initiatives that connect to the original recommendations, and offer suggestions to support educational opportunities in their communities. In addition, REACH activities have been conducted with principals and superintendents and with Minority Community Partners, a group that includes educators and others in the District who work with minority populations in the community.

9P2 Meeting varying needs of those involved

Richland uses existing partnerships, new local initiatives, and employee contacts in the community to determine actions and connections. The Strategic Plan is the guide to assure that Richland is connecting to a variety of stakeholders and to assist in prioritizing resources. The following connections are ongoing or have been made as a result of the Strategic Planning process:

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 2009, approximately 1600 students listened to practitioners from the District representing 6 occupational clusters.

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

The Director of Admissions and Recruitment makes regular visits to area high schools, coordinates registration in fall and spring, and hosts school tours on the Richland 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.

Math Link and English Link bring together high school and college faculty and counselors to discuss curriculum, placement, and transition concerns.

A English and Mathematics assessment pilot was conducted in District 61 with high school sophomores and juniors for guidance in registration and the need for supplemental instruction.

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. Even with the local economic conditions, 35 employers participated, and over 300 people attended. In addition, a seasonal job fair and a health professions job fair have been initiated in the last two years.

Richland participates in annual local Small Business Expos coordinated by area Chambers of Commerce by conducting workshops and seminars and staffing a booth outlining both employment opportunities and programs of study leading to new employment.

With the recent job losses in the region, the College sponsored two Workplace Fairs to address job search needs including resumé building, interviewing, and skills assessment. Another Fair will be conducted in mid-summer.

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 2008-2009, 13 representatives came at least once.

Richland participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to assure smooth student transfer and aligns new courses and programs to assure compliance with IAI. Deans serve on the Statewide Steering Committee and on the General Education Core Curriculum Panels, and several faculty and deans serve on Major Panels, which have statewide representation.

Richland administrators participate in a number of state-wide community college associations and groups, including the Chief Student Services Officers, the Chief Academic Officers, the Chief Financial Officers, the IL Council of Community College Administrators, the Arts and Sciences Transfer Administrators, Career Deans Organization, the IL Continuing Education and Training Commission, IL Community College Economic/Workforce Development Association, Illinois Correctional Education Association, Illinois Correctional Education Contractors' Organization, and, for the Board of Trustees, the IL Community College Trustees Association.

Richland is also a member of the Continuous Quality Improvement Network, a coalition of 45 community colleges across the country that meets annually in a Summer Institute to discuss and learn best quality practices from various business and educational learning partners. Recent Institute themes have included innovation, customer service, lean practices, and partnerships. One benefit from this interaction is the broadened network of professionals across the country to share and learn from.

With the hiring of a Director of Alumni Relations and Scholarships in the RCC Foundation, a new emphasis has been placed on reconnecting with Richland graduates. Three Alumni events have been held targeting graduates in specific majors, including Fire Science, Theatre, and Education. A new Alumni Newsletter is published twice a year, and the Richland website includes a page specifically for alumni. There they are able to learn about other alumni, alumni benefits, and opportunities to support the College. Building this base will increase the opportunities to hear about the College's strengths and challenges from the perspective of someone who has moved into the world of work. In addition, the Director and representatives of the Richland Foundation attend high school student recognition ceremonies to award Foundation Scholarships, including the Trustees and Valedictorian Scholarships for the students at the top 10% of each class and other endowed scholarships designated for recent high school graduates.

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

9P3 Creating and building relationships within the institution

Internal communications and relationship-building activities are ongoing. The committee structure revamped by two Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Teams in 2003 continues to promote involvement through stakeholder representation on committees and taskforces. Agendas and minutes are posted on the College Intranet, and the Strategic Plan, Environmental Scan, and other reports are available on the Intranet and open to the public on Richland's website. Individuals 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. With the introduction of my.richland, a web-based portal, in Spring 2009 comes the opportunity to subscribe to specific groups for more personal connections for stakeholder groups. This venue will also allow staff to post information for students and maintain calendars to share additional information. A previous quarterly publication, *Inside Richland*, was replaced in 2007 with the monthly *I-Mail*, with contributions by all divisions and published by the Marketing Department. Some divisions and areas publish newsletters, including Student Success/TRIO, Student Services, and Adult Education.

Another more personal relationship-building tool is the President's Breakfast, held once or twice a month. Through a lottery system, ten people are invited to have breakfast with the President and at least one Vice President. Participants have the opportunity to interact with other employees whom they may not see on a regular basis and with the President. With no agenda for the breakfast, people share their perceptions of Richland, both the opportunities and challenges. Since this activity began two years ago, the President is now starting the second cycle of breakfasts.

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. All employees, full-time and part-time, are encouraged to access and share information, and the new electronic

systems will facilitate that sharing. While not all employees read all communications, Richland continues to examine communications methods and offer a variety of opportunities.

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

| Meeting | Time | Stakeholders | Information Dissemination |
|---|--|--|--|
| VPs Staff; VP Team of SAS and EDIWS also meet jointly | Bi-monthly | Deans and Directors reporting to three VPs | Done by each Dean and Director |
| Full-time Faculty Division Meetings | Regularly scheduled | Open to Full-time and Adjunct Faculty | Done by each Dean and Director |
| Adjunct Faculty Division Meetings | Regularly scheduled | Open to Adjunct Faculty | Done by Deans and Directors |
| Academic Standards Committee | Monthly | Open to College community | Intranet access for minutes/ agendas |
| Quality Council | Monthly | 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 | Monthly | Open to College community | Intranet access for minutes and agendas |
| Employee Relations and Development Committee | Monthly | Open to College community | Intranet access for minutes and agendas |
| Policy and Communications Committee | Monthly | 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 |
| Diversity Committee | Monthly | Open | Minutes available; survey results also distributed to appropriate stakeholders |
| 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 and as needed | Open | Meeting dates and times announced in advance |

Another opportunity for communication between faculty and administrators occurs during joint meetings of the College administration and the Richland Federation of Teachers. An interest-based bargaining structure has been utilized for the prior two contracts, the most recent one approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2009. A team of 16 people, 8 from the Collective Bargaining Unit and 8 from the Administration, participated in an intensive negotiation process that 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.

To meet one of the conditions of the contract, faculty union representatives and administration meet quarterly to discuss items of mutual interest and concern. In addition, the Adjunct Faculty

Union Contract also includes a provision for meetings between adjunct faculty and administration held when needed.

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 have been held on Institutional Outcomes Assessment, Academic Integrity, FERPA, and online education.

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
- ❖ High School Articulation Feedback Survey
- ❖ Advisory Committees Surveys
- ❖ Student Satisfaction Surveys
- ❖ Graduation Follow-up surveys
- ❖ Occupational Follow-up surveys
- ❖ Number of new and continuing partnerships
- ❖ Program review
- ❖ Under-represented Groups Report (annual)
- ❖ Biennial Diversity Report
- ❖ Number of stakeholder opportunities to participate in College activities
- ❖ Annual reports to Illinois Community College Board and AQIP

9R1 Results in building key collaborative relationships

Richland has seen positive results from key collaborative relationships as it continues its 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 Richland 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%).

In 2005, the College proposed a tax transfer referendum for the District. The 69% citizens’ approval of this transfer emphasized that the College supports the communities it serves.

The growth of contributions to the Richland Foundation is another sign of support. From 2000 through 2007, the RCC Foundation has received about \$2.4 million. In FY07, the Foundation received \$561,480 in donations including restricted gifts for scholarships, capital projects, and programs, representing a 12% increase over FY06 pledges. The Foundation and the College have undertaken a Major Gifts Campaign; to date, donations have totaled over \$11.8 million. Individuals and businesses see Richland as a logical place for financial gifts.

Through collaborative relationships, Richland has been able to meet the challenges of educating District citizens, supporting business and industry, maintaining fiscal health, and sustaining the quality of programs and services.

9R2 Comparing results

Richland uses a variety of methods to gather information on partnerships, including state reports, AQIP information, and state and national conferences and meetings attended by other community college and university representatives. Through these methods, Richland 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.

College staff will continue to monitor existing collaborative relationships and compile data when available on satisfaction in these partnerships and how they fit with the College's mission and vision.

9I1 Improving current processes and systems for building collaborative relationships

Richland continues to explore new partnership and collaborative opportunities. With the College's reputation for timely, effective responses and for innovative thinking and planning, organizations contact the College to establish relationships. These relationships are tracked by the President's Cabinet and other administrators to assure that initiatives meet the College's mission, vision, and Core Values. Generally, requests 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, Richland'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, new and continued activities continue to be planned and implemented:

- Additional friend-raising and fundraising activities, including alumni gatherings connected to College events, and continuation of the Major Gifts Campaign, with a goal of \$15 million.
- Initiatives in response to REACH recommendations.
- Expansion of dual credit courses and programs.

- Increase in number of online courses and programs.
- Utilizing the work of a CIP team on student recruitment to identify target markets and implement marketing recruitment campaigns.