

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

**2C1 Explicit institutional objectives**

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

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

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

In the development of the Strategic Plan in 2003, the Strategic Planning Taskforce also worked in collaboration with the Board of Trustees to create a new vision for the College. This vision was adopted in 2003, along with the Core Values of *commitment, respect, excellence, accountability, and diversity*. The vision statement is *to be the premier source for education, workforce training, partnerships, and economic development*.

In 2009, the Board of Trustees adopted a new mission statement: *To offer innovative educational experiences, opportunities, and environments that enable individuals, communities, and the region to grow, thrive, and prosper*.

While education, workforce training, and partnerships are typical components of the work of any community college, Richland has expanded its vision and enhanced its mission with the incorporation of economic development. The mission statement and the vision both emphasize growth in the District, and Richland has taken significant steps in the last few years to connect with key partners in economic development.

The most significant recent event to promote economic development not only in the Richland District but throughout Central Illinois has been the partnership among government, businesses, and Richland to bring the Farm Progress Show to Richland’s campus with a permanent venue, rather than a traveling show. This event, which occurs every other year, showcases agriculture, research, and agribusiness industries on a national scale. The idea for a permanent location was generated by two local businessmen who knew that Richland should be a key partner. As that idea was “pitched” to local and state government officials as well as national agriculture businesses and universities such as Purdue University and the University of Illinois, Richland administrators realized that this event could be an economic catalyst for the area, known as the

“crossroads of agriculture.” With the partnerships in place, the Decatur community and Richland were notified in September 2004 that the Farm Progress Show would come to Decatur beginning in 2005. The results of this partnership are outlined later in the Portfolio.

In addition to the Farm Progress Show, Richland has made internal changes to increase emphasis on the economic development portion of the vision. In 2008, the College created and filled a new position, the Vice President of Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Solutions. This Vice President oversees the Continuing and Professional Education Division (business and industry training and the Engineering Technologies, Drafting and Design Engineering, and Welding Technologies academic programs), the Business and Technology Division (business, accounting, office technology, information technology, horticulture, and culinary arts), Partners in Education, and the Perkins Program. The Vice President works with his staff to create and promote partnerships that “grow” the District and emphasize the education needed for a strong workforce.

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

The College’s Organizational Chart 2C3 shows students in the center of the plan, and this philosophy is integral in the work done by the College. Collaborative relationships and institutional operations have at their heart connections to the primary mission of student learning. Fiscal decisions are based on their support of the educational mission, and the core of the continuous improvement training has been to examine processes that directly or indirectly support student success or employee development, both of which eventually lead to student success.

With a new vision and mission statement comes an additional emphasis on how student learning connects with the economic needs of the District—what training and education are required for students to gain employment and then stay in their communities, for current employers to expand the number of employees, and for businesses seeking a new home to come to the District and hire Richland graduates. New academic programs and non-credit courses have been developed to meet changes in employment and economic concerns in the District. For example, in 2008 a biofuels specialty was developed as an option for the Engineering Technology degree. Students may complete a Medical Transcription degree completely online. A CIP Team identified other degrees that could be offered totally online, and a CIP Team identified support services that online students may need; with the new student portal my.richland students will be able to access these services more easily than before.

Partnerships for training opportunities have also been significant. In 2008, Richland partnered with one of the District’s largest employers, Archer Daniels Midland Corp., and Workforce Investment Solutions to establish a Workforce Readiness Program, where 20 individuals received training through Richland and were mentored by ADM employees. All 20 individuals completed the program and were interviewed for positions at ADM. While not all 20 were employed by ADM, 16 of the 20 are either employed or continued academic coursework at Richland.

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

The Strategic Plan was developed by a Taskforce of stakeholders representing a cross section of the College. The three goals and supporting strategies outlined in 8C2 were developed as the results of external and internal scans, focus groups, demographic research, and examination of

previously created plans and reports. Stakeholders from throughout the College, including the Board of Trustees, were included in developing the Plan. With the creation of annual priorities based on the Strategic Plan, stakeholders continue to offer direction for the College to direct the mission and to reach the mission.

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

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

Since that initial process, Board of Trustees meetings held in District communities once or twice a year are preceded by presentations on the results of REACH and conversations about how the College can serve those particular communities. Some suggestions have received immediate response, such as scheduling dual credit classes or sending counselors to campus, and others have been integrated into the Strategic Plan, such as establishing community liaisons for outlying communities.

## **2P2 Communicating expectations**

Richland connects with its District communities in a number of ways to learn with what initiatives the College can assist. Through representation on the local Chambers of Commerce and the Local Workforce Investment Board, meetings with K-12 administrators, and meetings with local businesses, the College exchanges ideas and creates partnership plans. In addition, external communications options include the College website, press releases and feature stories in the local media, and Annual Reports to the District. One new external publication is a quarterly Alumni Newsletter, established to enhance connections with Richland graduates.

Internal communications are also important; formats include broadcast e-mails, posted minutes for College committees and taskforces, and information at All-College meetings and division meetings. Deans and supervisors outline expectations in meetings, and divisions support the Strategic Plan through work plans and regular reports to their Vice Presidents.

Participation in community activities is included in the tenure process, and non-teaching faculty may include participation as a part of their Personal Performance Plan. The PPP has been revised so that employees clearly connect their essential functions to the Strategic Plan and the Core Values. College employees also are encouraged to participate in community activities such as the Race for the Cure, American Cancer Society Relay for Life (held on the Richland

campus), Decatur Celebration, and the United Way campaign. Membership on boards for non-profit organizations and service clubs is also encouraged.

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

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

### **2P4 Assessing & reviewing objectives**

Stakeholders throughout the College are involved in assessing and reviewing objectives. Regular Strategic Plan reports to the Board of Trustees and to the College community include progress made and goals achieved. The Institutional Effectiveness Group receives regular committee and taskforce reports to learn about progress on internal initiatives. Staff meetings such as the Vice Presidents’ Teams offer regular venues on progress in academic and support areas and encourage discussion on cross-divisional initiatives. The Quality Council receives regular updates on the progress of Continuous Improvement Process Teams, and each team “reports out” at the end of its project with research and recommendations. Approved recommendations are piloted and/or implemented, with results tracked and reported by the institutional manager for integration into the appropriate College divisions. Information is also disseminated through division meetings, *I-Mail*, broadcast e-mails, or other appropriate venues. In the fall, the IEG, Quality Council, and other stakeholders meet to review Action Projects and determine what new projects should be implemented through CIP teams. The Board of Trustees meets in a retreat setting three times per year to discuss institutional issues, to offer suggestions on the Strategic Plan, and to conduct visioning exercises for the future.

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

Measuring the “success” of the vision and mission is done through a variety of ways:

- ❖ Number of local, state, and federal grant applications submitted
- ❖ Number of training sessions held on and off campus and the number of participants in these events
- ❖ Number of events held at Progress City (the location of the Farm Progress Shows)
- ❖ Contributions to scholarships and establishment of endowments to the RCC Foundation (external contributions)
- ❖ Number of presentations to off-campus organizations by College staff
- ❖ Utilization of off-campus sites

In addition, in 2007 Richland participated in a study conducted by Northern Illinois University’s Center for Governmental Studies and sponsored by the Illinois Community College Board to examine the economic impact of Illinois community colleges. This study utilized employment

information to show the contributions of Illinois community colleges to the vitality of their regions and the state; a segment of this study specifically analyzed Richland's contribution to the local and state economy. This study shows that in 2005 68.4% of all working students who had attended Richland over the past 10 years were employed within the area served by the District. Another measure was of student-generated tax revenues. Between 1996 and 2005 over \$120 million in federal tax dollars was generated by students who attended Richland Community College in 1995.

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

The Farm Progress Show has had a clear impact on the local region, and Richland has benefitted through its strong presence at the Show. With local, regional, and state partners, both public and private, Richland has increased partner opportunities with the University of Illinois, the University of Illinois Extension, and Purdue University.

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

- The Decatur Area Education Coalition, focusing on kindergarten readiness, student achievement, and young scholars and workers.
- Three Workforce Readiness Programs based on the ADM model.
- Off-campus Center at a shopping mall; offering a full range of non-credit and credit programs.

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

- Increase in the number of scholarships awarded to RCC students by Foundation
- Increased communication with local and state legislators
- Increased positive media exposure of activities occurring at the College
- Renewal of partnerships with area hospitals and clinics for 21 clinical sites for health professions students
- \$11.8 million pledged to the Richland Foundation "Investing in Our Future" Campaign.
- Offered the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Walking the Walk of Diversity Conference, with business and education participants from 5 states
- Opening the Fairview Park Plaza Center at the invitation of the shopping center owner
- Partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Office to move to Richland's campus in the Center for Sustainability and Innovation

New "friends" join the other relationships with Project READ, Partners in Education, the local Chambers of Commerce, and many others to strengthen the District and impact its citizens.

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

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

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

With a 38-year history in Central Illinois, RCC has contributed much to the lives of District citizens. A 2005 referendum for the College passed with a 69% of the votes, in a time when the

District was recovering from the loss of several major manufacturers. Citizens recognize the role of the College as a source of employment (the 5<sup>th</sup> largest non-manufacturing employer), a source of affordable education, and a partner in the advancement of the economic development of Central Illinois.

**211 Improving systems and processes for accomplishing other distinctive objectives**

As a major part of the Strategic Plan, collaborative relationships continue to be a focus of the College. The budgeting process includes extensive conversations on spending College dollars to impact the community. Student surveys and focus groups are planned for their input in academic support needs. Surveys of non-credit enrollees ask about other topics for courses and workshops. A summary of REACH ideas from Board of Trustees meetings is reviewed regularly.

Employee training is being conducted for a new Richland Ambassador program, which will include a tracking system for follow-up of contacts in the communities served by the College.

The College constantly monitors monies spent on partnerships to determine which to sustain, to increase, or to dissolve.

**212 Setting targets and priorities and communicating results and priorities**

The College will continue its pattern of strategic planning and priorities setting in order to focus on projects that support the mission and vision. The Vice President of Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Solutions will be a key driver in this planning based on data he and his staff collect throughout the year.

Additionally, the College will explore expanding partnerships through the Farm Progress Shows and determine additional training to be offered with the partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Service soon to be housed on the Richland campus in the Center for Sustainability and Innovation. The District continues to drive College partnerships.

Results will be shared through regular reporting mechanisms outlined in other parts of the Systems Portfolio to internal and external stakeholders.