Category Eight: Planning Continuous Improvement

Processes

8P1

The College is still in the beginning stages of developing its culture of continuous improvement. In the past, efforts were made at long-tem strategic planning. However, those efforts were never able to rise to the level of establishing an ongoing system of data-informed continuous improvement. Following the 1999 comprehensive HLC site visit, LCCC developed a planning document in 2002 entitled *Vision 2020*. It was briefly used to assist in setting organizational priorities. However, *Vision 2020* was intended to be a visioning document rather than a strategic plan. Subsequently, following LCCC's entry into the AQIP process, a team was formed to revisit the strategic plan. This team initially attempted to revise the *Vision 2020* document; however, this effort was suspended in favor of development of a new strategic plan. A new plan was ultimately developed, with input from the college community and external stakeholders, and adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2009.

As seen in Figure 8P1 on the following page, the new planning process began with the Board's Global Ends Statements and the mission and vision of the College. The College gathered internal and external data (including the *Wyoming Community College Commission Statewide Strategic Plan* [see Table 8P1] and feedback from stakeholders) about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and used that information to develop strategic directions and goals for 2010-2015. The Board identified preliminary progress report due dates for all goal statements. In early 2010, following an all-staff in-service training on planning, all College departments developed both objectives (i.e. operational plans) and budget requests for 2010-2011 in alignment the Strategic Plan. Now that the plan is in place, annual planning will be conducted during the fall semester (including a review of the previous year's plan[s]) and the budgeting process will follow in the spring. Finally, a process will be developed for annual review of progress toward achievement of area operational plans.
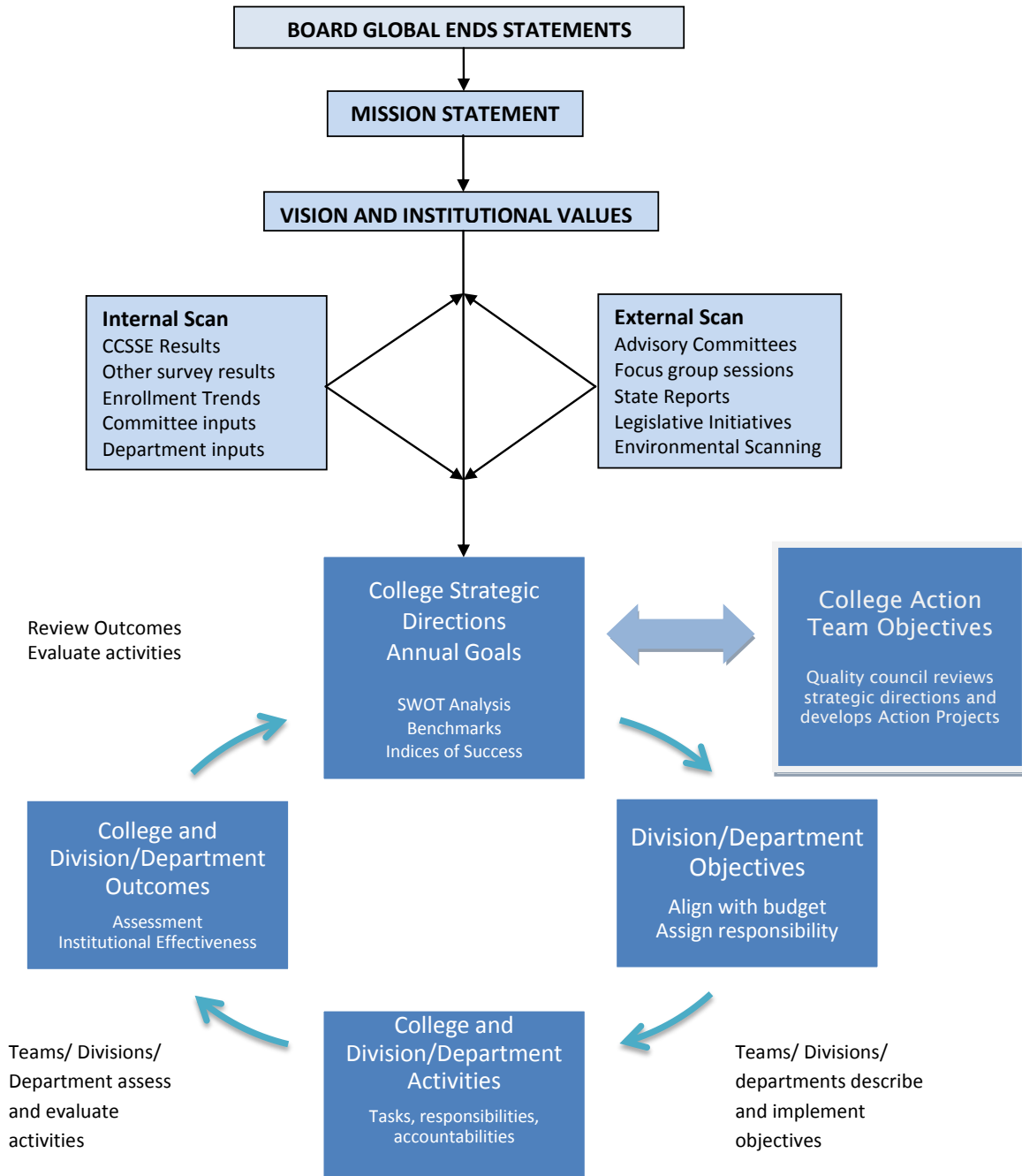
Figure 8P1: LCCC's Strategic Planning Model

BOARD GLOBAL ENDS STATEMENTS

MISSION STATEMENT

VISION AND INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

Internal Scan
CCSSE Results
Other survey results
Enrollment Trends
Committee inputs
Department inputs

External Scan
Advisory Committees
Focus group sessions
State Reports
Legislative Initiatives
Environmental Scanning

Review Outcomes
Evaluate activities

College Strategic
Directions
Annual Goals

SWOT Analysis
Benchmarks
Indices of Success

College Action
Team Objectives

Quality council reviews
strategic directions and
develops Action Projects

College and
Division/Department
Outcomes

Assessment
Institutional Effectiveness

Division/Department
Objectives

Align with budget
Assign responsibility

Teams/ Divisions/
Department assess
and evaluate
activities

College and
Division/Department
Activities

Tasks, responsibilities,
accountabilities

Teams/ Divisions/
departments describe
and implement
objectives

Table 8P1: Crosswalk of Wyoming Community College Commission Strategic Goals, LCCC Global Ends Statements, and LCCC Strategic Directions

WCCC Strategic Goals	LCCC Global Ends Statements	LCCC Strategic Directions
Student Access & Success	▪ Students achieve learning goals ▪ Student life enhances learning, civic development and sense of community	❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.1, 1.2, 1,3, 1,4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7) ❖ Manage resources to support a dynamic organization (4.6) ❖ Ensure Institutional effectiveness (3.4)
Quality Programs	▪ LCCC's programs are exemplary	❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.8) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7)
Distance Learning		❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.3, 2.7)
Alignment of programs & workforce opportunities	▪ Employers needs for skilled workforce are met	❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7) ❖ Ensure institutional effectiveness (3.4)
Partnerships	▪ Laramie County's needs are met	❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)
Coordination & Collaboration		❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.2, 1.4, 1,5, 1.6) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7) ❖ Ensure institutional effectiveness (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) ❖ Manage resources to support a dynamic organization (4.3) ❖ Strengthen the College through increased collaboration and communication. (5.1, 5.2, 5.3)
Adequate resources		❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.7) ❖ Manage resources to support a dynamic organization (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)
System of Continuous Improvement		❖ Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5) ❖ Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial (2.3 2.6, 2.7) ❖ Ensure institutional effectiveness (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) ❖ Strengthen the College through increased collaboration and communication. (5.1, 5.2, 5.3) ❖ Manage resources to support a dynamic organization (4.2, 4.3) ❖ Strengthen the College through increased collaboration and communication (5.2)

Source: LCCC Strategic Plan, November 2009

8P2

The process of developing long- and short-term strategies is described in 8P1 above. Long-term strategies were formulated in the development of the five 5-year strategic directions, each of which has a set of goals to be achieved. Annual area operational objectives are developed based on these long-term strategies and are reviewed as a part of the annual planning and budgeting process. As described above, this process was initiated in early 2010 and the College has yet to complete the first cycle. Because this is a new process, the College is still working to refine it and assure it is working as designed.

8P3

Traditionally LCCC has operated an informal and decentralized planning process in which individual departments have developed and implemented plans without benefit of specific stated College priorities. Recognition of the ineffectiveness of this style of planning was a primary reason for the development of the new planning process.

In the deployment of the new planning process, each department developed annual objectives and is charged with developing action plans to support achievement of those objectives. Periodic review of these objectives and progress toward their achievement is to be undertaken by the appropriate vice president, in consultation with his/her respective leadership team. It is then the role of vice presidents and President, via President's Cabinet, to review plans and progress with an eye toward the big picture, and to ensure that the objectives build towards the achievement of organizational strategies and goals. Because this process is in development, LCCC is still fine tuning effectiveness measures, processes, deadlines and responsibilities to ensure this review functions as designed.

8P4

As stated previously, coordination and alignment of planning is a new initiative for the College. The College is working to formalize the planning process to assure that planning moves up and down the College's hierarchy. Furthermore, LCCC is developing and implementing integrative mechanisms that will assist in aligning plans across department and unit lines and levels.

8P5

As stated in 8P1 above, the College is still in the beginning stages of developing its culture of continuous improvement. Traditionally, there has been no coordinated effort to define objectives, select measures, and set performance targets on a college-wide basis. An action team has been formed to develop college-wide benchmarks, which will assist the College in developing organizational objectives, measures, and targets,

With the implementation of the Strategic Plan, objectives are defined, measures are selected, and performance targets are set at the departmental level as part of the operational planning process. There is a need to provide more oversight for this process, so that the College can achieve alignment across the organization and help integrate individual departmental plans into a coherent whole.

8P6

Under the new planning process (see 8P1 – 8P4), budget managers submit budget requests that link specific requests to the Strategic Plan. As the process is refined, budget requests will be aligned with specific departmental objectives, which are in turn aligned with the Strategic Plan. The vice presidents, with their respective leadership teams, put forward prioritized budget requests aligned with the College's strategic directions and goals. The President's Cabinet reviews all budget requests and, in light of fiscal resources and organizational priorities, develops funding recommendations to the Board, which approves the annual budget each July.

8P7

LCCC Board policy requires conservative fiscal approaches to mitigate financial risk; the Board receives multiple monitoring reports on financial matters annually. The strategic planning process (see Figure 8P1) includes internal and external scans to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. As the planning process becomes more fully implemented, these scans will occur on a more regular basis, in a more formal manner.

8P8

The College supports professional development by sending faculty and staff to training to bring new skill sets back to the College. Additionally, there are internal development opportunities such as a mentoring program for new faculty (implemented in 2003) and the Leadership Academy (2007) for current and future leaders as a way to encourage continuous improvement. Other opportunities include college-wide in-service training and focus workshops addressing current issues, as well as training in online instruction and instructional design. Beginning in fall 2010, the College is implementing faculty development days to be offered each semester.   However, there is not currently an institution-wide system to coordinate these efforts or measure their effectiveness. Refer to Category 4 for more information on professional development activities.

Results

8R1

Traditionally, LCCC's strategic planning has not been systematic and has not included identification of effectiveness measures. With the implementation of the new institutional planning process, effectiveness will be measured by evaluating area operational plans on the basis of the criteria to be established. In addition, the College is implementing the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey in fall 2010. This survey includes items on employee perceptions of the planning processes. Finally, the program review process includes a discussion of planning processes, effective for the academic year 2010-2011.

8R2

The Board receives regular monitoring reports, including reports on the five Global Ends Statements, required by the policy governance model to monitor performance of the President and, indirectly, organizational functions. The Board uses this information to systematically monitor performance results. With the implementation of the College's Strategic Plan, the Board will receive regular progress reports

on each goal in the plan. (See Table 8R3) Additionally, the College has initiated an action project to develop a set of dashboard indicators and benchmarks.

8R3

Projected and targets for the next three years and in the form of the five strategic directions and related goals outlined in Table 8R3.

Table 8R3: Strategic Directions and Goals with Reporting Schedule

1. Maximize learning opportunities that foster student success	Progress Report Due:
1.1 Create and implement a student success program to improve student retention.	July, 2010
1.2 Restructure scheduling and delivery options to expand student access to learning.	January, 2012
1.3 Integrate framework for assessment of courses, core abilities and programs that leads to continuous improvement.	January, 2011
1.4 Create/revise programming that is responsive to both student and community needs.	Continuous, reporting every six months
1.5 Enhance quality in academic coursework to facilitate student learning necessary for building a well-educated citizenry.	Continuous, reporting every six months
1.6 Expand living learning options to support student engagement, enrichment and service outside of the classroom.	Annual
1.7 Conduct environmental assessment of campus for design that facilitates learning (wayfaring, aesthetics, comfort, etc.).	Master plan, July, 2012
1.8 Create centers of excellence for current and emerging technologies.	December, 2010
2. Engage the community through collaborations that are mutually beneficial	**Progress Report Due:**
2.1 Create new partnerships with businesses and industries to provide workforce training and development.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.2 Expand partnerships with businesses and community agencies to facilitate learning and leverage resources.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.3 Expand personal interest and community education programs, including conference services, to meet the diverse needs of the community.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.4 Extend community connections through outreach and service activities.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.5 Expand cultural enrichment opportunities and partnerships.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.6 Extend role as community partner in attracting new business to the region.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
2.7 Expand PK-20 relationships and processes to facilitate academic, career and technical curriculum integration that supports career pathway development.	Semi-annually, beginning July, 2010
3. Ensure institutional effectiveness	**Progress Report Due:**
3.1 Create and implement both institutional and department assessment/effectiveness plans.	January, 2011
3.2 Revise and document institutional policies and procedures.	July, 2010
3.3 Foster cultural change to adopt continuous improvement principles College wide.	July, 2010 and ongoing
3.4 Create/enhance technological systems to make access to College information easy and efficient for College community and beyond.	July, 2010 and ongoing

Table 8R3: Strategic Directions and Goals with Reporting Schedule

4. Manage resources to support a dynamic organization	Progress Report Due:
4.1 Increase College capacity to serve through planned physical facility growth.	January, 2012 and ongoing
4.2 Realign College systems and resources to meet capacity as needs change.	July, 2011 and ongoing
4.3 Identify and implement cost efficiencies and streamline processes to improve service and capacity.	July, 2010 and annually
4.4 Actively pursue additional sources of funding to facilitate growth.	July 2010, and ongoing
4.5 Develop and implement an integrated planning and budgeting process.	July, 2010
4.6 Recruit and retain a diverse student, faculty and staff population.	December, 2010
5. Strengthen the College through increased collaboration and communication.	Progress Report Due:
5.1 Create and implement a performance management system for all employees that increases employee accountability while simultaneously increasing employees' sense of being valued.	July, 2012
5.2 Establish cross-campus structures that foster increased collaboration and communication.	January, 2011 and annually
5.3 Establish professional development and mentoring programs for all employees.	July, 2013

Source: LCCC Strategic Plan, November 2009

8R4

Currently, no comparison data for the performance of LCCC's processes for Planning Continuous Improvement are available. With the implementation of the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey in fall 2010 (see 8R1), the College will begin to receive national comparison data on employee perceptions of the planning processes. Furthermore, the recently initiated action project to develop dashboard indicators will include the identification of appropriate benchmarks (i.e., measures being used by institutions similar to LCCC) to use as comparators.

8R5

Because the planning process is so new, this question cannot be answered at this time.

Improvements

8I1

The new Strategic Plan and operational planning model, approved and implemented in late 2009, is a major step forward for the College as related to this category. Further, the College used a modified zero based budgeting process in development of the budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, which facilitated both realignment of the budget in support of current initiatives, as well as a beginning connection between planning and budgeting efforts

Further, the Quality Council, charged with oversight for the continuous improvement process at LCCC, has participated in several learning sessions in the last year targeted at training in continuous improvement methods, and several of these methods have been employed by action teams. In this

way, the College is continuing to train faculty and staff in both understanding of, and use of, continuous improvement methods.

8I2

As has been stated in other categories, LCCC is developing a culture of data-enhanced decision making and continuous improvement. Several activities completed or in progress, have contributed to efforts in this area. LCCC completed a learning college assessment and implemented a climate survey/focus survey process in the last two years; these results have been used to identify areas in which improvements can be made. Subsequently, two action projects, one related to the formation of a college council and the other to define organizational structures and processes, have been initiated.