

Criterion 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs
Core Values: Commitment, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Diversity
Strategic Plan Goals 1 & 2: Enhance, Strengthen, and Advance Teaching and Learning
and Collaborative Relationships

3C1 Key students and stakeholders groups and short and long-term requirements and expectations

RCC supports several internal and external stakeholder groups through its mission and vision:

Key Groups	Short-Term	Long-Term
Board of Trustees	Timely information and communications Fiscal responsibility Retreats for planning and communicating	Fiscal accountability Academic Excellence Programmatic reviews/ modifications Positive College image--District and state Appropriate services & opportunities for students
RCC Foundation	Timely information and communications	Positive College image in the District and state Fiscal responsibility Academic excellence
Businesses & Industry Employers	Response to training needs of incumbent employees Qualified new employees	Qualified workers Monitoring economic development
Transfer Institutions	Articulation of courses and programs Education-ready students	Articulation of courses and programs Education-ready students
Collaborative Partners	Responsiveness to current needs	Long-term planning for growth in District and in Central Illinois
District Citizens	Fiscal accountability Commitment Quality, affordable educational opportunities	Fiscal accountability Commitment to long-term educational "health" of the District Quality, affordable educational opportunities
Students: Baccalaureate/ Transfer Career/Technical Dual Credit Non-credit Adult Education	Quality, affordable educational opportunities Appropriate training for current jobs Transferable courses/programs Developmental/transition courses to college-level work Adult education opportunities in various locations Community education opportunities in various locations Dual credit opportunities for high school students	Quality, affordable educational opportunities Appropriate training for current jobs Transferable courses and programs Developmental/transition courses to college-level work Adult education opportunities Lifelong learning for personal growth Strengthen relationships with K-12 Districts; increase opportunities to complete higher education in shortened time.

3P1 Identifying needs of student groups

RCC uses a variety of methods to identify student needs. Surveys are administered at various times in students' academic careers at the College, and these surveys offer students the opportunity to articulate their perceptions and preferences. Primary data gathering tools include

Instrument	Completed
The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory	Spring, even-numbered years
Faces of the Future Survey	Fall, even-numbered years
Graduation Survey	Annual
Course Evaluations (credit and non-credit)	End of every course
Satisfaction surveys in various student services offices, including orientation	Throughout the year
High School Inventory	Every two years to juniors
Admission Information Form	Admission to the College
RCC Help (online and phone help)	As needed

Student input is gathered through other venues, as well:

Type	Frequency
Student Senate meetings	weekly
Student Senate reports	Monthly to IEG
Input of students in participative College committee structure	Regular meetings
Student Senate/Administrative Lunches	Once a semester
Student Senate/Board of Trustees Breakfast	Once a year
Student Trustee input to Board of Trustees	Monthly
Student Senate minutes	Weekly (posted on bulletin board)
Student Focus Groups	As needed based on identified issue
Underrepresented Groups Report	Annual
Diversity Climate Surveys	Every two years
Food Service Menu Tasting	Annual

College departments and stakeholders review the information in order to plan campus life activities, address student services issues, and monitor faculty issues. Deans receive summaries of course evaluations, and all information is shared with the appropriate Vice President.

In addition, the *2007 Environment Scan*, the *Institutional Data Book*, and a demographic study of the District by zip code that examines population, education, and economics are available for staff to examine trends. Reports from external agencies help RCC staff track employment, workforce, and demographic trends, and enrollment trends in the K-12 Districts are used to determine potential enrollment by high school students in dual credit and high school graduates in RCC courses. The advisory groups for the Occupational programs also assist in monitoring training needs for current jobs and potential changes in business and industry.

3P2 Building and maintaining relationships with students

RCC faculty and staff strive to maintain strong relationships with current and prospective students. Opportunities for contact may be as informal as having lunch in the cafeteria or talking in the library or Mueller Student Center to as formal as attendance at meetings or student and staff forums held throughout the year. The common student area and cafeteria also promote additional opportunities for informal gatherings and increased communications among faculty, students, and staff. Opportunities for interaction include

- Student Clubs and organizations with faculty/staff advisor
- Student Club Days and Service Fairs held on campus each semester
- Student-Administrators Luncheon (representatives from clubs and organizations meet each semester with administrators)
- Student membership on Academic Standards Committee and Policy and Communications Committee
- Faculty advising
- Faculty and student interaction in and out of class
- Student Mentor Ambassadors, recommended by faculty and staff, who participate in a number of student activities
- Social gatherings, including the Spring Pancake Breakfast and the Fall Welcome Back Cookout
- Presence at Community activities such as the Decatur Celebration
- College Fair participation and regular visits to District high schools
- College 101, held in the spring for prospective students and parents
- Visits to District high schools by the Director of Admissions and Recruitment, staff, and faculty
- One-stop Student Services Center to facilitate obtaining services
- Monthly entertainers and novelty acts that provide an opportunity for fun interaction among students, faculty, and staff
- Multicultural and multiethnic programs and events such as the Cultural Fair, Kwanzaa, and the Black History Fair (all annual events)
- Health Professions Advisory Committee (student representation)

3P3 Identifying changing needs of key stakeholder groups and selecting a course of action

Richland continues to gather information on District concerns through REACH, an initiative begun in Fall 2003. The Board of Trustees approved a series of public meetings under the auspices of REACH—the Richland Educational Advisory Committee for Higher Education. This project enlisted the services of six volunteer Community Chairs and representatives from the College faculty and staff on a Facilitating Team to conduct information sessions and work activities on a variety of topics; these topics included serving diverse populations, job training and retraining, continuing education and partnerships, finances and funding, and the College's programs and services. The meetings were held from November 2003 through July 2004, and in August 2004 the Facilitating Team presented recommendations to the Board of Trustees for incorporation into the Strategic Plan for implementation. Since then, the Board of Trustees has held one or two Board meetings a year in District communities in the District and invited community/school district members to participate in a mini-REACH, with a presentation by College staff on meeting the recommendations from 2004 and then an opportunity for participants to ask questions and offer suggestions on how the College can meet the particular needs of that community. Since College stakeholders attend these Board meetings, they are

often able to respond with information on the spot or with follow-up correspondence. These meetings have been well-received in the communities.

Creating a long-term facilities plan also requires input from key internal and external stakeholders. Prior to the creation of the 2007 Facilities Master Plan, several focus groups met to discuss the physical vision of the College and potential educational and community needs. Faculty, staff, and community partners participated in the forums, and the *2007 Master Facilities Plan* reflects input from all groups.

In addition, the College uses other methods to identify potential needs of students and other stakeholders:

- Reports by local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Councils
- Reports from State and National agencies outlining career trends and economic issues
- Membership on various Boards throughout the District
- Attendance at and participation in forums conducted by community organizations such as the area Chambers of Commerce
- Program Needs Assessments

Career and Technical Education Advisory Committees are also integral in identifying needs for students and business and industry stakeholders. Advisory groups meet at least annually for the following disciplines:

Communication, Education, Humanities, and Fine Arts	Mathematics and Sciences	Health Professions	Business & Technology	CPED
Early Childhood Education	Criminal Justice	Emergency Med. Services	Automotive	Agriculture/Horticulture
Graphic Arts	Fire Science	Nurse Assistant	Business	Drafting
		RN-ADN and PN	Culinary Arts	Engineering Technology
		Radiography	HVACR	
		Surgical Technology	Information Technology	
		Pharmacy Technology	Office Technology	

The configuration of these advisory committees is also responsive to area needs, adding new members as needed to assure broad representation of large and small businesses.

3P4 Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders

Visibility is key for maintaining relationships with the citizens of the RCC District. With over 35 years of community connections, the faculty and staff work together to take the message of RCC into the District and beyond. The College community has connections with over 90 local organizations, either serving on Boards or volunteering in other capacities outside of work time. Through the Speakers’ Bureau, College representatives speak to local organizations on a variety of professional or leisure topics. Through REACH, the College has been able to gather ideas and

identify areas of concern to District residents. Contacts at area high schools include participation in College Fairs, regular visits by the Director of Admissions and Recruitment, and since 2004, attendance at high school awards ceremonies to present RCC scholarships from the Richland Foundation. The President has spoken at over 15 Awareness Gatherings in the last year, hosted by College friends who invite others who may or may not be familiar with the College. Organizations are also invited to hold meetings on campus, and College administrators and faculty conduct tours and present programs to those groups. College faculty, staff, and administrators continue to investigate methods to reach various populations in the District.

3P5 Determining new student and stakeholder groups' needs

Richland works constantly to recognize new student and stakeholder groups and their needs. Methods include needs assessments of area businesses and industries, focus groups, advisory committees, and collaboration with external groups such as the local Workforce Investment Board, Chambers of Commerce, and the Economic Development Council.

For students, Campus Life and Student Senate support the formation of clubs and organizations related to specific majors or other special interest groups. Students and faculty interested in new clubs must complete an application and receive approval from the Student Senate in order to be a recognized club and receive supporting funds from student activities fees. For example, a Culinary Arts Club was formed in Spring 2009 after establishment of the Culinary Arts Institute and the two-year Culinary Arts program. Currently, 25 clubs and organizations offer social and academic connections for students. Club advisors (volunteer faculty or staff) meet with the Director of Campus Life to determine co-curricular and service learning opportunities and to encourage collaboration to maximize resources.

3P6 Collecting and analyzing complaint information

Issues raised by students, employees, or groups are collected in a number of ways. Surveys including the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey and Faces of the Future show gaps in student satisfaction. Graduation surveys also offer information about student perceptions of programs and services. The Student Grievance Policy (Policy 4.15.3) includes both an informal and a formal process for grievances about academic concerns, accommodations, discrimination, financial aid suspension, FERPA, sexual harassment, conduct, employment and refunds; this information is available in the Student Handbook and the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. The process encourages addressing the issue at the lowest level possible. The Student Senate, representatives of clubs and organizations, and administrators meet each semester at a luncheon where concerns and ideas are shared, and a follow-up is presented either at a subsequent Student Senate meeting or at the next luncheon.

Concerns or grievances for staff are handled by the appropriate Dean or Supervisor, and a grievance process for full-time faculty is outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Human Resources Office also handles personnel complaints. The President's Cabinet discusses grievances and issues of a broader nature. Communications regarding actions occur through the appropriate venues to maintain confidentiality. If actions impact the entire institution, information is disseminated at the Institutional Effectiveness Group meetings held twice a month or through communications venues like broadcast e-mail, *I-Mail*, or memos from the President.

3P7 Determining student and other stakeholder satisfaction

Satisfaction is tracked through the Noel Levitz Surveys, Faces of the Future, All-College Surveys, and other surveying done by various committees, taskforces, and CIP Teams, many of which are identified in 3P1. Campus Life also works with the Program Board to assess the types of performers students might want for the next school year. Employee surveys and graduations surveys assist in tracking those who leave the institution, and reasons for withdrawal from the College are also tracked to determine any patterns causing students to withdraw.

3R1 Results for student satisfaction

According to the Faces of the Future Survey administered in 2007, students expressed overall satisfaction with RCC. Of the credit students, 80.6% were very satisfied to satisfied with RCC overall, an increase from 75% in the 2005 administration. For both administrations, less than 5% of the students were dissatisfied, with the remaining either neutral or leaving the item blank. Students also feel safe and secure on campus (4.11 average) and identify their academic experiences as positive (3.98 average), both with higher ratings than the national average. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory administered in 2007 offers more specific comparative information about importance and satisfaction. Two critical questions focus on satisfaction and expectations:

Noel Levitz	2007 Local/National	2004 Local/National
“So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?”	4.57/4.76	4.57/4.67
“Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.”	5.29/5.43	5.14/5.37

Noel Levitz	RCC Importance/Satisfaction	Satisfaction RCC/Other Institutions
Safety and Security	5.99/5.36	5.36/4.94
Student Centeredness	5.96/5.35	5.35/5.32
Campus Support Services	5.39/4.96	4.96/4.93
Campus Climate	5.95/5.26	5.26/5.25
Instructional Effectiveness	6.18/5.35	5.35/5.36

These results indicate that the College is close to or exceeds national figures; areas to continue to work on include *Campus Support Services* and *Instructional Effectiveness*.

Another gauge of student satisfaction can be seen in the number of students who have sought resolution through the resolution/grievance procedure, which has two options: formal and informal. Since Fall 2005, 29 students have chosen the formal appeal process, presenting their cases to a Judicial Board comprised of students, faculty and staff. The distribution of these cases by year appears in the following table:

Academic Year	No. of Formal Appeals
2005	10
2006	8
2007	8
2008	3

3R2 Results for building relationships with students

RCC has worked to establish a positive relationship with students, and these positive results are reflected in a number of surveys. Graduates are surveyed each year regarding their overall satisfaction with the College programs, staff, and services. These results are reported to the Illinois Community College Board annually and are included in the College's *Institutional Data Book*. The following information comes from the survey administered to graduates from 2007:

- ❖ Course Scheduling & Availability 74% Very Satisfied or Satisfied
- ❖ Quality of Academic Advising 63% Very Satisfied or Satisfied
- ❖ Comfortable facilities, conducive to learning 91% Very Satisfied or Satisfied
- ❖ Overall Academic Experience at Richland 89% Very Satisfied or Satisfied

Enrollment Services staff continues to investigate ways to increase the response rate for all surveys mailed to current or former students.

A report from the Illinois Community College Board included the following information on the percent of first-time full-time Richland students who graduated, transferred, or were will enrolled after 150% of program length:

Semester Enrolled	Fall 2001- Summer 2004	Fall 2002- Summer 2005	Fall 2003- Summer 2006	Fall 2004- Summer 2007	3-Yr. Average FA02-04
Number Entering Cohort	220	265	180	207	217
Number/% Graduated, Transferred, or Still Enrolled after 150% of Program Length	139/63.2%	181/68.3%	111/61.7%	130/62.8%	141/64.7%
Statewide Average	70.6%	71.1%	70.8%	70.3%	70.7%

Additional Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results may be found in 3R1.

Previous student survey results have led to the reorganization of Student Services, development of a series of workshops dealing with academic skills such as time management, research, and study skills, increased training for academic advisors and faculty advisors, and increased visibility in area high schools. A two-part customer service training, "Lighten UP!" Customer Service, has been presented at least twice a year; in 2005 it also received the third place Shared Journey Award from the National Council on Student Development.

3R3 Results for stakeholder satisfaction with performance

The results of a recent Employee Survey indicated that overall Richland's employees felt they are a part of a culture that promotes learning, offers a variety of courses and programs, has good facilities, and fulfills its mission. 81% of employees very strongly or strongly agree that they are "committed to helping students reach their academic goals." 71% of employees very strongly or strongly agreed that the College has a good reputation within the community and makes a valuable contribution to the local economy. Employees see the need to improve response time to creating programs and services and to capitalize on ways to improve teaching and learning. Attention to these two areas has increased through additional professional development activities, emphasis on faculty participation in advisory boards with community members, and training in technology for curriculum enhancement.

3R4 Results for building relationships with key stakeholders

In a Fall 2003 telephone survey of District residents, 89.6% recognized that Richland plays an important role in the community and was a “source of pride.” More than nine in ten (91.5%) respondents said that the phrase “provided quality education at an affordable cost to our community” is descriptive of the College.

The College has also maintained existing partnerships and built new collaborations. One prime example of the growth of support is the increase in donations to the Richland Foundation, including scholarship endowments. In 2003, for example, 40 scholarship funds were distributed to 199 students; in 2007, the number of funds had increased to 71, with 346 students benefitting. These increases were possible due to the positive perception of Richland.

3R5 Comparing results with other institutions

As explained in 3R1, Richland compares well with other institutions participating in the Faces of the Future study and in the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey. While the College is slightly below the national figures on overall satisfaction, the difference between 5.29 and 5.43 is minor. In the future, additional comparisons with other AQIP colleges and universities will be possible, particularly in creating cohorts both in Illinois and nation-wide.

3I1 Improving processes and systems for understanding needs of student/stakeholders

Two critical elements for improvement will be communication of intended projects and their results and collaboration by stakeholder groups and/or their representatives. With the implementation of AQIP and continuous improvement strategies, the College has experienced a change in attitude about sharing research across the College. More information is available on the College Intranet, including the *Institutional Data Book*, and the College Strategic Plan is now available on the College Website. Individuals may access all CIP Team reports in the Library Archives, and some reports are also available on the Intranet. In fact, the Archives houses a wide range of information to use in comparisons and reports and is accessible by all College faculty, staff, and administrators. The Institutional Effectiveness Group and the other committees and taskforces, as well as divisions throughout the College, continue to examine processes and systems as they consider topics for CIP Teams, Action Projects, and annual Priorities for the Strategic Plan.

In addition, the committee structure offers increased internal communication throughout the College. Minutes are available on the Intranet, and paper copies are also archived in the Adjunct Faculty Office, the Staff Lounge, and the Archives. All meetings are open, and agendas are posted several days before the meetings occur.

The Director of Campus Life is emphasizing student involvement in planning activities through the Program Board; information gathered here is shared with the Dean and others through the Director’s membership on the Institutional Effectiveness Group.

3I2 Setting targets and communicating results

Targets are set as a part of CIP Team recommendations, Strategic Plan goals, committee activities, and division work plans. In addition, the results of surveys conducted throughout the College serve as drivers for additional projects and identify baseline data.

Administrators review the Strategic Plan, the recommendations from the REACH public engagement initiative, and surveys to outline institutional tactics to support the Strategic Plan goals and subgoals. In addition, the Vice Presidents of SAS and Economic Development and Innovative Workforce Solutions and the academic deans will work on academic tactics, and the Institutional Effectiveness Group will set goals for committees and taskforces using CIP team recommendations and information from other external groups.

The College disseminates information on goals and tactics by broadcast e-mail, paper memos, Intranet postings, open committee and taskforce meetings with minutes also posted on the Intranet, All-College meetings, and division meetings. Externally, information is disseminated by presentations through the Speakers' Bureau to groups in the District, an Annual Report to the Community, and press releases through the Marketing Department. The Strategic Plan is also available on the College website.