

Category 8 Planning Continuous Improvement

8C1 Institutional vision

In the next five to ten years, we are committed to the central philosophical perspective of our mission: Enhancing the quality of life through learning. In our vision:

- The college is dedicated to providing quality, comprehensive, educational programs and services in a fiscally responsible manner.
- The college provides a supportive environment for lifelong learning for the development of the individual and the community.
- The college provides leadership in identifying the future educational needs of the district.

Current planning most strongly reflects accountability, community, student access and opportunity, and teaching and learning. We want to ensure that sufficient resources are available and sustained to maintain the college and to keep excellence in certain established areas as well as in new directions. We also wish to extend collaborations into the community and to other entities. These objectives, which support our mission and vision, provide greater efficiency and effectiveness leading to improved service to stakeholders and for student learning.

8C2 Short- and long-term strategies [objectives] and alignment with mission and vision

Our short-term strategies focus on the core functions of student learning and student development. Our mission and vision are at the forefront of planning.

(<http://www.kcc.edu/community/collegeinfo/aboutkcc/mission.asp>)

Short-term efforts are seen in the Institutional Priorities for any given fiscal year (<http://www.kcc.edu/faculty/institutionalpriorities/index.asp>). Annual institutional priorities have broadened to acknowledge that all initiatives and objectives should align with the college mission, vision and strategic priorities.

Long-term strategic plans exist for finance, academic programs, technologies and master facilities. A capital campaign is also underway. While there is no over-arching five to ten year strategic plan, the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement is creating a template for strategic planning, due August 2006. The new process will be utilized in FY07 with anticipated approval of a five-year strategic plan in spring of 2007. Mission, vision, five-year strategic planning and annual institutional priorities will be aligned as a result of the process.

8P1 Planning process

Our annual plan is expressed through institutional priorities and operating unit goals and initiatives derived from input from all stakeholders. The following cycle (see Figure 8a) outlines the process for the development of the annual plan and indicates the entities identified in parentheses which are principally responsible for each step.

Figure 8aShort-term Strategic Planning Cycle

August-Oct:	Review of environmental scan information (Administrative Council)
September:	Complete the Institutional Effectiveness Report
October:	All college AQIP planning day
Nov-Feb:	Review of existing institutional priorities (Administrative Council)
	Nov: Administrative Council and employee review
	AQIP Leadership team analyzes input from the planning day
	Dec: AQIP Leadership Team provides recommendations to the President's Cabinet based on analysis of the planning day information.
	Jan: Board review of President/Vice Presidents and Administrative Council priorities
	Feb: Administrative Council finalizes revised priorities
Feb-Mar:	Development of operational unit goals in light of new priorities (Administrators) Draft of updated strategic plan: institutional priorities plus unit goals (Administrative Council)
Apr-May:	Review of updated strategic plan for budget implications (PC)
Jul/Aug:	Implementation of updated strategic plan (Administrators) Annual report to Board of Trustees (Administrative Council) A. Evaluation of past year's progress on institutional priorities B. Presentation of updated strategic plan

Our long-term planning process along, with review of the mission and vision, is being revised. The process for the college-wide five-year strategic plan will be defined by August 2006 with a new strategic plan developed by FY08. Currently, long-term plans for major areas of the college are in place in four areas: (1) the technology plan, (2) the financial projection model for planning the college's finances over the next five years (3) the master facilities plan and (4) an academic plan. This planning process involves the president's cabinet after the president has consulted and exchanged ideas with various persons and groups internally as well as externally. Division chairs, the AQIP Leadership Team, the Administrative Council and a variety of committees in the college are regularly consulted. Processes for existing plans (financial, technology, etc.) are found in 6P3.

8P2 Selecting short- and long-term strategies

Our short-term planning process involves all levels of the college community in the selection of short-term strategies. The following items are used to prepare, influence and guide all staff discussions regarding short-term strategies:

- Trends - A number of trends impact our college district and, therefore, also influence planning and development. These include:
 1. New technologies that require innovative interactions with students:
Asynchronous distance learning.
Fast-track programs.
 2. Increasing costs of higher education.
 3. Diversity in the population; the emergence of a mosaic society.

4. A 21st century work environment that requires lifelong learning.
 5. Global economic systems.
- Environmental Scan - Scanning the internal and external environment is an ongoing activity. Some sources of information about the internal environment include the Institutional Effectiveness Report, surveys from KCC employees, students, the Board of Trustees, and the KCC Foundation Board. Some sources of information from the external environment include: local, state, national, and global reports related to education; local, state and national educational and social initiatives; funding realities; and regulatory changes.
 - Review of Systems Portfolio and Feedback reports - Information regarding our college's strengths, opportunities and planned improvements are reviewed from both the Systems Portfolio and the Project Feedback reports. The information is consolidated and presented to all staff via electronic and print means. These documents are utilized as a source of information for the October all staff meeting to prioritize issues.
 - Action Projects, committees and task groups - Summaries of action project status similar to the AQIP annual update are gathered. Progress on existing institutional priorities is examined. In addition, details regarding major efforts of the college via committees, task groups and departments are identified as part of the preparation materials for the October discussion.

The above items contribute to the education of stakeholders and preparation of staff attending the October planning meeting. The meeting is held annually in October (<http://www.kcc.edu/faculty/aqip/qpprogress.asp>). At that time, staff members have the opportunity to discuss progress and identify opportunities. Small groups hold discussions based on the nine categories of the systems portfolio. Discussions are captured and analyzed by the AQIP Leadership Team. Results are presented back to staff for input on possible projects and priorities. Suggestions for institutional priorities for the next year are based on all school input, our mission and strategic direction. The suggestions are presented to, and discussed by, the president's cabinet and our Board of Directors. (See Figure 8a)

Once approved, institutional priorities for the following fiscal year are presented to administrators, faculty and staff as part of the annual review cycle in the spring. Administrators develop department and personal goals around institutional priorities. In the next two years, we expect to tie budget requests (including resource allocation) to specific goals and priorities.

The greatest challenge in this process is the limited availability of resources (human and financial). A prototype process has begun in the student services department to prioritize resource requests internally prior to submitting requests to the budget committee. The expectation is that the process will be used within the broader instructional division next year, allowing more direct staff input into prioritizing resource allocation. The president, along with the budget committee, has the ultimate responsibility for selecting among conflicting priorities.

Long-term institutional strategy selection will be developed in FY06 and implemented in FY07.

8P3 Developing key action plans

Key actions plans, supporting institutional strategies, are developed by the AQIP Leadership Team following analysis of the October all staff meeting data. Factors considered when selecting action projects include:

1. Ongoing institutional priorities
2. Systems Portfolio commitments for improvements
3. Feedback report identified opportunities
4. Faculty, staff and administrator input
5. Potential impact (both positive and negative) on our school, staff and finances

Recommended action plans include the identification of champions who will lead the project and act as liaisons to the AQIP Leadership Team. Project development includes:

1. Identification of key staff
2. Development of a plan centered around the AQIP project reporting forms
3. Internal and external review of the overall plan

AQIP Leadership Team members meet regularly with project liaisons. Assistance is provided in developing or revising the plan's timeline, staff, description, outcomes and measurements. Semi-annual reports are provided from the project team to the AQIP Leadership team for incorporation into the Systems Portfolio. The project teams are encouraged to communicate results via the weekly college newsletter, "Update", and to impacted departments. The AQIP Leadership Team also updates the college web page with project updates. A new action plan will change the focus of reporting from an AQIP Leadership Team initiated request to a cyclical planned activity for each individual, department or committee which has defined goals and measurements.

8P4 Coordinating and aligning planning processes

The planning process is coordinated and aligned via annual reviews. Institutional priorities are developed prior to the annual review process for administrators. Administrators include personal and division goals related to institutional priorities. The administrators then filter goals into reviews for supportive staff. The annual review is then submitted to a supervising administrator. Ultimately, the Vice-President for a division reviews the annual evaluation thus promoting consistency in aligning goals and objectives to institutional priorities.

8P5 Selecting measures and setting performance projections

In most cases, measures and performance projections are set by the individual, department, committee or team which develops the activity. For broader reaching projects, the AQIP leadership team consults on measurements and performance projections. In a few cases, performance projections may be set by upper level administrators. For instance, the president defined August 2006 as the due date for the long-term strategic planning template.

8P6 Accounting for resource needs

See 8P2 (challenges) and 6P3 (Budget process)

8P7 Ensuring faculty, staff, and administrative development

We ensure that faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities will be developed and nurtured to address requirements regarding changing institutional strategies and action plans primarily through the annual evaluation process. (See 8P4)

We have, for the past several years, invested heavily in the development of our faculty, staff, and administrators' capabilities regarding changing institutional strategies and action plans. (See Categories 4 and 5) Annual climate surveys of supportive staff, faculty and administrators provide feedback for the success (or failure) of training efforts. Results are used to plan annual institution-wide training efforts. The supportive staff survey results indicate dramatic improvement, with the greatest increase in agreement centered on adequacy of training and satisfaction with technology, and the least (although still showing improvement) in the perception of trust and support. (See 4R1)

Administrators were surveyed with the same Climate Survey instrument in December 2004/January 2005. The results of the survey are found in 4R1. Faculty members were surveyed in fall 2005 for the first time. In fall 2006, all three sets of surveys will be administered and analyzed on the same schedule.

The Faculty Development and Instructional Support Committee offer opportunities for faculty members to improve and maintain capabilities as in the teaching and learning model. (See 4R1) Informal continuing education teaching-improvement sessions are offered at the Teaching and Learning Center by the director of instructional technology and alternative delivery and other members of the college community. (See 6R1)

8P8 Measuring and analyzing planning effectiveness

Measurements of the effectiveness of our system for planning continuous improvement include the regular collection and analysis of the climate surveys. In addition, enrollment and retention data are used as early steps in creating core institutional effectiveness measures. These will form part of the Systems Portfolio. The annual planning process integrates internal and external surveys of stakeholders with the AQIP strategic planning process and the administration's goals. It began in FY06. Analysis of results via administrator reviews will be available in summer 06.

Program review is the primary way to assess instructional programs. The program review provides a systematic, college-wide program evaluation process for assessing both instruction programs and student and supporting services, using as criteria program need, program cost, and program quality. The report is summarized and recommendations for changes are provided. The results of each program evaluation, including recommendations and follow-ups, are kept on file at the college for five years. Program reviews have evolved to include occupational, transfer and developmental programs. (See 1P8 for additional details)

8R1 Results for planning strategies and action plans

Based on analysis of processes for strategic planning and action plans, we are proud of our accomplishments to date in the areas of short-term strategic planning, college inclusion into projects over the past four years and the numerous changes made in the college culture as seen in the climate survey results.

Results in the areas of teaching and learning, technology (in teaching and in support areas), diversity, supervisory training, and the development of processes are encouraging. These are

described in the appropriate categories of this portfolio. Most results are found in Category 4. Results are also displayed on an AQIP web page. (<http://www.kcc.edu/faculty/aqip/index.asp>)

Results also show that we lack a cohesive process for long-term strategic planning. Feedback of the systems portfolio indicates this as an area to be addressed immediately. Our short-term process is well-defined and the annual strategic priorities have focused the college initiatives and produced significant results. This year, the October planning session work overlapped with submission of our first portfolio and the timeline was delayed somewhat. We will continue analysis of the annual process until the process is refined.

8R2 Performance Projections

In the next one to three years, our performance projections for strategies and action plans include:

1. Retiring the three existing action projects in summer 2006 following collection and analysis of final data.
2. Submission of three new action projects. These are in internal and external review in May 2006. We expect submission of the three new action projects this summer. The project areas are assessment, continuous improvement and communications.
3. Creation of a long-term strategic plan.

The annual strategic planning efforts will continue with a focus on developing measurable goals at the individual and department level and reporting/communicating results to all stakeholders. In addition, a five-year strategic plan will be developed and integrated into the planning process.

8R3 Comparison of performance projections

When comparing our college to others, review of the AQIP action project directory for best practices when defining college projects has become a standard practice. We meet with other Illinois community colleges using the AQIP process to discuss successes and challenges. This could develop into a benchmarking forum. In addition, we have participated in comparative data discussions among AQIP institutions, both online and at the HLC annual meeting. We are on the list of institutions interested in sharing data through Johnson County's project.

8R4 Results for planning system effectiveness

Evidence that our system for planning continuous improvement is effective can be found through all staff participation in the October planning sessions, inclusion of goals towards institutional priorities in administrator reviews and results of the Climate Survey administered to support staff, faculty and administrators. The results of these surveys confirm the direction of the institutional priorities is one supported by supportive staff, faculty and administrators. The most recent results show that significant progress has been made in addressing staff issues. (See 4R2)

8I1 Improvement of current processes and systems

We improve current processes and systems through the annual strategic process (see Figure 8a) which helps ensure that we continually evaluate priorities and results. In addition, as a result of that process, a new action project will begin in summer 2006 to address the continuous improvement process at our college. The AQIP Leadership Team is charged with analysis and continued update of the annual strategic planning process. Finally, analysis of our first portfolio submission helps identify gaps in planning such as the lack of a five-year strategic plan.

8I2 Setting targets for improvement. Specific improvement priorities. Communication of results

There are three primary targets for improvement of continuous improvement:

1. Continue evaluation of the annual strategic process for institutional priorities. Primary responsibility held by the AQIP Leadership Team.
2. Develop a continuous improvement Action Project which will train all divisions, programs, and departments in the college on continuous quality improvement including the development of measures and communication of results. Primary responsibility held by Director of Learning Services and Director of Workforce Services and Adult & Community Education.
3. Develop a long-term strategic plan. Template development responsibility held by the Vice-President of Institutional Advancement.