

Richland Community College Institutional Overview

01. Distinctive features

Richland Community College District 537, established in 1972, is a two-year public institution located in Central Illinois about 3½ hours from Chicago and 2½ hours from St. Louis and is geographically one of the smallest downstate community college districts.

Since acceptance as an AQIP institution in 2001, the College community, including the seven-person Board of Trustees, has examined the mission, vision, and core values to ensure that they truly reflect the College's role in the District. First, over a period of a year and involving the entire College at various stages, Richland's first Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Team identified and defined five core values and affirmation statements adopted by the Board of Trustees in Spring 2003:

- ❖ **Commitment:** *We are dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities we serve.*
- ❖ **Respect:** *We recognize the expertise of all members of the College community and encourage individual contributions.*
- ❖ **Excellence:** *We strive to develop and pursue higher standards.*
- ❖ **Accountability:** *We assume and demonstrate responsibility for our actions.*
- ❖ **Diversity:** *We believe that our similarities and differences are opportunities for establishing a common bond and strengthening the College.*

These core values appear at all entrances and on most printed College documents. The core values, mission, and vision statements are also read at the beginning of the monthly Board of Trustees meetings and at other committee meetings on campus.

Also in 2003, the Strategic Planning Team and the Board of Trustees examined the College vision, which had been in place for several years. To reflect Richland's growth and potential, the Board of Trustees in November 2003 adopted the following vision: *To be the premier source for education, workforce training, partnerships, and economic development.*

The final step in the review of key institutional statements was the examination and revision of Richland's mission statement in 2008. The Board of Trustees approved the new mission statement in February 2009: *To offer innovative educational experiences, opportunities, and environments that enable individuals, communities, and the region to grow, thrive, and prosper.*

The Vision, Mission, and Core Values are the core of decision making at all levels of the institution.

Scope of educational offerings

As a public comprehensive community college with an "open door" admissions policy, Richland is governed by the Illinois Community College Act to provide transfer/baccalaureate courses and programs, adult education courses, occupational and technical courses and programs, and developmental education courses. Business training and community education initiatives complement College efforts to serve all residents of the District. The following list outlines the range of offerings as of April 2009:

- ❖ Associate degrees in Arts, Science, Fine Arts, Teaching, and Engineering Science (34 areas of concentration)
- ❖ Associate in Applied Science (47 degrees and 85 basic and advanced certificates)
- ❖ Community Education and Business Training courses (personal and professional growth, offered in a variety of locations throughout the District)
- ❖ Adult Education (including Adult Basic Education, GED, and English as a Second Language)
- ❖ Developmental education (5 mathematics, 2 writing, and 2 reading courses)
- ❖ Online courses (total of 181 sections for Summer and Fall 2009 to be offered; increase from 64 in Fall 2004's Systems Portfolio)

- ❖ Dual Credit—courses offered to high school students both at Richland and at some of the area high schools to earn high school and college credit simultaneously. Currently, 11 high schools offer dual credit courses on site and students are also able to come to Richland’s campus. In Fall 2007, 476 students were enrolled in Dual Credit courses, up from 138 students in Fall 2003.
- ❖ Credit in escrow—students may enroll in courses to receive college credit, which is held for them until they graduate from high school. In Spring 2007 39 students were enrolled in credit in escrow courses, a decrease from Spring 2006 due to the increased opportunities for dual credit enrollment.
- ❖ Distance education—Richland is connected for real time course delivery at one local high school and with another community college for a cooperative respiratory therapy program.

Student base, needs, and requirements

The following chart details information on Richland’s student population in FY08:

Part-Time	67.6%
Full-Time	32.4%
Men	46%
Women	54%
Asian	1.1%
Am. Ind.	0.4%
Black/Non-Hisp.	18.6%
Hispanic	2.7%
White/Non-Hisp.	77.2%
Avg. Age—All	28
Avg. Age—Day	27
Avg. Age—Evening	31
Avg. Age—Weekend	36

Total Credit Students	7280
Non-credit Students	5045

AA/AS	53.3%
Occupational	34.3%
Voc. Skills	0.3%
Adult Basic	0.1%
Adult Secondary	0.1%
Gen. Ed.	10.7%
Gen. Studies	1.2%

Of the 1,373 Spring 2007 graduating high school seniors, 335 enrolled in Richland courses in Fall 2007.

Financial aid support for students comes from federal and state funding such as PELL, MAP, and SEOG, scholarships from local civic organizations, and scholarships from the Richland Foundation, a non-profit fundraising and friend-raising entity for the College. With the current economic conditions in the nation and in the District, the need for financial assistance has increased dramatically.

Number of students receiving financial aid	FY06 2009	FY07 3792
Amount Received	FY06 \$4,039,359	FY07 \$4,192,873

Costs for higher education have risen, and Richland has increased tuition and course fees annually for the last three years. The Board of Trustees reviews and approves necessary tuition and fee changes in February each year; any changes are publicized for students to use in calculating financial need.

FY10 Charges	Rate
Tuition (Resident)	\$69.50 per credit
Auxiliary Fee	\$4.50 per credit
Registration Fee	\$10.00
Tuition (out of district/in state)	\$376.48per credit

Tuition (out-of-state/ international)	\$491.94 per credit
Graduation Fee	\$25.00

As a result of another CIP team's efforts in Fall 2002, the College offers an installment payment option, and the date of final payment of tuition now occurs approximately one week before classes begin. This deadline allows Deans to monitor and adjust section offerings to increase enrollment prior to the beginning of the semester.

Richland's current students have many of the typical needs of college students. They need courses and programs that will transfer and programs that will lead to employment. They need reliable information for registration and graduation. They need excellent teaching and learning opportunities in the classroom and a variety of extracurricular activities to support the whole person. They need career guidance and job information. They need reliable transportation, either personal or public, neither of which the College can control. Currently the city bus service only runs to the College until 5:45 p.m., but Saturday service is available. Many students also need reliable and affordable daycare. The Child Development Center admits children ages 2 (potty-trained) through 12; students, Richland employees, and District residents may enroll their children in a full-time or part-time program, and it offers after-school and summer care for school-aged children.

Collaborations with other organizations (businesses, foundations, agencies, etc.) and/or institutions

Richland is proud of the ongoing collaborative efforts in the District and the region with a variety of educational institutions, businesses, and service providers. Following is a partial list of collaborative projects and agreements, which will be expanded in other sections of the Portfolio:

- ❖ Partners in Education—non-profit educational agency created to facilitate business and education partnerships that provide experiences to expose diverse students to the world of work. Richland serves as the fiscal agent for this organization, and Partners in Education relocated to the Richland campus in Summer 2008.
- ❖ Articulated 2 + 2 Degree Programs—designed for Richland students who intend to transfer to another institution to complete a four-year degree after earning an associate's degree at Richland. Currently, the College has 39 formal agreements with 12 colleges and universities.
- ❖ Cooperative Educational Programs—Richland has agreements with 27 other community colleges that allow students to enroll in a career/technical degree and/or certificate program not available at the home institution. Students are able to enroll in these programs at the cooperating college's in-district tuition rate.
- ❖ Illinois Articulation Initiative—a statewide agreement, initiated in 1998, that allows transfer of completed Illinois General Education Core Curriculum between participating institutions.
- ❖ Richland Community College Foundation—established in 1985 to encourage and receive monetary and in-kind contributions and support for the College. The Foundation awarded over \$175,000 in scholarships to 346 students for Fall 2008, and it has shepherded donations and bequests to expand the physical campus, along with technology purchases and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
- ❖ The Full-time Faculty Collective Bargaining Unit and the Part-Time Faculty Union—work with the College to support teaching and learning and professional growth and development. Interest-based bargaining was used to reach a five-year contract approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2009.
- ❖ Community Agencies--over 90 District non-profit, civic, and service organizations have benefited from the volunteer efforts of College staff over the past few years.

- ❖ Farm Progress Show—the College has worked with a large contingent of community, county, and state entities to bring the Farm Progress Show to the area for a period of 20 years. Richland will host the third Farm Progress Show in September 2009.

Faculty and staff base

Like many other community colleges in Illinois, Richland experienced a large retirement wave from 2002 through 2005. From May 2002 through June 2004, 12 full-time faculty and 11 administration and staff have retired. In addition, Richland is the contracted education provider for 5 Illinois Department of Corrections facilities. The total number of full-time faculty, including the DOC, is 96, the largest number in the history of the College.

The following is an analysis of full-time faculty at the College as of Fall 2008:

Length of Service	0-5 years	58
	6-10	14
	11-15	11
	16-20	9
	21+	4
	<i>Average</i>	6.8
Gender Distribution	Male	44
	Female	52

Education Level	Doctorate	7
	MA/MS/MFA	58
	BA/BS	20
	AA/AS	5
	Other	6
Average Age	48.2	49.5

Richland also relies on a strong pool of adjunct faculty, many of whom have devoted many years to the College and its students. In FY 07, 146 adjunct faculty were employed, a typical number in any fall or spring semester. The following is an analysis of adjunct faculty at the College:

Average Age		49.5
Average Length of Service		
Gender Distribution	Male	64
	Female	82

Education Level	Doctorate	4
	Professional degree	5
	MA/MS/MFA	64
	BA/BS	46
	AA/AS	6
	Other	21

Critical and distinctive facilities, equipment, and technologies and regulatory environment

Facilities and College sites include the following:

- ❖ Main campus--one main building (154,071 square feet) and a shared building for the horticulture program and College maintenance (12,000 square feet), located on the southwest edge of 117 acres on the northeast side of Decatur. Since the permanent campus opened in Fall 1988, construction has added new classrooms, labs, and office facilities to meet student and District needs. The main campus includes a fully functional surgical technology lab, 6-bed hospital room simulation, a Human Patient Simulator Lab with an adult and pediatric simulator, 2 greenhouses, integrated robotics, HVARC, electronics and drafting and design labs, 44 general classrooms (including 32 “smart” classrooms equipped with audiovisual equipment), and 25 computer and 8 science labs. The Culinary Arts Institute opened in August 2008 to accommodate the new

Culinary Arts degree and certificate programs. A 325-seat auditorium is located in the Shilling Community Education Center along with a banquet room for 300, conference rooms, and several classrooms available for students and for rental by community groups. Opened in April 2009, the Adele P. Glenn Academy for Early Childhood Education offers pre-kindergarten training; it joins the Child Development Center for care for children of students, Richland employees, and District citizens.

- ❖ Also located on the campus is a building with rental office space for the Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District. Construction of Richland's Center for Sustainability and Innovation began in fall 2008. This facility, the first "green" building in Macon County, is designed to showcase sustainable environmental practices and to serve as a center for community activities. The Center will open in Summer 2009, and the University of Illinois Extension Office will relocate to share that facility with the College.
- ❖ Clinton Extension Center is located in Clinton High School, about 20 miles north of Decatur, with a computer lab, classroom, and office space for the College Extension Office. Clinton, the second largest community in the District, has had an extension site since 1980.
- ❖ The RCC Hope Academy Center opened in Fall 2005 at the Decatur school District's Hope Academy. The Hope Academy Center offers admissions advising and other services. Credit and non-credit courses are also offered at this location, which has a computer lab and two classrooms.
- ❖ The Fairview Park Plaza Center opened in January 2009. Credit classes and non-credit workshops are offered, as well as general College admissions services.
- ❖ Fire Science Training Center and separate "burn building"—collaboration with local fire departments for off-site training in two communities.
- ❖ Project Read—community literacy initiative directed by the College's Adult Education Program, located at the Decatur Public Library.
- ❖ Other classes, both credit and non-credit, are scheduled in churches, high schools, and libraries to increase access by District citizens.

The following programs are accredited by national agencies: Surgical Technology, Radiography, Practical Nursing, Associate Degree in Nursing, Automotive Technology, Emergency Medical Technician, and Medical Transcription.

Competition

As Richland looks for ways to expand its services and programs, the staff are constantly looking not only at District needs but also at what entities would vie for the same shrinking population. Several competitors have surfaced in this examination. Consistently, public and private four-year colleges and universities draw students to get the "real" college experience with residence life, sports, and other extracurricular activities. Other local technical training agencies offer competition for occupational training and certificates. Sometimes displaced workers are sent to these agencies through the local Workforce Investment Solutions (WIS); the local WIS sometimes perceives that other entities are able to respond more quickly than Richland to training needs. On-line universities also are drawing students, although the number of actual attendees is difficult to track. This option will only increase in popularity in the future; however, not all students have the technical skills to maneuver on-line, nor does everyone have the hardware to handle some of the more sophisticated software. An increase in the number of high school Advanced Placement (AP) courses, where students may test for college credit, may reduce the population available for dual credit and credit in escrow courses on campus. Financial competition is enhanced by the change in economics. Individual and corporate donations to Richland will be affected by the national economy, but District residents and businesses historically have been generous with their donations.

Key opportunities and vulnerabilities

Often the opportunities and vulnerabilities are tied together. Although Decatur, the major urban center in the District, is the home of Archer Daniels Midland Co. and Tate and Lyle, two international food processing plants, the perception is that Decatur has been for generations a blue collar community. Until the early 1990s international companies including Caterpillar, Bridgestone/ Firestone, ADM, and Tate & Lyle were prime employers of high school graduates who did not choose college immediately after graduation. However, since then, the area has lost manufacturing jobs in many companies due to downsizing, the closure of major employers, and increased technological efficiency that does not require the same number of workers. In fact, perception is one of the area's biggest vulnerabilities. People in the District do not often see the career opportunities available; the perception is, "If we don't have factory jobs, we don't have employment." With the recent economic trends and layoffs at the major manufacturing plants, people are realizing that their basic skills will not be enough for the technical jobs that remain.

Other challenges affect planning at Richland. The District faces a declining birthrate and an egress of people due to job losses. For those who stay, maintaining state-of-the-art training facilities and equipment is critical. The College also faces competition for dual credit students, limited alternative scheduling opportunities (weekend college, accelerated courses, late-start courses, hybrid online/on-ground classes), tying the educational cycle to the traditional semester, and the high drop out rate, particularly of African American males (57%), in the Decatur public schools, the largest K-12 feeder to Richland. The College also faces decreased funding through property taxes and state funding, thereby reducing faculty and staff development opportunities and affecting staff morale. Educationally, Richland cannot rest on past successes; the College community must strive to maintain the positive attitude that has been a trademark of the College and one of the "selling points" in hiring new faculty and staff.

Opportunities, though, may also be found in these challenges. The number of new faculty has given the College new ideas. The low tuition rate makes Richland attractive in a time of economic stress for citizens choosing colleges for their children and for themselves. The high caliber of instruction, small classes, and student support often make Richland more attractive than larger institutions. Richland strengthens existing partnerships and continues to build new collaborations with agencies in the District, focusing on health professions and biofuels. Finally, the College's opportunities to change and grow through the established decision-making system, the Continuous Improvement Process, and AQIP will allow the staff and faculty to examine and adjust as needed to make Richland more attractive to District citizens, regardless of their needs.