

Criterion 1: Helping Students Learn

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

Strategic Plan Goal 1: To Enhance, Strengthen, and Advance Teaching and Learning

***ICI* Common student learning objectives**

From the establishment of the College in 1972, Richland Community College faculty and administration have stressed the importance of helping students achieve their personal and professional goals, regardless of what they are. Programs, courses, and support services have been designed to strengthen skills and abilities of all enrollees, regardless of their beginning competencies. RCC has students at the center of its organizational chart and has placed primary emphasis on student learning in its first Strategic Plan goal, **to enhance, strengthen, and advance teaching and learning.**

While the College has worked to graduate successful students, it has only recently turned its attention to College-wide student learning objectives and outcomes assessment. Various plans over the years have been created, but the commitment from the faculty and administration has been sporadic and limited except in the occupational programs. The AAS degree programs have delineated outcomes based on the SCANS competencies or mandated requirements by licensing boards in the health professions. For other degrees, including the AA and AS degrees, no formal efforts have been made.

When the College adopted the AQIP accreditation model in 2001 and began examining the 9 criteria, administrators realized that assessment was one of the College's least developed criteria, particularly as it directly related to programs and student success. The Student Outcomes Assessment Taskforce comprised of faculty and staff had made a proposal in May 2001, but the recommendations of this Taskforce were not implemented. Then in Fall 2003, a Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Team (#26) also took up the task of learning outcomes assessment. The Team used the recommendations of the previous Taskforce as a springboard for its work and in fact incorporated some of the recommendations into its final report in December 2003. At the same time, 2 CIP Teams worked on reorganizing the committee structure; one critical area was to continue the work of Team 26 to address outcomes assessment at the course, program, and institutional level. The Outcomes Assessment Taskforce was created with faculty representation from all teaching divisions as well as other stakeholders and began its work in February 2004. This Taskforce has taken the lead in activities to move the College community into a mindset of learning outcomes across the campus.

In the ten months since the inception of this taskforce, several activities have served to focus attention on outcomes assessment. A faculty survey was administered in October 2003 to gather information perceptions and understanding of the concept of student learning outcomes and course and program outcomes. National experts on assessment spoke at the Staff Development Day in February 2004 and during the week prior to the beginning of the Fall 2004 semester. Four forums have been held in Fall 2004 as a part of the process to determine what the College is calling cross-disciplinary outcomes, those common outcomes for all degree seeking students at RCC, and a survey was distributed to gather additional ideas regarding these outcomes. The taskforce is working on compiling the results and creating a list with definitions to take to the College for further reaction. The Spring 2005 semester will be devoted to these activities.

The Taskforce and the administration recognize that this process will be an extensive one, but the progress in educating faculty and staff has been significant.

***IC2* Aligning student learning /expectations, practices, and development objectives with mission, vision, and philosophy**

The administration works to assure that course and program objectives support the mission, vision, and core values of the College. New program recommendations or revisions of existing programs are aligned with the Strategic Plan and its goals, and academic and institutional support initiatives are also linked to the Strategic Plan.

As the Outcomes Assessment Taskforce works on cross-disciplinary outcomes and then broader institutional outcomes, connecting these to the mission, vision, and core values will be a primary component. In addition, the administration will make sure that student and institutional outcomes activities are included in the Strategic Plan and other short- and long-term planning for the College.

***IC3* Key instructional programs, delivery methods, and technology use**

Key instructional programs at the College report to the Vice President of Student and Academic Services and to the Vice President of Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Solutions. Specific program areas are listed on the Organizational Chart *IC4*. They include the following:

- ❖ Career and Technical Education (AAS degrees and certificates)
- ❖ Transfer/baccalaureate (AA, AS, AES, AAT, and AFA degrees)
- ❖ Adult Education (Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, Project READ/literacy)
- ❖ Continuing and Professional Education (occupational training and professional and personal development)
- ❖ Developmental Education (integrated into academic divisions depending on discipline)

Faculty in these areas use a variety of technology methods for content delivery. The College has upgraded 32 classrooms to the level of “smart classrooms,” where faculty have access to AV equipment and Internet without having to take equipment with them. The College has offered online classes since Fall 1998, and this semester some divisions have created hybrid or blended classes, with some instruction done on campus and some over the Internet. In the Spring 2005 semester the College will reinstate distance learning in one area high school by transmitting over the Internet instead of over fiber optic cable or T1 lines. If this system meets faculty and staff standards for course delivery, more high school sites may be added in Fall 2005. Faculty and staff also have access to a variety of audiovisual equipment delivered to their classrooms, with media such as DVDs, videotapes, and CDs. Faculty are encouraged to use technology in their classes, including web discussion boards, online access to syllabi or other class materials, and/or Powerpoint presentations. Students are also expected to use technology in a variety of ways, from class presentations to assignment delivery to instructors, and registration for classes and access of semester grades and complete transcripts. The College knows that reliance on computers and the Internet will grow, and to compete in the job market and at transfer colleges and universities, students must be trained in appropriate uses of technology.

In addition, faculty and staff do not ignore the traditional methods of instruction that allow students to learn in a variety of ways. Pedagogical approaches to classroom teaching and learning include

- ❖ Lecture and discussion (both in person and online)
- ❖ Small group work and collaborative presentations
- ❖ Laboratory assignments
- ❖ Written work, including tests, quizzes, journals, research papers
- ❖ Internships and practicums
- ❖ Field observation and research
- ❖ Internet research and content delivery
- ❖ Portfolios

Syllabi generally include the methods of delivery as well as objectives that address mastery of technology.

IC4 Preparing students to live in a diverse world

RCC strives to expose students to as many “real world” options and situations as possible in its courses, programs, and extracurricular opportunities. All degrees and many certificates include requirements for humanities or business courses, and students are encouraged to enroll in courses that include a non-Western perspective in the curriculum. The Strategic Plan includes strategies to increase and track cross-cultural assignments in general education classes. Other opportunities for exposure are incorporated into classes and extracurricular activities:

- ❖ General education credits included in programs
- ❖ Collaborative activities in the classroom
- ❖ Readings and research on global issues
- ❖ Service learning opportunities in clubs and organizations
- ❖ Membership in a state program with study abroad options
- ❖ Opportunities to join clubs and organizations offering perspectives on diverse topics
- ❖ Input from advisory boards to assure exposure to different perspectives
- ❖ Opportunities to interact with faculty and staff outside the classroom
- ❖ Annual Walking the Walk of Diversity conference—students in TRiO and student leaders participate in this conference.

In Spring 2009 a faculty member is on sabbatical in Kenya working in an orphanage. When she returns, she will take the lead role in assisting faculty to infuse international awareness into curriculum.

IC5 Creating and maintaining a positive academic climate

RCC promotes for all members of the College community, including students, faculty, and staff a climate of intellectual freedom while respecting differing and diverse opinions. Two of the College’s five core values and their definitions, adopted in 2003, are *respect* and *diversity*.

- ❖ **Respect:** We recognize the expertise of all members of the College community and encourage individual contribution.

- ❖ Diversity: We believe that our similarities and differences are opportunities for establishing a common bond and strengthening the College.

These and the other Core Values are emphasized in Personal Performance Plans, the annual appraisal system used by non-faculty employees, and are a part of meeting agendas throughout the College.

The Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook outlines for students both their rights as students in an academic setting and their responsibilities to be productive, contributing members of an educational community. These rights and responsibilities are also a part of the Board Policies in Section 4.15 and are available in the *Student Handbook* printed each year. The *Student Handbook* also includes other policies related to graduation, honors, and transfer information, as well as confidentiality and privacy rights. A part of student rights and responsibilities is a grievance process with both informal and formal methods of settling issues in the areas of academic concerns, FERPA, ADA, sexual harassment, student employment, student conduct, and financial aid and student refunds. Additional activities that encourage inquiry, academic investigation, and sharing include

- ❖ Classroom discussion and assignments
- ❖ Open forums, workshops, and Student Senate meetings
- ❖ Luncheon for Student Club Representatives and Administrators (spring and fall)
- ❖ Participation in clubs and organizations that reflect a variety of viewpoints (i.e. College Republicans and College Democrats)
- ❖ Program Board—a student group responsible for planning extracurricular and service activities for students

Section 3 of the Board Policy Manual outlines various rights and privileges for all employees, including evaluation and grievance processes. CIP Team 19 developed and the College has implemented a new Personal Performance Plan that allows non-teaching employees to develop with their supervisors action plans for professional growth. These plans are reviewed on a yearly basis. Faculty's rights to academic freedom are addressed by Board Policy as well as in the *Faculty Handbook*. Faculty have access to a variety of research tools through the Learning Resources Center as well as Internet access. Conference and travel funds are included in the annual budget for professional development, and the RCC Foundation offers professional development funds as well. The Faculty of the Year Award has been given since 1979, with a cash stipend awarded by the RCC Foundation. An Adjunct Faculty of the Year Award was reinstated in 2005. Both the Faculty and Adjunct Faculty of the Year participate in commencement ceremonies and are recognized at a number of events throughout the year.

Additional methods of academic inquiry and discussion include

- ❖ Faculty Forums and town meetings
- ❖ Open Division Meetings
- ❖ Open committee and taskforce meetings, with agendas and minutes posted on the College Intranet
- ❖ All-College meetings
- ❖ Ad hoc taskforces on topics such as the academic calendar, Faculty of the Year, Professor Emeritus, and Graduation

The Employee Appreciation Taskforce, under the direction of the Office of Human Resources, coordinates the annual Employee Recognition Awards and other events to celebrate the dedication of Richland employees. Other awards are detailed in Section 4, Valuing People.

IP1 Determining common student learning objectives and specific program learning objectives

The Outcomes Assessment Taskforce, created in January 2004, is comprised of faculty from all academic divisions as well as representatives from other stakeholder groups. After series of faculty forums and other activities, the Taskforce identified four cross-disciplinary outcomes for all degree-seeking students.

| | |
|---|---|
| Outcome 1— Communication | Students will demonstrate the ability to read, write, listen, and speak (or use other modes of communication) effectively in a variety of contexts and formats, in order to show required levels of comprehension. |
| Outcome 2—Critical and Creative Thinking | Critical Thinking: Students will gather appropriate information from multiple sources, evaluate information and distinguish between proper and fallacious inferences and connections. Creative Thinking: Students will formulate alternative solutions, processes, or decisions and identify potential consequences |
| Outcome 3— Professionalism and Diversity | Students will demonstrate appropriate professional behaviors in a variety of modalities and roles, including leaderships, ethics, conflict resolution, self-awareness, feedback, time and stress management skills, and global awareness/diversity. |
| Outcome 4— Technology Literacy | Students will use technology and other resources efficiently and legally/ethically to effectively gather, organize, manage, evaluate, and create information, solve problems, and communicate. |

A pilot was conducted in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 to test a matrix for assessment. Faculty training will be conducted in Fall 2009 for institutional implementation. A subcommittee is also working on a system of artifact collection and storage and on the evaluation process.

Program objectives have been established by faculty and Deans as the programs are developed. These objectives are reviewed and adjusted if the program is revamped. Objectives are determined by input from Advisory Groups (where applicable), graduates, faculty, and staff, as well as from standards established by national certification agencies and/or other oversight groups. Evaluation of objectives is also done as a part of the Program review process, developed by a Continuous Improvement Process Team to meet the requirements of the Illinois Community College Program Review requirements. The College also participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative, assuring that courses taken at RCC meet standards set at a state level and that they will be accepted at participating transfer colleges and universities.

IP2 Design new programs and courses to facilitate student learning

New programs and courses may be initiated through a number of avenues at the College. Through Student and Academic Services and the Economic development and Innovative Workforce Solutions Divisions, Deans and Vice Presidents may undertake an investigation on the feasibility of new programs based on input from

- ❖ Advisory Committees
- ❖ Needs Assessments conducted in the District
- ❖ Occupational Outlook information through Federal or State reports, the ICCB, or IBHE
- ❖ Contact from local businesses or industries
- ❖ Internal assessment of student interest
- ❖ National trend information
- ❖ Critical Skills Shortages information

As a part of program development, Deans are responsible for determining needs for faculty, equipment and supplies, space, and other special program needs. Program prerequisites, course schedule options, and other special student support requirements such as testing must also be outlined. Developers must present research on transfer articulation through the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Articulation Initiative. They also must consider how the program fits with the College’s mission, vision, and core values.

The following flow chart shows how new programs move through the current system:

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| New Programs | Deans and Faculty Initiators | VP, SAS/VP Team | Academic Standards Committee | IEG | Board and/or ICCB |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----|-------------------|

Faculty in any discipline may develop new courses to support existing programs and may alter existing courses to meet changing demands in course content and delivery. These courses must also meet IAI and ICCB requirements for new courses, and faculty and Deans must determine any new prerequisites, course articulation, and additional equipment and space needs.

IP3 Determine the preparation required of students

RCC’s “open door” policy allows all students with a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent admission to the College.

The College follows the IBHE’s minimum subject requirements established in 1993 for transfer programs:

| Units | Subjects |
|-------|--|
| 4 | English (emphasizing written and oral communications and literature) |
| 3 | Social Studies (emphasizing history and government) |
| 3 | Mathematics (introductory through advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or fundamentals of computer programming) |
| 3 | Sciences (laboratory sciences) |
| 2 | Foreign language, music, art, or vocational education |

Students who do not meet these requirements will be required to make up any deficiencies by graduation.

In order to be admitted to most credit courses and programs, students must evidence academic preparation through one of five methods:

- ❖ Accuplacer placement testing in mathematics, sentence skills, and reading comprehension with scores established by the Placement Standards Taskforce
- ❖ ACT or SAT scores established by the Placement Standards Taskforce
- ❖ Evidence of prior knowledge through proficiency tests

- ❖ CLEP or DAN TES testing (in certain subjects only)
- ❖ Transfer work from another college or university

In addition, students may receive academic course credit through a number of additional options (recently approved by the Board of Trustees as policy):

- ❖ Credit Equivalency by Licensure of Certification
- ❖ Credit Equivalency for Professional Training
- ❖ Credit Equivalency for Professional Experience
- ❖ Credit for Military Service and Training

Certain health professions programs require additional placement testing and/or completion of certain courses in order to be for students to be admitted into the program, according to national or state mandates.

The Board of Trustees approved a mandatory placement testing policy in Fall 2003 to support the existing mandatory placement policy. The placement test policy allows certain exceptions for individuals who have not earned over 15 hours of college credit, including enrollment in courses with no prerequisites.

***IP4* Communicating expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives**

Interested individuals may access program, course, and general enrollment information through a number of sources:

- ❖ College Catalog
- ❖ College website
- ❖ Class schedule (for prerequisites, testing information, and admission process)
- ❖ Visits to high schools by the Director of Recruitment and Outreach Services and other College employees
- ❖ Program sheets (also available on the College Intranet for all employees to use when advising)
- ❖ New Student Orientation (SOAR)
- ❖ Course Syllabi available in division office
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Program brochures and other printed materials
- ❖ Contact with program faculty

***IP5* Helping students select programs of study to match needs, interests, and abilities**

Since not all individuals who want to attend Richland have a clear picture of career goals and expectations, the College offers a number of aids. The College has available for District citizens, regardless of enrollment status, a number of career interest inventories, some at no cost. A counselor or Career Services staff person will then review the results and discuss possible programs of study. In addition, students are encouraged to meet with faculty in their programs of interest. Richland participates in a number of career and college fairs in the District.

Career information is also available to K-12 students through outreach activities such as “I’m Going to College,” a summer program for grade and middle school children, the 8th Grade Career

Fair co-sponsored by Partners in Education, Richland, and the Heartland Career and Technical Education Cooperative, and other activities organized by Partners in Education.

Academically, students complete placement tests or show evidence of competencies based on the instruments listed in *IP3*. Students may enroll in the courses designated by these tests, including placement directly into college-level courses or into developmental reading (2 levels), writing (2 levels), and/or mathematics courses (4 levels plus geometry). Students are encouraged to review prior to completing the placement exams; websites and tutoring are available for any interested individuals.

Other academic support services are available for students. Students with disabilities may seek assistance through the Office of Learning Accommodations Services for a variety of support services for any courses. Diagnostic screening is also available through this office for older students who may not have had access to testing while in high school. All students may access the Student Learning Center, offering faculty and peer tutoring in many academic areas; any individual in the College District who is 16 years or older and at least a junior in high school may also use these services.

1P6 Determining and documenting effective teaching and learning

The foundation of RCC in the community is the strength of its faculty. Alumni of the College comment on the connections with faculty who have made positive impressions on them both professionally and personally. The College tracks effective teaching and learning through the following means:

- ❖ Course evaluations by students (full-time and adjunct faculty)
- ❖ Evaluations by supervisors (full-time and adjunct faculty)
- ❖ Informal student feedback
- ❖ Student success data, persistence data, and anecdotal information
- ❖ Licensure statistics and graduation rates
- ❖ Occupational Follow-up Surveys
- ❖ Faculty awards, publications, and other external achievements
- ❖ Tenure and promotion, both of which require assessment of teaching and college activities

Faculty learn about institutional expectations during the hiring process, new employee orientation, the tenure process, and other presentations. The Outcomes Assessment Taskforce have involved faculty in the development of cross-disciplinary outcomes; faculty will also be involved in the development of scoring rubrics, thus encouraging understanding of the process and the expectations. Deans are also conducting meetings for discipline-specific faculty to determine learning outcomes.

1P7 Building an effective and efficient course delivery system

Although the College builds its schedule around the traditional 16-week pattern for fall and spring semesters and an 8-week summer session, schedule builders also develop course patterns to accommodate student needs. Evening courses offered one day a week, Saturday sections, 5-week summer courses, late-start sections in both fall and spring (generally 12-week sessions) as well as special short-term offerings for specific business and industrial training have been

offered over the last few years. For example, the Illinois Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) worked with the Mathematics and Sciences Division to offer a 3-credit-hour political science class over 4 weekends. In Spring 2008, pilot sections of Speech 101, Oral Communication, were offered in a new format called Interterm. These three-week courses were offered online except for the presentation of three speeches, for which students had to come to campus (based on requirements by the Illinois Community College Board). Since then, Interterm courses in English and Speech have been offered during all breaks between regular semesters; while enrollment is low, retention and completion have been at 75%.

Online delivery is increasing in popularity. Two 2008 Continuous Improvement Process teams focused on online education—one reviewed and outlined the steps needed to increase the number of online programs and offered recommendations on bolstering the online program process. The second team reviewed and recommended the steps needed to offer student support services online, including registration, financial aid, and advisement. Faculty and Deans continue to investigate additional courses that can be offered online, and hybrid courses, with some on-campus meetings, are also gaining popularity. Meeting dates for hybrid courses are generally published in the class schedule so that students will be aware of this requirement prior to registration.

A recent CIP team also recommended additional alternatives to the traditional schedule; the academic deans are currently studying these recommendations to determine what else the College may be able to offer efficiently and cost-effectively.

***IP8* Monitor the currency and effectiveness of curriculum and process for change**

The College reviews curriculum on a regular basis. Program reviews are prescribed by the ICCB every 5 years for all programs; the program review process involves deans, faculty, and advisory committees. Programs are discontinued or undergo substantive changes following a process that includes data collection, trend analysis, input from advisory boards, discussions with transfer colleges and universities, and extensive faculty input. Faculty, deans, and administrators also monitor curriculum through

- ❖ Input from advisory boards
- ❖ Current professional literature
- ❖ Conferences, workshops, and professional memberships
- ❖ Certification and licensure reviews
- ❖ College teams attending national conferences including Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) Summer Institutes, HLC/NCA Annual Meetings, and League of Innovations conferences

The ICCB also outlines procedures for discontinuation or substantial changes in programs or courses, and the College follows a process similar to the one outlined in *IP2*.

***IP9* Determining student and faculty needs relative to learning support**

The College's commitment to student success is evidenced in the long-standing support of the Student Learning Center (open since 1978) and other student support services. Student needs are determined through placement testing, referrals by faculty to support services, student requests for services, surveys such as the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and the ACT Faces

of the Future, and requests to programs such as the Student Support Services/TRIO program and the Perkins Program.

Faculty and staff learning support needs are determined through surveys, including the All-College survey administered biannually, through division meetings, through faculty and staff requests for training in technology, the College data collection software, and online course delivery, and through requests to committees and taskforces such as the Employee Relations and Development Committee.

Support for faculty and staff training needs is given through the RCC Foundation, division budgets, and special grants, along with support from the Learning Resources Center, the Student Learning Center, and the Office of Student and Academic Services.

***IP10* Aligning co-curricular development goals with curricular learning objectives**

The Campus Life Office, which oversees co-curricular activities, supports classroom activities through availability of funds from the Program Board so that faculty may bring speakers to individual classes; sometimes, these programs are open to other classes or to the entire College community. In addition, clubs and organizations may work with faculty or staff to offer workshops or activities that support classroom work. Several clubs, including the Culinary Arts Club, the Early Childhood Professionals Club, Visions of Design (graphic arts), and the Student Nursing Club, all developed as a result of requests from students in particular majors. Faculty advisors work with the Campus Life Director in planning activities to benefit students in those programs.

Service Learning courses have also been developed to encourage growth in student leadership and community service. Specific section topics are developed by faculty and include both academic and service components.

***IP11* Determining the processes for student assessment**

According to Board Policy 4.1.2.1 (approved December 1005), students are required to complete placement tests in mathematics, sentence skills, and reading to determine a student's eligibility for courses with prerequisites and/or placement in developmental courses (numbered 099 or below). Students who have completed the ACT may use the Reading and English scores for placement in courses with prerequisites and not take those two components of the Accuplacer, the current placement instrument. A testing process has been established and includes steps for retesting; students must retest if 1) more than two calendar years have passed since the student tested the first time and 2) the student has not begun a sequence of courses that uses the placement test results.

The Placement Standards Committee was established in 1987 to examine the student placement processes for the College. Since then, the Committee has undergone several transformations, but its primary purpose has always been to set the standards for placement testing and other necessary assessments for individuals entering the College. With the committee restructure in January 2004, the current Placement Standards Taskforce is charged with examining placement score ranges, reviewing the current placement instrument, Accuplacer, and assuring that other placement issues are resolved by stakeholders. Currently, the Taskforce is studying how to evaluate computer fluency, including researching available testing and best practices at other community colleges.

Faculty and deans have determined appropriate processes for assessment in courses and programs. Faculty use typical assessments including course tests and quizzes, final projects, and other assignments. AAS degree-seeking students are assessed through capstone courses, portfolios, projects, and internships as well as tests, quizzes, and class projects.

The Outcomes Assessment Taskforce will coordinate efforts on student outcomes in courses, programs, and across the curriculum and will develop an outcomes assessment plan for the institution. The College recognizes that this process will be slow, but the work done by the Taskforce so far has helped the process move forward.

***IP12* Discovering student preparation for further education or employment**

The College relies on a number of methods to gather information on student preparation:

- ❖ Transfer information from colleges and universities
- ❖ Employee surveys
- ❖ Anecdotal information from students reporting to faculty and staff
- ❖ Graduation surveys
- ❖ Feedback from advisory groups
- ❖ Licensure and certification information
- ❖ Contacts by the Career Center
- ❖ Internship results
- ❖ Number of students receiving degrees and certificates
- ❖ Pass rates from certification tests such as the NCLEX (health professions)

In addition, the College tracks the number of students receiving academic awards and those with honors status at graduation.

***IP13* Measures of student performance**

Measures of student performance collected and analyzed regularly are

- ❖ Licensure and certification data
- ❖ Institutional data such as persistence, retention, and graduation rates
- ❖ Program data including completion, placement, and transfer information
- ❖ Course information such as completion rates and success in subsequent courses (where applicable)

The Retention Study completed in Spring 2009 and the Persistence Study currently in progress will allow the College to establish benchmarks and to implement activities that maintain or increase retention rates in high-risk courses and for at-risk student populations.

***IR1* Results for common student learning objectives and specific program learning objectives**

The Outcomes Assessment Taskforce is developing the next components of the cross-disciplinary outcomes process. Data will be collected as baseline in the next year.

In addition, the Retention Study identifies classifications of students and their retention rates along with grade distributions. This information will be used by appropriate stakeholders to implement strategies for target classifications.

The current Program Review process has been used for three years and is under review for the next year. The next step is to identify benchmarks for program deans and faculty to use in determining program success and viability.

The ICCB also identifies cohorts of students that can be used as baseline data for comparison. This information is used in examining dual credit and online education.

Another critical area of student achievement for the College is the GED pass rate. Information from the last 4 years for Richland indicates a relatively flat number. The College continue to

work with these graduates to encourage them to enroll in college courses upon completion of their GED.

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|------|------|------|------|
| 86 | 70 | 68 | 64 |

The College transfer/graduation/still enrolled rate as reported to the ICCB has maintained a steady rate for the last several years:

| | Full-time First-time Entering Cohort | Graduated. Transferred or Still Enrolled Number | Percent |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Fall 2001 | 220 | 139 | 63.2% |
| Fall 2002 | 265 | 181 | 68.3% |
| Fall 2003 | 180 | 111 | 61.7 |

Many RCC students earn credits with only the intention to transfer, such as through Dual Credit or Credit in Escrow.

IR2 Evidence that students have acquired the knowledge and skills base for degrees and certificates

The College constantly reviews available information for student success including employment, transfer, and licensure and accreditation. According to the 2008 *Institutional Data Book*, 80% of nursing students who graduated in 2006 passed the NCLEX on the first attempt, down slightly from the 100% in 2005 and the 92% in Spring 2006. Practical Nursing graduates in Summer 2006 passed the NCLEX at 100%, and in Summer 2007 88% of graduates passed the NCLEX.

The 3-year average for degree/certification recipients who are either employed or enrolled in further education within one year of graduation from RCC is 98.7%, based on a follow-up survey mailed to all graduates. The College would like to increase the number of surveys returned and

will be investigating other avenues for gathering this information, perhaps through the revitalized Alumni Association.

***IR3* Results for processes associated with Helping Students Learn**

With any reorganization, the College reviews processes related to teaching and learning. The faculty of the Academic Standards Committee participate in curriculum review and related processes as well as other academic areas such as the master syllabus, academic integrity, and placement. The Office of Student and Academic Services is also involving Deans and Directors in reviewing processes for program review, course and program development, and support services delivery. Changes have been made in processes related to

- ❖ New student orientation and registration
- ❖ Tuition and fees payment
- ❖ New employee orientation
- ❖ Approval of curriculum changes, deletions, and additions
- ❖ Application for RCC Foundation scholarships
- ❖ Placement testing for new students
- ❖ Program review

In addition, the faculty and Deans have developed new online course delivery methods including hybrid courses, have increased the number of sections offered online, and have developed new courses and programs to meet student and employer needs. The Director of Online Learning has overseen the transition to a new learning management system and conducted extensive training during Professional Development Day; additional levels of training are being presented. The Director is also working with faculty to incorporate online technology into existing classes, thus not only increasing the number of sections but also enhancing the course content as faculty make the transition to online teaching methods.

***IR4* Comparing results**

Comparisons of results information are often difficult because of the varied nature of student demographics and goals as well as varied processes for determining outcomes, developing courses and programs, and conducting other activities that support teaching and learning. The College does use results from the Noel Levitz and the Faces of the Future to compare to other institutions, but this information is general in nature and does not allow easy comparison to what could be considered “cohort” institutions.

The College receives limited information from transfer institutions, and in general, transfer students have a higher GPA than native students at those institutions.

***III* Improving current processes and systems for helping students learn and develop**

The College is examining the following processes and systems to determine improvement needs:

- ❖ Complete cycle using program review process
- ❖ Implement training for new learning management system for students
- ❖ Develop a central location for data and information collected throughout the College to decrease duplication of efforts

- ❖ Examine student advisement issues as indicated in the Noel Levitz Inventory and Faces of the Future and refine as needed
- ❖ Implement new portal, my.richland, for prospective and current students
- ❖ Maintain state-of-the-art technology in classrooms and labs
- ❖ Increase enrollment in student support courses such as Personal Development, Career Development, and Education 101, the Community of Higher Education.
- ❖ Determine appropriate screening for computer fluency
- ❖ Review New Student Orientation satisfaction results and adjust program if necessary

***IR2* Setting targets and priorities and communicating results**

A clear process for evaluating the cross-disciplinary outcomes listed in *IR1* will be established in the next year. Benchmarks will be determined and targets will be set at that time. In addition, the College will review new performance reports required by the State and make any necessary changes in the data requirements for those reports as well as for other reports required for grants or for federal programs.

Communication of information will continue through mechanisms described elsewhere in the Portfolio. In addition, the balanced scorecard being developed will also serve as a communication device on the College website for external stakeholders and posted on the College Intranet for internal stakeholders. Developing strategies for improved communication are also among the charges of the Policy and Communications Committee and the Employee Relations and Development Committee. The REACH public engagement process described in *3P3* also assisted the College administration in identifying citizens who might be interested in future focus groups or taskforces to address specific College issues.