

Criterion 5: Leading and Communicating
Core Values: Respect and Accountability
Strategic Plan Goal 3: Advance, Strengthen, and Enhance College Operations

5C1 Leadership and communication systems

Richland Community College follows a “traditional” organizational model with 3 vice presidents, deans and directors, with the President reporting to the Richland Board of Trustees. Chart 5C1 shows the committee, responsibility, and reporting model adopted by the Board of Trustees in Fall 2003 and implemented in January 2004. Monthly Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public, and follow-up press releases are sent to the College community and to local media.

RCC faculty and staff learn about College activities and the planning and implementation of the College vision, mission, and Strategic Plan through a number of systems and mechanisms:

COMMUNICATION METHOD & FREQUENCY	INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESSIBLE BY
Strategic Plan (3-year)	Staff and faculty—printed copies, website
Strategic Plan Priorities (annual)	Staff and faculty—printed copies, website
Annual Report to Community	Anyone—printed copies, website
Intranet (Q Drive)	Staff and faculty
Broadcast e-mail (as needed)	Staff and faculty, including off-campus access by employees through Internet
CampusVision (Television monitors with campus announcements, local weather, and national news)	Anyone on campus—8 monitors
Richland Website	Anyone with Internet access
Institutional Data Book & High School Follow-up Report (annual)	Staff and faculty—printed copies, Intranet, Internet
College Archives (historical records, including grant applications, news articles, minutes, and other documents)	Employees, students, community—Located in the Learning Resources Center
Board of Trustees Updates	Weekly to Board members from President
College Spotlight (monthly)	Board of Trustees and attendees—Presentation by College personnel highlighting a recent event or program
All-College Meetings & Convocation	College community—held in August and January and on Professional Development Days
Press releases	Anyone—posted on broadcast e-mail and sent to local media
Committee Meetings	College community—agendas posted on Intranet, in staff lounges and in Archives
Division Meetings	Division employees, full- and part-time
VP Team Presentations by Area Supervisors (information on programs and services)	Deans and VPs
Angel (Learning Management System)	Faculty and students in class—Communication of course information and discussion
my.richland (online portal) (online in April 2009)	Students and employees. Will have capability of establishing groups for stakeholder communication and for target e-mails to students.

College Catalog (annual)	Anyone. Print and online.
<i>I-Mail</i> (monthly)	College community.
Reports from the President	College community and District residents. Print and online as appropriate

Through the Strategic Plan, the Annual Report to the Community, REACH activities, and regular press releases to the media, RCC communicates activities and accomplishments to District residents and internal and external stakeholders. In addition, *I-Mail*, a monthly in-house publication with contributions by deans and directors, and broadcast e-mail offer regular information sources to employees, and divisions and individuals use this method to distribution information on a regular basis. Bulletin boards and CampusVision allow offices, clubs, and organizations to post information for a wider audience including students and visitors to the campus. The Richland website continues to undergo changes and to expand access to information and online forms for both the College community and to the public.

The Intranet system or “Q” drive allows offices to post forms or other materials that need to be accessed and reviewed without unnecessary duplication. For example, the *College Catalog* is posted and available to secretaries and administrative assistants to edit throughout the year rather than waiting until publication time to make textual changes. With a heightened focus on sustainability, more forms are available on the Q Drive to reduce paper and printing costs and to reduce the time spent in gathering these forms.

Two major reports published annually and presented to the Board of Trustees include important demographic and research information. The *Institutional Data Book*, available on the website and the Q drive and in hard copy, contains data collected on a variety of topics, including employee and student demographics, financial information, and division statistics. The *High School Follow-up Report* contains specific information about RCC enrollment of graduates from District high schools. These documents include comparative data that allow administration and staff to monitor trends and plan accordingly.

In addition, reports from Continuous Improvement Process Teams are available on the Q Drive for review and for use in planning and implementing new strategies. Work is being done to make these reports available on the website as well.

The Kitty Lindsay Learning Resources Center (LRC) also houses Richland’s archives, accessible by staff and students to conduct research on the College. The archives house copies of reports, news articles, and meeting minutes for reference, and a complete collection of class schedules and catalogs from the beginning of the College is frequently used for research into the development of the College. Wireless Internet access is available for students and faculty, and laptops may also be used in small meeting rooms in the LRC.

At the monthly Board meetings, a College Spotlight allows individuals and departments to highlight a special activity or accomplishment for the Board of Trustees; CIP Teams have also reported to the Board. The President’s Report, construction updates, Foundation reports, and other information offer information to the community through media presence.

Students also have access to a number of open computer kiosks in the Mueller Student Center to access e-mail, the Internet, and their academic information. The kiosks are available at any time that Richland is open, so community members have access on the weekends and times when classes are not in session.

5C2 Aligning practices and 5C3 Institutional values and expectations

Several projects have been completed in the last three years to emphasize the importance of the mission, vision, and core values.

The Board of Trustees adopted the *Tenets of Community College Trusteeship* in 1990 and reaffirmed the Tenets in 2007; in 2008, the Board amended the Tenets by adding “Creating a Culture of Sustainability.” Also the *Administrator’s Creed*, adopted in 1990 to establish a viewpoint, framework and tone from which the College’s leaders would lead, was reviewed in 2008; at that time, the Values and Tenets for Richland Community College Employees, utilizing the College’s Core Values, definitions, and affirmation statements, replaced the *Administrator’s Creed*. The core values, definitions, and affirmation statements were the results of guidance by a CIP team created in Fall 2002, and the College community was involved in town meetings at all stages of the process.

Richland’s mission, vision, and core values align with the Illinois Community College Board’s Illinois Promise as well as the guiding principles of other external agencies such as the Higher Learning Commission, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the League of Innovations.

A recent revision of the Personal Performance Plan, the annual performance appraisal instrument, incorporate the Strategic Plan, mission, vision, and core values as one component for individuals to report their successes and to determine professional plans for the coming year.

Community connections and collaborations are an expectation of administration and faculty at RCC. One of the full-time faculty tenure requirements is to evidence community service, and administrators are expected to participate in community activities as well. This commitment connects one of the goals of the Strategic Plan, **to enhance, strengthen, and advance collaborative relationships**, as well as one of the major recommendations of the Richland Educational Advisory Committee on Higher Education (REACH), an initiative explained in *3P3*.

5P1 Setting directions in alignment with mission, vision, and values

The Strategic Plan and annual Priorities are primary components in Richland’s planning. However, as in most college situations, planning also occurs in response to student surveys such as the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and Faces of the Future, recommendations by divisions, committees, taskforces, and advisory committees, and work conducted by Continuous Improvement Process teams. As part of being a responsive community college, the administration and staff monitor District and regional changes and trends that could affect enrollment and programs. Drivers from the community include recommendations from REACH, needs assessments related to potential program development and training needs, and economic changes in the District. With College personnel serving on Boards throughout the District and the state, information can be gathered and shared with administrators to assure that District needs are being met. Additional projects must still relate to the Strategic Plan, the vision and the mission. The College community through division meetings, all-College meetings and forums, and committee and taskforce meetings can be involved in all stages of planning.

5P2 Guiding institution in seeking opportunities and building and sustaining a learning environment

With the adoption of the new Vision in Fall 2003, Richland expanded its focus from the three more traditional components of education, workforce training, and partnerships to include economic development. Since then, several personnel changes occurred to emphasize this new component, and in Spring 2008 a new position was created, the Vice President of Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Solutions. This Vice President is responsible for coordinating business/industry training, continuing and professional education, and other initiatives as well as assuming responsibility for some of the industry-related Career and Technical Education programs. This additional executive position strengthens the leadership team and increases community connections, offering a new voice in seeking opportunities for partnerships, education, and training.

Involvement of stakeholders is a primary component in guiding the College. The President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors discuss opportunities in a number of venues, including regular staff and division meetings, and the President's Cabinet explores potential College initiatives. Quarterly faculty/administrator meetings include discussion of academic issues to support teaching and learning. Student/administrator lunches each semester offer students the opportunity to learn about College plans and to share club and organization concerns; these meetings are chaired by the Student Trustee and the President of the Student Senate. Connection to the Strategic Plan and budget support are critical in approving new projects, and short-term and long-term effects on student learning and faculty instruction are also key issues. The College leadership's open door policy promotes sharing and evaluation of prospective projects, using data to make final decisions for implementation.

With participation in local, regional, and state academic organizations, administrators are also able to bring to Richland potential partnership opportunities as well as contribute in leadership roles in these organizations. For example, a dean is the current president of the IL Consortium of Community College Administrators, another dean is on a State Taskforce for Continuing and Professional Education, and the President will serve in two years as the Chairperson of the Community College Presidents' Council.

Using the sustainability principles of people, environment, and economics, the Board of Trustees and administrators are mindful of the need to be fiscally and socially responsible for sustaining growth and supporting the needs of employees and citizens of the District.

5P3 Making and implementing decisions through teams, task forces, groups, or committees

With the adoption of a new committee and participatory decision-making system in January 2004, the College has adjusted its paradigms for decisions. The key component continues to be involving stakeholders as much as possible in the process, which means that students are involved in planning and consideration. While sometimes perceived as slow, using consensus to reach decisions allows for greater understanding and participation; voting "yes" or "no" does not promote buy-in by all parties.

Decisions at the committee or taskforce level may be implemented by the group or may need to move to another set of stakeholders for approval. Stakeholders within divisions also make and

implement decisions that impact their areas only by conferring with the Dean and/or Vice President; if these issues involve other areas of the College, stakeholders are also included in the process. For example, meetings of counselors and deans occur prior to the creation of class schedules to share student needs for courses on particular days or times or interest in a new course delivery format.

Current Board of Trustees policies are another guiding factor for decision-making at all levels. A flow chart outlining the steps for policy approval is posted on the College Intranet system. Stakeholders such as the Registrar may recommend policy changes or deletions as internal, state or federal guidelines change. Any policy changes or new policies move through appropriate committees and then through the Policy and Communications Committee and finally through the Institutional Effectiveness Group before going to the Board of Trustees for adoption after three readings. An announcement is then made through one of the communication venues, and the Board Policy Manual available on the College website is updated. Again, this process ensures that stakeholders are aware of recommendations and decisions, with input possibilities at various stages.

5P4 Using information and results in the decision-making process

With the emphasis on continuous improvement and quantitative and qualitative support for decision-making, recommendations generally are accompanied by pertinent information in order for the appropriate stakeholder group to make an informed decision. Program creation or changes that go through the Academic Standards Committee, for example, are generally supported by needs assessment information, a trend analysis, and information from appropriate advisory committees. These changes have also been reviewed by the Deans to determine any impact on other courses or programs. Information from the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey or from the Graduation Survey may be used to initiate discussions on areas related to advising and counseling or admissions and records. The *Institutional Data Book*, the Environmental Scan, and reports submitted to the Illinois Community College Board are also used as support for any decisions that are made. CIP Teams are expected to have researched best practices, budget and personnel implications, and long-term impact in order to make recommendations. This research is incorporated into the team’s written and oral reports and is available for others employees to review.

5P5 Communication between and among institutional levels

In general, communications work through the College in the following ways:

	Down	Up	Two-Way
Board of Trustees’ Communications	√		
All-College Meetings & Convocation	√		
Annual Report of the President	√		
Broadcast E-mail			√
Alumni & Friends Newsletter	√		
Student Senate Report to Board of Trustees		√	
Committee Minutes			√
Committee Policy Recommendations			√
Advisory Boards			√
Faculty Forums			√
Faculty/Administration Committee			√

Student/Administrator Luncheon		√	√
Division Meetings	√	√	√
Committee & Taskforce Meetings		√	√
Institutional Effectiveness Group	√	√	√
Vice Presidents' Teams Meetings		√	√
College Website	√		
<i>I-Mail</i>			√

According to the most recent Employee Survey, limited or inconsistent communication is still a primary concern for all Richland employees. Two CIP teams made recommendations regarding improving communications, and some of these have been instituted, including broadcast of minutes and agendas of committee and taskforce meetings and increased distribution of information about honors and awards of individual employees. *I-Mail* has also been received favorably since this venue is used to announce upcoming events as well as results of events in the previous month. In general, communication opportunities have increased, but the College will continue to work in this area.

5P6 Communicating mission, vision, values, and high performance expectations

The focus on Richland’s mission, vision, and core values permeates both internal and external publications and communications. At the beginning of each monthly Board of Trustees’ meetings, for example, the Board Chair reads the vision, mission, and Core Values. The core values are visible at the main entrance of the College, and displays with the core values and their definitions are posted at each entrance. College publications, both internal and external, include the core values, including course syllabi. The President includes the core values in her Convocation presentations, and the Spring 2009 Convocation included skits on how the core values connect to everyday actions at the College. Employees see the emphasis on performance expectations in the Faculty and Adjunct Faculty of the Year Awards, recognition of length of service, receptions and other recognition for retirees, Employee Appreciation Awards (based on the Core Values), and recognition of the receipt of external awards.

At the annual Student Awards and Recognition Program, student clubs and organizations are recognized for their commitment to the Core Values through their involvement in community service projects; club advisors also receive awards for promoting co-curricular activities. Students select an Advisor of the Year, who receives a stipend from the Richland Foundation, and a Core Values Award is presented to a student who exemplifies the Core Values.

In addition, the movement to AQIP and the continuous improvement model reinforces the College’s shift in thinking in the last few years. With monies spent previously on a training consultant and the ongoing Continuous Improvement Process training for new employees, the College has made a commitment to this change and attempts to incorporate the philosophy of stakeholder involvement in decision-making and implementation at the lowest possible level in all of its work.

The College recognizes the need to assure that the core values are practiced in daily activities. At the Institutional Effectiveness Group meetings, for example, members are asked to share activities that support the Core Values in action. As professional development activities are planned, the vision, mission, and core values are used to ensure that professional development activities meet Richland’s high academic expectations.

Community involvement continues to be a part of faculty tenure requirements, and staff and administrators are encouraged to participate in activities during the work day if schedules permit. Community involvement is also a component of performance appraisals for all employees.

5P7 Encouraging, developing and strengthening leadership abilities

Through Richland's history, examples of leaders developed from within the institution are apparent. In recent reorganizations, individuals moved into other positions based on their talents and on the changing requirements for the jobs. Employees are encouraged to continue their education and training to be eligible to apply for supervisory positions or for positions in other divisions. The Richland Foundation supports this effort by paying part of the tuition for an employee working on a bachelor's degree. Flexing a work schedule is also possible so that an individual can take a credit course during the normal working day.

Richland leaders and Board members are proud to talk about the College's mission and vision to prospective and current employees, to District citizens, and to other more far-reaching audiences. The New Employee Orientation includes a discussion of all of these items, and constant institutional reminders include printed materials, website information, and reference at various meetings. When the current president was hired in 2001, the Search Committee included information about the recent adoption of AQIP, and the previous president was retained for one semester on a consulting basis. Included in the search process for other positions is information about core values and the vision of the College.

Professional development workshops and training are offered regularly, and supervisors encourage staff to participate. Fourth Friday Supervisors meetings, established in Spring 2007, offer supervisors training in common areas such as harassment, performance appraisal, and strategic planning. This is also an opportunity to discuss upcoming events and plan collaborative activities. Even though these could be viewed as "another meeting," supervisors have expressed appreciation for this new opportunity. Participation in off-campus workshops and conferences is also encouraged when funds are available, and faculty and staff are expected to share their experiences when they return. Richland has sent participants to the local Decatur Leadership Institute for the last 12 years, and Deans have participated in the Chair Academy as well. When conference content would benefit from a team of participants, efforts are made to include faculty and administrators, who then bring ideas back to the College. This approach has been used for the Continuous Quality Improvement Network's Summer Institute, the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Meeting, AQIP Strategy Forums and other training.

The Human Resources Office, the Deans, and the Vice Presidents continually review topics to meet training needs. In addition, as retirements and job changes cause the loss of long-time employees, greater attention is being paid to how to replace these individuals with qualified faculty and staff who will also embrace continuous improvement concepts.

5P8 Leadership succession plans

While Richland has no "formal" succession plans in place, the College's history shows that employees are encouraged to apply for positions when their credentials meet application requirements and that they are considered in reorganization plans. Many adjunct faculty have been hired as full-time faculty throughout the history of the College, and Richland graduates have also been hired as full-time faculty and staff.

5P9 Measures of leading and communicating

Annual performance appraisals occur for every non-faculty employee of the College, including the review of the President by the Board of Trustees. As described in 4P6, the Personal Performance Plan includes achievements for the previous year and goals for the coming year.

The faculty appraisal process depends on whether the faculty member has been granted tenure. Non-tenured faculty follow a three-year structured process monitored by a Tenure Committee including faculty in the discipline and from another division, classroom visits by the Dean and members of the Tenure Committee, and a portfolio of work. For tenured faculty, classroom visits and a meeting with the Dean along with a self-evaluation are a part of their process.

In addition, items on the Employee Survey relate to leadership and communications issues.

5R1 Results for leading and communicating processes and systems

The committee structure and representation of stakeholders for decision-making has received positive feedback. Annually, committees and taskforces review the charges and stakeholder membership to assure representation, and adjustments are made to meet organizational changes.

As at many other institutions, communication continues to be an opportunity for growth. In the most recent Employee Survey, for example, 74% of respondents indicated that “Two-way communication in divisions/departments is maintained” very often,” “often,” or “sometimes,” but only 62% indicated that “Two-way communication between divisions/departments is maintained” “very often,” “often,” or “sometimes.” These questions will be repeated on the next survey to determine if the increased supervisor training and communications tools have impacted employee perception.

Increased access to the Intranet has allowed divisions to post procedural information and committees and taskforces to post minutes and agendas. As a part of the next Employee Survey, information will be gathered about individuals’ access of this information. The Employee Relations and Development Committee and the Policy and Communications Committee also are continuing their work to implement recommendations by the CIP Team on communications and recognition.

Through REACH, the District public engagement endeavor conducted November through July 2004 and ongoing at Board of Trustees meetings throughout the District, participants indicated satisfaction with communication of RCC’s programs and services, although more can always be done.

5R2 Comparing results

Historically, this type of information has not been available for comparison with other cohort community colleges in the state. While Richland does compare data on topics like tuition, enrollment, and faculty and staff salaries, communication efforts are more difficult to compare. With the increase in communication among AQIP institutions in Illinois, communication strategies will be one of the topics of conversation.

5I1 Improving current processes and systems for leading and communicating

Improvement to processes and systems for leading and communicating will continue to be explored and implemented. With the President's Breakfasts in their second cycle, questions have been developed to ask at each breakfast. Responses will be compiled to determine trends and challenges discussed. With the new portal and changes to the Richland website, administrators are determining what to include in order to facilitate two-way communication between employees and the District.

In addition, the marketing director continues to examine the methods for gathering information for media press releases and appearances of College employees at various meetings and venues. The Marketing Director is also looking at how information is communicated to the District's residents, and changes in the class schedules and in the RCC website will assist in improving communication.

Training for new committee and taskforce members will continue in order to assure that all stakeholders understand the processes for introducing possible policy changes and additions.

In addition, the flow of communication is being monitored to see if all employees have access to the same general information, even if they choose not to access it. The Employee Relations and Development Committee and the Policy and Communications Committee are examining their roles in communication of information.

5I2 Setting targets and improvement priorities and communicating results

College administrators, division heads, and the Institutional Effectiveness Group will use recommendations from CIP Teams, from committees and taskforces, and from other initiatives to establish priorities for the next year of the College's Strategic Plan. Targets for communications improvement will be incorporated into Goals 2 and 3, to **enhance, strengthen and advance collaborative relationships and College operations**. Some of the areas already targeted include

- ❖ Increasing the submission of information to *I-Mail*, the monthly internal newsletter
- ❖ Increasing training workshops related to leadership issues
- ❖ Maintaining the 80% participation in CIP training by new employees
- ❖ Continuing the publication of the Annual Reports from the President
- ❖ Maintaining the visibility of Richland in the media through press releases and feature stories

With the emphasis on data collection and assessment of results, RCC hopes to improve its reaction to issues and concerns determined from surveys, town meetings, focus groups, committee and taskforce meetings, and other venues. Communication will continue to be a central focus of the Strategic Plan and other initiatives at the College.