

# **AQIP SYSTEMS PORTFOLIO**

JUNE 2015



***NORTHEAST IOWA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE***

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Kristin Dietzel  
Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness  
238, Main Building, Peosta campus  
563.556.5110, ext. 379  
dietzelk@nicc.edu

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## Institutional Overview

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) is a public, two-year comprehensive community college serving a mostly rural, eight-county district in northeast Iowa. Offering 84 academic programs in addition to distance learning, customized business and industry training, short-term certification options and adult education and literacy, the College is committed to high-quality education and training at an affordable price to ensure the growth and vitality of northeast Iowa.

The College district spans 5,000 square miles and is served by two campuses in Calmar and Peosta and six centers in Dubuque (two locations), Oelwein, Waukon, Cresco, and Manchester. In addition, NICC provides services in New Hampton and hosts the region's Small Business Development Center in Dubuque, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety in Peosta, and Iowa's Dairy Center in Calmar.

The College, governed by a nine-member elected Board of Trustees, was named a 2011 Aspen top ten community college in the nation for its successful graduate outcomes, academic excellence and community impact.

Under the leadership of its current President, Dr. Liang Chee Wee, Northeast Iowa Community College is nearing its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is more committed than ever to transforming and honoring its communities one student at a time.

**Mission Statement:** Northeast Iowa Community College provides accessible, affordable, quality education and training to meet the needs of our communities.

**Vision:** The Northeast Iowa Community College educational community will live the values of service, respect, innovation, stewardship and integrity within a culture of continuous improvement.

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### Values

Service: **Dedication to meet the ever-changing educational needs of our stakeholders**

Respect: **Recognition of individual dignity by promoting trust and cooperation**

Innovation: **An open climate fostering collaboration, improvement and advancement of ideas**

Stewardship: **Responsible management that sustains resources for the common good**

Integrity: **Policies, practices and actions reflecting responsible citizenship**

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In fiscal year 2014, the College proudly served 7,153 academic students (including 2,720 high school students) and 22,126 continuing education students, adult learners, and other clients. Table 1 illustrates a profile of our non-high-school learners.

**TABLE 1. Student Profile**

- 
- **69% enrolled part-time**
  - **84% residents of Iowa**
  - **55% enrolled in Career and Technical programs**
  - **64% female**
  - **46% Pell eligible**
  - **10% identified as students with a disability**
  - **62% age 18-24**
- 

The College employs approximately 300 faculty and 265 staff. 67% of credit hours are taught by full-time faculty, and our student to faculty ratio is 16:1. The College is honored to have recognized four Iowa Professors of the Year<sup>1</sup>, more than any other higher education institution in the state.

Our academic offerings include eighty-four A.A., A.S. and A.A.S. degrees, diplomas, and certificates designed to prepare graduates for employment in technical fields including agriculture, business,

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<sup>1</sup> Awarded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education

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health, information technology, STEM, and advanced manufacturing.

Academic offerings include high school concurrent enrollment options, which identify career technical and academic program prerequisite courses for high school students, provide a challenging educational experience and ensure a smoother transition to college. Our concurrent enrollment program has recently been accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).

The College's economic development and continuing education division, Business and Community Solutions (BCS), offers personal and professional programs delivered in response to the educational needs of the people and the businesses in the communities the College serves. During FY14, BCS processed 39,501 enrollments for 22,544 unique students in a variety of programs, including innovative career pathway certificate programs that lead directly to employment in high-demand, middle-skill careers or transition students into one of our academic programs.

The Adult Literacy programs at the College provide basic skills instruction in math, reading, writing and listening, as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and programs to achieve the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), formerly GED.

NICC offers distance learning courses through multiple formats, including completely online (web-based), Iowa Communications Network (video classroom), hybrid, and web enhanced. This includes online formats through both synchronous and asynchronous approaches. Currently, 12 programs are completely online and approximately 329 courses are offered online each year.

The College has moved toward a systematic and well aligned quality improvement experience since its admission to AQIP in 2003 and, particularly, following our Quality Check-up in 2008 and Portfolio Appraisal in 2010. Major improvements include the following:

- Streamlined Quality Council team with broad College representation and cabinet-level

leadership to lead and measure the College's culture of quality;

- Integrated College-wide goal-setting process aligned with the strategic plan, annual priorities, and AQIP categories;
- Dedicated institutional effectiveness department, which brings together institutional research, marketing and communications, strategic planning, accreditation and grants under one umbrella and reports directly to the President;
- Improved data reporting tools and communication processes to quickly access and report accurate data; and a culture increasingly accustomed to analyzing and utilizing data to inform decisions at all levels.
- Reflection of quality initiatives and results in recently closed and active Action Projects including: Monitoring and Improving Employee Satisfaction, Assessing Written Communication, Develop and Implement College-wide Technology Plan, Measuring Student Learning Outcomes, Improving a College-wide Assessment Plan, and Evaluating Student Onboarding and Placement; and
- Revised institutional learning outcomes that are measurable, attainable, and mission-focused with a quality council team dedicated to implementing a comprehensive assessment plan for them.

The College believes the reviewers will find ample evidence of increased maturation, and understanding of quality improvement in this newest edition of its AQIP Systems Portfolio.

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**AQIP Category One: Helping Students Learn**

well underway to significant improvements in evidencing student learning.

**INTRODUCTION**

The mission of Northeast Iowa Community College includes commitments of affordability, accessibility and quality for students’ educational experiences. The result of these commitments are processes that not only help students learn but also achieve success beyond their time at the College.

Despite this long-standing mission and evidence of success, the College has improved considerably since its last portfolio submission in 2010. Guided by the 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and subsequent Strategy Forum, high-impact Action Projects, and internal reorganization, the College is

The College’s efforts in the *Helping Students Learn* category will acquaint readers with processes, results and improvements related to:

- Common Learning Outcomes,
- Program Learning Outcomes,
- Academic Program Design,
- Academic Program Quality,
- Academic Student Support, and
- Academic Integrity.

The following table provides a self-assessment of how NICC rates the growth of maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Aligned
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Reacting 2014: Systematic
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of common learning outcomes</li> <li>• Pilot of “Writing Across Curriculum” to assess student learning</li> <li>• Development of program metrics to assess program-level outcomes</li> <li>• Joining Quality Matters distance learning quality consortium</li> <li>• Sought and secured NACEP accreditation for high school concurrent enrollment programming</li> <li>• Implementation of College Experience course required for at-risk student groups</li> <li>• Development of iINDEX student resource guide</li> <li>• Updated student conduct code, forms, and improved automation and tracking of process through Maxient software implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active: Measuring Student Learning Outcomes</li> <li>• Active: Improve Placement Processes</li> <li>• Active: Evaluate Student Onboarding and Placement</li> <li>• Closed: Assess Written Communication</li> </ul>

Going forward, NICC is focusing efforts in the *Helping Students Learn Category* on a comprehensive process and data capture system for assessing common learning outcomes. In addition, the College is working to refine its students placement processes to account for behavioral and motivational measures in addition to academic placement test scores. Finally, the College is focusing on ensuring proven supports are in place for students who are not college ready to improve basic skills while still engaged in academic programming.

**COMMON LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1P1. Common Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of graduates from all programs. Describe the processes for determining, communicating, and ensuring the stated common learning outcomes and who is involved in those processes.

**Determining Common Learning Outcomes and Aligning to the Mission, Educational Offerings, and Degree Levels of the College**

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) has four common learning outcomes (CLOs) to ensure graduates of both its general education program and career and technical programs have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in their post-graduate career and experiences, regardless of their chosen program of study or degree level. These CLOs align with the College mission, vision, and values and can be reasonably attained through completion of all of the College’s educational

offerings and degree levels, including co-curricular opportunities (3B1, 3E2).

NICC revised its CLOs in fall 2013. This change followed the 2010 Systems Appraisal and subsequent feedback at the AQIP Strategy Forum in 2011 revealing that the College’s previous twelve learning outcomes—while ambitious—were overly broad, redundant, and difficult or impossible to measure. As a result, the College revised its CLOs down to four measurable, concise objectives students will need to thrive in their communities and careers (3B2).

The new CLOs were vetted though faculty, the academic deans, and the President’s cabinet for review, revision and approval. They were shared at convocation in fall 2013. Table 1P1.A. shows the previous twelve objectives, the current CLOs, and their alignment with the College. (3B1, 3E2, 3B2, 4B4).

**Table 1P1.A. Transition of Common Learning Outcomes and Alignment with College Mission**

<i>Previous 12 Common Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Four Common Learning Outcomes (Adopted 2013-2014)</i>	<i>Alignment with Mission, Values and Strategic Plan of the College</i>
1. Communicate Effectively 2. Understand Cultures and their Interrelationships 3. Locate, interpret, and use information effectively 4. Understand themselves and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills. 5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills. 6. Demonstrate respect, dignity, and moral and ethical decision-making 7. Understand the principles of mathematics, science, and technology 8. Appreciate literature, history, and arts 9. Embrace lifelong learning 10. Promote personal and community wellness 11. Develop Workforce Skills 12. Understand Technological and Social Changes	1. Think Critically  2. Communicate Effectively  3. Apply Knowledge and Skills to Life  Value Self and Others (3B4)	Value: Innovation  Value: Respect, Innovation  Value: Integrity, Stewardship,  Value: Service, Respect, Stewardship, Integrity  All align with Mission: <i>provide quality education to meet the needs of community</i>  All CLOs with strategic plan priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority #4 - Evaluate the College’s internal and external programs and processes and engage in continuous improvements</li> <li>• Priority #8 – Embrace Assessment and Continuous Improvement</li> </ul>

### **Incorporating into the Curriculum Opportunities for all Students to Achieve the Outcomes**

All students, regardless of discipline, are apprised of the CLOs through the College catalog and admissions materials and in every course syllabus. To track curriculum opportunities for students to achieve CLOs, faculty update course matrices each term, which connect each course to a primary CLO. Additionally, faculty and academic deans complete program summaries to verify each CLO is addressed by a complete program. Course guides and matrices are reviewed on a rotating basis during program advisory meetings, each time a course objective is modified, and according to the program evaluation plan (3B2, 3B3, 3B5, 4B1).

### **Ensuring Outcomes Remain Relevant**

To ensure the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs, the academic deans review the CLOs annually against the College's mission and strategic priorities. In addition, the career and technical program advisory committees receive the CLOs during the first meeting of the year. As of spring 2015, they are also evaluating how the program prepares students to achieve each of the four CLO's (3B4, 3B3).

### **Articulating the Purposes, Content, and Level of Achievement of the Outcomes.**

Recognizing that CLO assessment was an opportunity for growth at the College, in July 2014, the vice president of academic affairs organized four CLO teams to lead College-wide initiatives for CLO assessment. Each team is co-led by two academic deans/directors and includes members from across the college community. The team initially was tasked with researching best assessment practices for their assigned CLO internally and externally to the College to share with faculty and staff. Sharing of best practices by each team occurred during faculty convocation in January 2015 (3B3, 3B4, 3B5, 4B1, 4B4).

In fall 2015 each team will offer a workshop to further share their findings and also provide examples of measurement instruments for each CLO. This will enhance faculty expertise in the measurement and analysis of CLO attainment. The vice president of

academic affairs, deans and executive director of institutional effectiveness are currently working to identify a "best practice" archival system to easily track and analyze results of identified CLO assessments, including co-curricular assessments. To assist with this, the team has requested funding to participate in the Higher Learning Commission assessment academy in spring 2016 (3B3, 3B5, 4B1, 4B2, 4B4).

### **Co-curricular Activities to Support Learning**

Co-curricular and other student activities at the College also provide opportunities for students to achieve CLOs. Therefore, staff from student life, student services, student government, financial aid, and other key areas are members of the four CLO assessment teams to identify and develop assessments for co-curricular activities that support achievement of CLOs while remaining aligned to the College's mission. (3E1, 4B2).

Unlike traditional curricular opportunities, co-curricular opportunities allow students to achieve CLOs outside of class (3E1,3E2,e 4B2). These include but are not limited to the following:

- Voluntary membership or nomination on academic associations and organizations that support their academic experiences at NICC, such as NSNA (for nursing students) or Business Professionals Association
- Participation in iMPACT, student government and leadership team
- Membership in Phi Theta Kappa honor society
- Involvement in various clubs and associations, such as Rodeo, STEM, S.T.E.P. (support group for students with disabilities), Student veterans associations, etc.
- Participation in service learning locally or through annual spring break service trip
- Showcasing student talents in seminars, poetry slams, talent sharing activities, and other campus-led events.

### **Selecting Methods and Assessing CLOs**

The methods of CLO assessment are determined by program faculty, deans and staff overseeing co-curricular activities. CLOs are assessed using both

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standardized and non-standardized tools across the College. Classroom assessments and their connection to CLOs are clearly articulated to students through the course syllabus (3B3, 4B1, 4B2, 4B4).

Standardized tools for the assessment of critical thinking are common in the health programs. Nursing, for example, has incorporated the HESI assessment into each core nursing course to measure a student’s critical thinking abilities and ensure continued growth in his or her ability to address question prototypes similar to the professional board examination questions. Other courses, such as Composition I and II, utilize a portfolio with associated rubrics to evidence student growth in CLO #2: Communicate Effectively.

CLOs are assessed at a program level in addition to the course level. For example, the dental assisting faculty utilize an assessment plan to evidence skill attainment that achieves CLOs across each program course. Likewise, nursing and respiratory therapy programs integrate comprehensive program portfolios to document CLO achievement. The ultimate purpose of these various faculty-identified assessment measures is to improve student learning and ensure all students graduate with CLO attainment. (3B3, 4B1, 4B2, 4B3, 4B4).

In another example, College-wide faculty participate in the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) assessment, developed as one standardized assessment of CLO #2: Communicate Effectively. This assessment was developed and executed through a recent HLC Action Project, activated when the College first embarked on its commitment to

measuring CLOs. Though closed, this ongoing project serves as the model and springboard for the College’s current Action Project, Measuring Student Learning Outcomes. The WAC assessment is effective in that it uses a common pre- and post-assessment rubric. The results are then used by a WAC core team to identify opportunities to improve students learning. These opportunities (i.e. WAC toolbox for faculty to teach writing, rubric training, etc.) have been implemented each year following assessment to improve student learning (3B3, 4B1, 4B2, 4B3, 4B4).

1R1. What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are expected at each degree level?

NICC currently monitors and track results related to the processes detailed in 1P1. On a macro-level, the College monitors completion (see also 2R2), job placement rates and employer feedback, which ultimately demonstrate that students possess the skills and abilities for their chosen degree level. On a micro-level, NICC is working toward comprehensive assessment plan of each CLO for each student. The College currently tracks results for a pilot assessment related to CLO #2: Communicate Effectively. Both types of results are detailed in this section.

As stated, the College is amidst a major shift in process to integrate best practices of assessment of CLOs with the hope of utilizing the HLC Assessment Academy to advance quality student assessment beyond the CLO course matrix system seen in Table 1R1.A.

**Table 1R1.A. Example of Arts and Sciences program matrix showing CLOs taught and assessed**

Course #	Course Title	CLO: Think Critically	CLO: Communicate Effectively	CLO: Apply Knowledge and Skills to Life	CLO: Value Self and Others	Assessment Utilized
ENG:105	Composition I		1*			Portfolio
SPC:112	Public Speaking		1*			Analysis of Speeches
SDV:091	The College Experience		1			Pre and Post Assessment/ Cohort

						Retention
<b>*CLO formally assessed by course</b>						

This matrix allows staff and faculty to compare programs internally, evaluate the quality of assessments, and ensure all programs of study include opportunities for students to be assessed on CLOs. In fall 2013, this matrix provided insight to the vice president of academic affairs and the deans reviewing the results, revealing that the level and consistency of assessment that students experience varies across the college. It also revealed a gap in tracking co-curricular assessments of student growth.

One CLO for which the College piloted a comprehensive common assessment was for CLO #2: Communicate Effectively. This pilot was in response to an HLC strategy forum College staff attended in fall 2011 following the 2010 systems appraisal report. The forum enabled the NICC team to develop an assessment to track one outcome that could be used as a pilot and model for other CLO assessments. The results of this project are detailed in the now retired Action Project, Written Communication

WAC, as the pilot came to be called, was deployed college-wide in spring 2012, providing several terms of data for College teams to review and learn from, although the assessment rubric has undergone several revisions. To measure student writing improvement and skill level, the WAC pilot prompted each faculty member to score two student writing samples from their course on a common rubric of 1-9. The College's goal was and continues to be for scores to improve at least 0.5 points between pre- and post-test. Detailed results are in Table 1R1.B.

**Table 1R1.B. WAC Results Trends**

Term	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Fall 2012	7.09	7.59
Spring 2013	7.3	7.7
Fall 2013	7.1	7.6
Spring 2014	6.86	7.38

Results are based on completed pre- and post-assessment scores. Incomplete and missing scores

are not included in the sample size. In summary, NICC is encouraged by the improvement shown each term. At this time, approximately 125 faculty participate. Student sample sizes range from 1500-2300, roughly 50-70% of degree-seeking students.

The Colleges does not compare this data with any external targets, however the results can be broken down by faculty, by program, and by course, so there is the opportunity for each division to set goals. Internally, College targets are for students' scores to increase over the term at least 0.5 points and that at least 100 faculty report pre- and post-test scores to ensure a healthy sample size.

To analyze the results in more depth, the College engaged Bruce Schmidt, PhD, RN. of Consulting Analytics in January 2013 to analyze results and provide feedback. Dr. Schmidt assisted the College in understanding the conclusions that could be drawn (and not drawn) from the results and areas for improvement. He validated the need for continued faculty training regarding rubrics (which is now included annually in faculty development offerings). His report also suggested that the College should identify factors influencing pre- and post-scores.

In addition to CLO assessment data, the college regularly examines employer satisfaction survey data to provide evidence that students have attained the appropriate knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace. This voluntary survey requires NICC staff to follow up with alumni six months after graduation. Response rate is strong, typically over 75%. For 2013 graduates, 96% percent were either employed or pursuing additional education. For further detail see table 1R1.C.

**Table 1R1.C. Graduate Alumni Trends**

Term	FY11 Grads	FY12 Grads	FY13 Grads
Respondents	704/795	732/807	592/770
Employed, Related Field	52%	52%	58%
Employed,	69%	70%	74%

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Anywhere			
Continuing Education (not employed)	28%	28%	21%
Employed or Continuing Education	97%	98%	96%

Alumni data is also broken down by career and technical graduates and arts and science graduates, as well as by program. This allows deans, program faculty and staff to analyze placement data in comparison to similar programs and set internal targets.

111. Based on 1R1, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Improvements in student assessment will continue to be updated through the College’s active AQIP Action Project, Measuring Student Learning Outcomes. The major improvement leading to the College’s ability to be at this place in its CLO development and assessment was the most recent Strategy Forum the College attended in 2011 and subsequent work that led the College to develop and adopt new CLOs in 2014 (4B3).

With this new foundation, the College intends for the next three years to yield a comprehensive CLO assessment, archival, and tracking process. As a result of reviewing the existing CLO matrices, the vice president of academic affairs mandated that all courses identify assessments that will be utilized and archived to assess students attainment of CLOs by spring 2015 to improve student learning. This is already underway through the academic teams identified to work on this task, led by academic deans and the vice president of academic affairs. The team is hoping that participation in HLC’s Assessment Academy will ensure an efficient and effective process emerges to track CLOs of all students engaged in both curricular and co-curricular learning. At this time, faculty archive their own assessments until an efficient College-wide system is identified and implemented. The WAC Action Project provided a strong model of using CLO assessment data to improve student learning. The

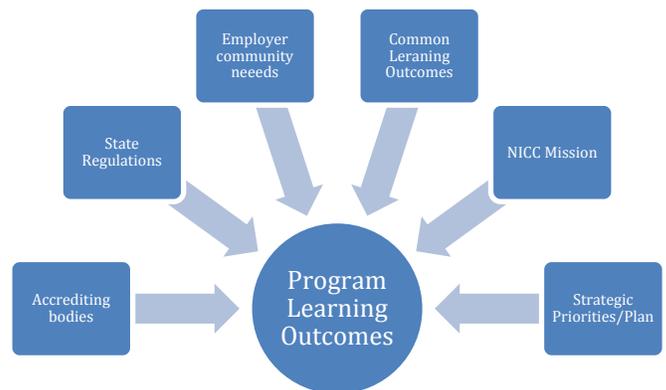
College hopes to continue this process until all CLOs are not only assessed for each student, but systematically archived and tracked in a database that can be used to draw sound conclusions regarding helping students learn (4B3).

**PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1P2. Program Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities graduates from particular programs are expected to possess. Describe the processes for determining, communicating, and ensuring the stated program learning outcomes and who is involved in those processes.

**Aligning Program Learning Outcomes to the Mission, Educational Offerings, and Degree Levels of the Institution**

Program learning outcomes (PLOs), like CLOs are rooted in the College’s mission and vision and designed to meet state regulations for degree level, expectations of transfer institutions, requirements of accrediting bodies and needs of employers as reflected in advisory committees. Each level of outcomes is limited by the scope of the previous outcome; for example, CLOs at the institution level cannot extend beyond the mission and vision of the College. Likewise, PLOs do not extend beyond the scope of the CLOs (3E2). The following chart depicts this relationship:



**Determining Program Outcomes and Ensuring Relevancy**

Under the vice president of academic affairs, the academic deans, program faculty and program advisory committees review, evaluate and revise PLOs. When new programs are developed, an industry-based advisory committee composed of experts, advisors and faculty from the field is created to help identify PLOs. These committees play a critical role in determining program-specific learning objectives in the career and technical program and ensuring they remain relevant to the workplace (3B4, 4B4).

Collaboration with accrediting and licensing agencies and transfer institutions is essential to ensure program sustainability. If the program is accredited, certified or licensed, it must meet specific standards. The College then uses these national standards to develop PLOs to ensure NICC students meet those minimum requirements. The program and its courses also need to meet the expectations of transfer institutions. When articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities are developed, the receiving institutions often provide learning objectives to guide development of PLOs (3B4, 4A5, 4B4).

**Articulating Program Learning Outcomes**

To articulate these PLOs and ensure achievement of the outcomes, each program maintains course guides that list course-specific learning objectives. The curriculum committee oversees course guides and approves any additions, deletions or revisions (4B1).

**Co-curricular Activities Supporting Program Learning**

With the revision of the CLOs in 2013, it is apparent that co-curricular activities that support learning often provide ample opportunity for students to achieve not only CLOs, but also PLOs. For example, a communication instructor directs “Coffee Cart Jam,” a poetry slam event held twice a year where communications and other students have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning through their talents. Other students participate in program-related clubs and organizations such as Business Professionals Association, NSNA (student nursing association), or Dairy Club. Through these experiences, students have additional opportunities to hone their skills and engage in discussions with practitioners in their field to better meet PLOs. NSNA, for example, assists students to meet the following nursing PLOs: 1) ability to convey information through verbal, written, technological or visual means, 2) ability to manage finances effectively, 3) ability to work cooperatively as a member of a team, and 4) appreciation of diversity (3E1, 4B2).

**Selecting Tools and Assessing Level of Achievement of Program Learning Outcomes**

Each program’s faculty works with its advisory committee to develop, review and validate the assessment measures utilized for program outcome achievement. This includes voluntary or required certification and/or licensure exams, competency checklists, and/or portfolios, all of which should demonstrate achievement of PLOs. Assessment tools are selected to have the most relevancy to the workplace, transfer institution, and student experience (4B2, 4B4). A strong example from Nursing of a capstone portfolio rubric is provided in Table 1P2.A.

**Table 1P2.A. Example Documentation of Program Learning Outcome Assessment**

<i>As provider of care, the graduate will use the nursing process as the primary method of decision-making as evidenced by the ability to:</i>				
<b>Associate Degree Nursing Outcomes*</b>	<b>Terminal Objectives**</b>	<b>Common Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Artifact</b>
Integrate knowledge of the biopsychosocial sciences and applied mathematics	Demonstrate knowledge, comprehension, and application of social and scientific principles in the analysis and synthesis of			

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	data as a health care provider in a variety of settings.			
Assess and prioritize client needs integrating individual cultural variables.	Implement the nursing process to provide transculturally congruent care.			

**Table 1R2.A. Diesel Mechanic program Completion Metrics Sample**

Metric	2012 Report	2013 Report
3-Year Graduation or Transfer Rate of FT students*	67%	63%
Award Production	7	9
Course Completion (% of successfully completed credits in fall term)	77%	69%
Credit Accumulation (FT students earning 24+ credits in first year)	67%	73%

The program assessment model feeds directly into the assessment of CLOs described in 1P1. As each program identifies assessments it will utilize and archive to demonstrate students' learning of one or more PLOs, those assessments will become critical components to measure achievement of CLOs. This will ensure alignment of PLOs with CLOs (which are aligned to mission, values and plan of the College). The College is currently seeking a web-based archival tool to easily assess and track these connections (4B1, 4B2., 4B4).

Now that the College is able to drill into program level data, faculty and deans set retention initiatives and quality improvement initiatives designed to improve student completion rates. One example of how the College used this data was to determine highest attrition programs and pilot a mandatory College Experience course to these populations.

Program faculty and deans also review and utilize program placement data available from the alumni survey process described in 1R1. Table 1R2.B. provides an example of program level placement data the survey provides.

**1R2. What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are expected in programs?**

Completion and placement data are vital to tracking effective program learning outcomes. Table 1R2.A. details a sampling of measures related to completion tracked by each program dean and faculty. This data currently has a trend of two years, as it was developed from a new State of Iowa report adopted by all community colleges. NICC then worked with a programmer to allow us to take the institutional level data down to the program level.

**Table 1R2.B. Program Placement Data Sample**

Technical Programs	Degrees Earned	Alumni Contacted	Total Employed	Total Employed Related	Employed in District Related	Total Continuing Education
Accounting Clerk	10	6	4	4	2	3
Accounting Specialist	10	8	7	4	3	1
Administrative Assistant	9	7	6	5	5	0
Associate Degree Nursing	37	25	22	22	13	11
Automotive Mechanics	12	10	8	7	5	1
Business Specialist	18	16	15	12	8	5

In addition to program completion and placement data to demonstrate mastery of PLOs, they are also demonstrated through individualized program assessment plans and licensure or certification pass rates. Table 1R2.C. details the two most recent year's certification/license results for the College.

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**Table 1R2.C. Certification/License Results (since 2012)**

Exam/License	2012/2013	2013/2014	State/national rate	# Students
Exam for the Registered Health Information Technology	79%	76%	65%+	35
Iowa Board of Examiners for Cosmetology	100%	100%	75%+	7
MBLEX or NCBTMB (Massage Therapy)	100%	100%	70%+	7
John Deere University Certification-Electrical	100%	100%	N/A	74
John Deere University Certification-Hydraulic	100%	100%	N/A	74
John Deere University Certification-Service Advisor	100%	100%	N/A	74
John Deere University Certification-MACS Air Conditioning	100%	100%	N/A	74
HVAC Refrigerant Usage Certification	100%	90%	N/A	20
Wind Program Climb Test	100%	100%	N/A	7
OSHA-10 (carpentry, construction, wind programs)	100%	100%	N/A	34
Iowa Board of Dental Examiners	100%/100%/92%	95%/89%/83%	N/A	32
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists	100%	100%	89.6%	27
Certified Respiratory Therapy	92%	100%	60.8	26
NCLEX-Practical Nurse*	97.89%	98.10%	84.63%	200
NCLEX-Registered Nurse*	96.84%	83.33%	83.04%	173
Iowa Certified Nursing Assistant Exam	89.41%	91.65%	N/A	977
Paramedic	100%	92.86%	N/A	19
Emergency Medical Technician	65%	60%	N/A	104

\*must achieve 95% of national rate

This favorable data not only illustrate student competencies for their selected field upon graduation, but also provides external benchmarks in some cases through which the College can compare its performance and set internal targets. For example, the Nursing programs have set achievement goals of 95% of the national pass rates.

Approximately 18% of the College's programs include or prepare students for a comprehensive program assessment (third party or internally-developed) to demonstrate student achievement of PLOs beyond passing each class and graduating from the program.

1I2. Based on 1R2, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Results of program learning assessments affect many levels of teaching and learning. They often lead first to faculty interventions in terms of improved teaching methods or curricular revisions approved by the curriculum committee and State of Iowa. Results may also trigger a sustainability study or influence program evaluation outcomes (4B3).

For example, the Dental Assisting program recently made a major instructional delivery improvement in response to unsatisfactory performance in an assessment plan target. The program has a target that 85% of employer surveys will indicate adequate preparation of students (based on 9 questions

aggregated). Because the response was at 80% in 2011, the faculty requested and received additional hours for adjunct faculty to provide more 1:1 practice for students in a clinical setting (4B3).

Because the College's ultimate goal is each student's successful transfer or placement into a career, advisory committee feedback is very important. As a result, the College has designed and piloted a uniform advisory survey to better analyze and use employers' input regarding satisfaction with graduates' skills, knowledge and abilities to improve learning(4B3). The advisory committee membership composition was also expanded to include representation based upon gender, ethnicity, race, disability, English as a second language and credit and non-credit sectors of the College.

To ensure academic programming remains relevant and sustainable, the academic team (vice president of academic affairs and deans) developed a Program Health Indicator rubric to provide an annual summary of program trends pulled from completion metrics. This process, scheduled for implementation in summer 2015, will enhance overall program evaluation and ensure the annual assessment of and proactive response downward trends in key program elements.

In addition to this new annual review process, the formal program evaluation that routinely occurs during the third year of new programs and then every five years is under revision. The current process requires the assignment of a program review team for each review. Team members have reported discomfort with providing feedback that may ultimately impact a program and or faculty position. To ensure this process is based upon objective assessment of program data, the vice president of academic affairs is appointing a formal program review team that will receive training regarding program assessment. This team will be organized for spring 2016 with training occurring prior to the fall 2016 term. To facilitate data review and allow for ongoing, transparent committee assessment, an electronic process utilizing SoftDocs (document imaging system) will be implemented by fall 2017 (4A1).

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM DESIGN

1P3. Academic Program Design focuses on developing and revising programs to meet stakeholders' needs. Describe the processes for ensuring new and current programs meet the needs of the institution and its diverse stakeholders.

### Identifying Student Stakeholders' Educational Needs

Identifying students' educational needs begins during the College onboarding process, from recruitment through enrollment, and continues throughout students' time at the College. Student needs are assessed by staff through personal interactions and data collection at the time of placement testing, campus visits, required academic advising, referrals to veteran's or disability services, orientations, online surveys and focus groups.

In addition, The College is committed to administering the CCSSE and SENSE surveys to students on a two-year rotation as part of an Iowa Community College consortium. College work teams and committees utilize this data to ascertain the services students deem most important, utilize most frequently and for which they report high satisfaction. Vice versa, they also uncover underutilized services and resources that would benefit students. From these conclusions, work teams and departments develop targeted interventions to improve students' experience at NICC.

While all students are considered stakeholders, the College is developing, or has in place, interventions designed to address the unique needs of these stakeholder groups(1C1, 1C2):

- Adult literacy students, including students from whom English is a second language
- Students in a career pathway program in high school or through the non-credit training division
- Students with documented disabilities
- Student veterans
- Online learners
- Students at elevated risk for attrition
- Students of color

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- Students in programs non-traditional for gender
- Students who are not college ready

In addition to the assessments and supports received throughout the onboarding process, each of these groups is represented by a committee or committees at the College overseeing design, implementation, and outcomes of interventions. By addressing the unique needs of these populations, the College is adhering to its values of respect and services and its mission to meet the needs of its communities. As the College's communities grow more diverse, so do the constituents of the College (1C1, 1C2).

### **Identifying Other Stakeholder Needs**

Other key stakeholder groups who influence academic program design include the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), which maintains a strict process for applying for new programs and reviews the needs in the community college service area to determine the feasibility of adding a program, particularly one that is duplicated at other colleges. In addition to IDOE approval, NICC has to get approval from all other chief academic officers in the state prior to implementation of a program. Business and industry also represent critical stakeholders who provide input through advisory committees before a program is even approved.

The College regularly reviews local, state, and national workforce and industry data to determine how to best serve the communities and its employer and economic development stakeholders in the increasingly global economy. This includes identification of business and industry looking to grow and enhance their workforce. NICC works with these stakeholders to determine their needs through roundtables, one-on-one meetings, grant partnerships, formal alliances/groups and program advisory committees (1C1, 1C2, 3E2).

An innovative example of responding to employer stakeholders has been through the development of career pathway certificates, which offer industry-recognized, short-term training that ladders into traditional academic programs. This programming, offered through the Business and Community

Solutions division, meets both employer and student needs in local communities to fill a shortage in high-growth careers in advanced manufacturing, transportation, information technology, and healthcare. Students who later transfer into degree programs have foundational knowledge and may have credits earned in the program. Some employers offer sponsorships to assist with tuition costs, thus reducing student financial barriers.

Funding and accrediting bodies also serve as stakeholders that the College responds to through program design; the State of Iowa legislature and federal, state, and local granting agencies are identified by NICC as resources to enhance and expand programming to meet the needs of the constituents governed by these entities. NICC monitors their needs through participation in federal, state, and local organizations and one-on-one relationships with key staff. Government entities and private granting organizations often provide opportunities to pilot best practices or share and scale up innovative models of program design. In addition, regulatory bodies, like the Iowa and federal Departments of Education provide a framework through which new programs are developed to ensure equity and access (4A5).

### **Developing Responsive Programming**

To ensure local responsiveness and to meet stakeholder needs, all career and technical programs receive bi-annual input from their advisory committees, including a new uniform survey instrument that asks uniform questions regarding how well the program curriculum meets the needs of business and industry and where it could improve.

Flexibility in delivery format and course scheduling also provides responsiveness to student needs. Course delivery is discussed at advisory committees, which include faculty, the dean, advisors, students, graduates, members from business and industry, high school partners, and continuing education staff. Course delivery is also addressed at course scheduling and enrollment management meetings with broad, College-wide participation (1C1, 1C2).

When looking at course delivery and design, NICC

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uses the strategic enrollment management team to guide decision-making to ensure student and community stakeholder needs are at the forefront. General education courses are scheduled during convenient times for students. Late start sections of common liberal arts transfer courses are offered each semester for students coming in late in the semester. A selection of transfer liberal arts courses are offered during alternative sessions, such as during summer in a variety of formats. A new, innovative Degree after Five program offers five-week, hybrid courses designed for working students who require evening coursework. NICC centers are also analyzed for programming needs to fit their population and ensure that as many students as possible have programs available locally. Open classroom formats for Computerized Numerical Control and Welding will provide students the flexibility to develop a personalized schedule to complete program requirements (1C1, 1C2).

In addition to face-to-face formats, classes are also offered as hybrid, online (both synchronous and asynchronous), and through the Iowa Communications Network (synchronous video conferencing) to respond to the site-bound needs of rural and other students. Three video conference sites are used between the main campuses to ensure effective programming district-wide (1C1, 1C2).

NICC's course management system and related technology are continuously assessed, enhanced and upgraded to meet student needs and organizational requirements. For example, in 2009 NICC hired an external consultant to assess the College's technological infrastructure. The resulting report laid out a framework for NICC to improve its ability to offer technologically-advanced coursework. The plan is currently implemented, funded by both a 2008 bond levy and a Title III—*Strengthening Institutions* grant. In addition to infrastructure improvements, the grant also included an objective to ensure high quality delivery of online programs, which is detailed in 1P4.

### Reviewing Viability of Courses and Programs

Independent of the formal program review, the College recently developed a program sustainability

process. The sustainability study is initiated by the vice president of academic affairs based on a new Program Health Indicator rubric utilizing criteria such as declining enrollment, retention or completion data, advisory committee feedback, or declining workforce needs. If warranted by the rubric data based on pre-determined cut-offs, a sustainability review team is identified and tasked with evaluating data, curriculum, feedback from students and employers, advisory committee recommendations, labor trends, marketing strategies, and financial status of the program to make recommendations to continue, review, suspend or discontinue the program. The goal is to highlight the strengths of the program and make recommendations for improvement as needed to respond to stakeholder needs. The findings of the sustainability review team are then forwarded to the vice president of academic affairs who forwards a program recommendation to the President's cabinet. The President's cabinet reviews and votes on the recommendation. Recommendations to discontinue or suspend a program are then presented to the Board of Trustees for formal action (1C1, 1C2, 4A1, 4A6).

### Assessing Program Currency and Effectiveness

The currency and effectiveness of academic programs are regularly assessed through methods and tools selected by program faculty, the administrative academic team, and the President's cabinet to determine if the program is meeting student, employer, and community needs. This includes (4A1):

- Newly enhanced advisory committee survey
- Program review process (under revision)
- Regional skills gap analysis utilizing workforce data
- Program employment placement rates
- Student transfer data
- Student Satisfaction Survey data

1R3. What are the results for determining if programs are current and meet the needs of the institution's diverse stakeholders?

NICC utilizes data modeling services, alumni surveys, students surveys, and data sharing agreements to track outcomes related to program

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design. These include the following tools and results.

**Skills Gap Reports**

Attention to employer needs for skilled workers plays an increasing role in the College’s academic program design and aligns with the NICC mission to *meet the needs of our communities*. One way NICC evaluates if it has the right programs at the right time is through skills gap analysis, merging data of occupational needs with graduate data. A portion of

a recent skills gap report is shown in Table 1R3.A. These reports have recently been used to justify development of new programs in computer-numerical control machining, industrial maintenance and medical assisting, among others. While local skills gap data is not typically compared to other regional skill gap reports, comparison to state and regional reports are conducted as needed to identify the local region’s unique needs and communicate those needs to state groups, such as legislators or grantors.

**Table 1R3.A. Skills Gaps Analysis**

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Employment			Annual Job Openings			Skills Gap	
		2012 Estimated	2022 Projected	Annual Growth Rate (%)	New	Re-place	Total	Avg. annual grads (3 years)	Annual Gap
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	500	625	2.60	15	10	20	28	No GAP
25-2011	Preschool Teachers	230	260	1.30	5	5	10	9	1
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,150	2,480	1.53	35	40	75	79	No GAP
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	265	310	1.70	5	5	10	6	4
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	535	650	2.15	10	15	25	101	No GAP
31-9091	Dental Assistants	225	255	1.33	5	5	10	14	No GAP
31-9092	Medical Assistants	325	385	1.85	5	5	10	NEW program developed	
47-2031	Carpenters	690	900	2.97	20	10	30	6	24
47-2111	Electricians	590	690	1.69	10	10	20	26	No GAP
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	625	695	1.12	5	15	25	17	8
49-3031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	305	330	0.82	5	5	10	9	1
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	175	215	2.29	5	5	10	11	No GAP
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	520	640	2.31	10	15	25	NEW program developed	
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators	1,020	1,230	2.06	20	30	50	48	2

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### Student Placement Results

Another outcome tracked for effective program design is student placement results. These are available through an in-house alumni survey process, described in 1P1. Previous Tables 1R1.C and 1R2.B showcase results that are available and reviewed at both the institutional and program level.

Internally, programs use placement data to monitor negative changes in placement that might be triggered if a career market is saturated or if program learning outcomes are no longer meeting the needs of industry. These concerns are discussed at deans' meetings and at advisory committee meetings where applicable, and then if needed, curricular changes are advised and formally submitted to the curriculum committee for approval.

For example, the recent Laboratory Science Technician program sustainability review highlighted the disengagement of the advisory committee and difficulty in obtaining internships for program completers. Even though program advisory members participating in the sustainability review expressed a willingness to provide spring 2015 internships for two active program students, this was a factor in supporting the recommendation to suspend the program for fall 2015.

### Student Transfer Success Results

In addition to placement, successful programs also meet the needs of transfer students. Results for transfer students are currently measured by a limited report from two of the three state Regent universities to NICC. That report is shown in Table 1R3.B.

**Table 1R3.B. 2013 Transfer Report**

REGENT	NICC Student Count	1st term GPA of Natives	1st Term GPA of NICC transfers	1st Term GPA of all CC transfers	Cum. GPA of Natives	Cum. GPA of NICC transfers	Cum. GPA of all CC transfers
Iowa State University	59	2.91	2.74	2.57	2.99	2.87	2.73
Univ. of Northern Iowa	68	2.94	2.71	2.67	3.00	2.77	2.83

\*CC= Community College

The value of this report is that it allows NICC to monitor the success of students in comparison with other community colleges and at two different institutions. The consistency of student success at both Regents partners, and in comparison with state peers, suggests that NICC transfer preparation is successful in meeting many students' needs. Currently, this report is undergoing an overhaul at the state level to bring in the third Regent university, University of Iowa, and include additional elements of student success such as achievement of previous degrees or credentials.

The College is also hopeful that a report in the pilot phase from the National Student Clearinghouse will provide clearer outcome results for students who start at NICC and then transfer elsewhere with or without graduating.

### Program Evaluation Results

Program evaluation directly informs program design through recommendations for curricular changes. Per state guidelines, NICC reviews 20% of its

programs annually through formal program evaluation. To date, 100% of programs have met evaluation guidelines. Deans and program faculty write program goals after review and report on progress to the vice president of academic affairs the following year. Details of planned improvements to this process are detailed in 1I3.

Program changes based on program review recommendations have included the establishment of program entrance criteria and or pre-requisite classes for health programs to ensure students are prepared for the level of coursework they will encounter (e.g., HESI testing for Radiologic Technology and Practical Nursing; prerequisite Anatomy and Physiology course for Radiology; identified reading score for Certified Nurse Assistant); modularization and alignment of the curriculum to align with industry standards and statewide curricula (e.g. Welding Computer-Numerical Control Machinist); and the addition of a College Experience course for first-time, degree-seeking A.A and A.S. students. This has now been expanded to all first-time degree-seeking students in

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all degrees and will be offered for senior high school students enrolled in concurrent coursework in spring 2016.

1I3. Based on 1R3, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

In fall 2015, the College will launch its first program to be offered via a competency-based design model. Through this improvement, students in the Computer-Numerical Control Machinist program, a regional employee shortage occupation, will have the opportunity to enroll in the program through more than one “start date” and complete competencies and classroom lecture through a self-paced delivery model. The College expects additional programs will offer a similar format in the future to provide best practices in pedagogy and meet increased employer demand in skilled occupational shortage areas.

Because of the increasing need of developmental coursework for incoming students, the College is also undertaking a redesign of developmental education and placement testing. This includes review of best practices in contextualized instruction, self-paced instruction and experiential learning to ensure that students develop the skills needed to be successful in program areas without having to “sit out” of programs to remediate. The College hired a new adult literacy and developmental education director in spring 2015 to lead this effort. Furthermore, this improvement is part of a current AQIP Action Project, Improve Placement Processes.

To create a quantitative assessment of employer stakeholder needs, NICC developed a new advisory committee survey with eleven standard questions measured on a Likert scale. Questions hone in on employers’ satisfaction with the program, with the advisory committee and with graduates. Results will affirm successful program models and provide rationale for curricular or instructional updates to improve student learning, increase completion, boost placement rates and improve employer satisfaction.

Related to sustainability, a program rubric has been developed as a monitor of each program’s “health”

related to resources, workforce projections, enrollment, retention and completion and graduate data. This ensures programs are proactive in addressing concerns annually versus waiting for the evaluation review.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY

1P4. Academic Program Quality focuses on ensuring quality across all programs, modalities, and locations. Describe the processes for ensuring quality academic programming. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Program Requirement Identification

With both new programs and changes to current programs, required courses and prerequisite courses are determined in conjunction with the program's advisory committee, the program dean and program faculty. To determine courses and rigor, program development teams look at similar programs at other institutions, review accrediting body guidelines, review degree level requirements set in Iowa code, review industry standards and third-party credential competencies, and confer with four-year institutions for transfer guidelines as applicable. All curriculum decisions are brought before the curriculum committee for approval internally before submission to the Iowa Department of Education for state approval (3A1, 3A2, 4A4).

### Program Requirement Communication

Communication to the students regarding the preparation necessary to succeed and the learning goals for each program and degree level are articulated in multiple ways, from the recruitment process through ongoing advising (3A2).

The College is currently using a single assessment for course placement, meaning students are placed into courses and programs based on the results of their ACCUPLACER test scores (or other acceptable scores). Required “cut-off” scores are clearly communicated to students through program course guides and education plans, on the web, by the testing facilitator at required one-on-one intake advising sessions and through concordance tables. As part of NICC’s efforts to move toward a more balanced approach to student placement, however,

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a current AQIP Action Project, Improve Placement Processes, is guiding the College to utilize new testing tools and a multi-faceted process.

Prospective and current students are made aware of the expectations regarding student preparation and student learning objectives in a variety of ways. All recruitment materials emphasize that NICC is an open-door college that welcomes all learners. Both current and prospective students can find information on the [NICC website](#). By following the appropriate path, each student can find relevant information about admission, registration, program and degree requirements, as well as videos giving more details on each program. Students can also access the complete NICC College Catalog online. Print materials, such as program brochures, that students can access or request include comparable information. Each brochure provides entrance requirements, tuition and fees, career opportunities academic requirements and graduation requirements (3A2).

For online learners, distance learning web pages include explanations and expectations for all forms of distance learning courses: online, ICN and hybrid. The [online “quiz”](#) allows students to assess their own readiness for distance learning courses. The new [“FAQ” page](#) helps students understand the concept of distance learning and prepares them for what to expect as a distance learner.

NICC finds personal communication is the best way to help prospective students understand NICC expectations and advantages. NICC’s high school partnerships department maintains regular contact with every high school in the district, and these employees, as well as the admissions representatives, center directors and other faculty and staff make regular visits to area high schools to share information with principals, guidance counselors, teachers and prospective students.

When prospective students visit campus, admissions representatives and intake advisors meet with them to discuss program offerings. Prospective students and their families are then encouraged to participate in bi-monthly Welcome Wednesday visit days, half-day events offering a

campus tour, interaction with faculty, placement testing and information regarding admission, registration and student support services.

Students also learn of program requirements through face-to-face and online orientation options. Orientations allow students the opportunity to meet with faculty, staff and other students to learn about programs, degree requirements, policies and success strategies (3A2).

Even after program admittance, as recommended by the National Association of Academic Advisors (NACADA), advising is required for all students all terms of their enrollment at NICC. This ensures students are frequently engaged in discussions about course and program requirements and academic progress. All students develop an education plan at their intake advising that outlines course requirements and sequencing. Outside of these appointments, students can use a self-service “Program Audit” function through the Xpress learning management system to identify remaining credits needed in a program and what program requirements would change if they switched their program.

### **Ensuring Rigor across Modalities**

NICC maintains a course guide for all courses, which contains the official course description, course goal(s), credit value, unit level and module level objectives, grading format and other course details. Regardless of the format through which a course is offered, faculty must meet the objectives of the course guide. While the same outcomes from a course are expected, faculty are encouraged to make use of the best pedagogical techniques and tools available in meeting these requirements, which they can personalize and convey to students in the course syllabus (3A3, 4A4).

Many NICC programs have an outlined sequence of courses that is provided in the College catalog and on educational plans available from advisors and on the web. These plans show the same prescription for all program formats and the College agrees to offer courses as they are presented on the plans. This rotation and promised offering ensures that

students be able to complete program requirements in the stated timeframe of the program.

To help ensure suitable course development of online courses and to strive for the inclusion of best practices in course design and delivery, the College makes use of two rubric processes. Before a course's first offering, the faculty member is required to meet with an instructional designer to design the course to meet the College's *Online Standards and Guidelines*. This document outlines the minimum expectations for all online and hybrid courses. Developed from best practices and standards from other similar rubrics, the document is routinely updated with input from faculty and staff. To best assist students in using the online courseroom at NICC, all students enrolling in online or hybrid courses must successfully complete an online tutorial that demonstrates how to use the unique features, tools and links within our online courserooms. The tutorial is always available and can be completed and accessed at any time after acceptance to the College (3A3, 4A4).

Additionally, NICC is implementing the Quality Matters (QM) rubric. Initially, this rubric is being used with faculty who volunteer to have their course reviewed. Ultimately, NICC expects faculty to go through this review process and strive to meet QM's standard of excellence based on national research and best practices. The ultimate goal is to develop courses that are best designed to ensure student learning and success.

### **Ensuring Rigor for Dual Credit Courses**

The College's high school partnerships department oversees programs that enable high school students to earn NICC credit while still enrolled in high school. NICC offers college courses to high school students through post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO), concurrent enrollment, career and technical consortiums and through articulations. These programs are guided by State of Iowa Senior Year Plus legislation and referred to as "concurrent" throughout this portfolio.

To ensure consistency and rigor, instructors in these programs are expected to have credentials equivalent to those required of instructors at NICC,

outlined in the *Quality Faculty Plan* and mandated by the Iowa Department of Education. This information is detailed in an [instructor handbook](#). Students are also made aware of their rights and responsibilities through the College Catalog, to which they have access (3A3, 3C2, 4A4).

### **Awarding Prior Learning and Transfer Credits**

The College supports a thorough assessment of each student's formal and informal training and experience and awards academic credit for college-level knowledge and skills a student has gained outside of the classroom including employment and military service.

NICC accepts credits transferred from other accredited colleges and universities for which a minimum grade of C- has been earned. Courses which correspond to an equivalent course at the College are transferred at face value and may be used to fulfill major requirements. Students requesting to transfer college credit earned must have the previous institution send an official transcript to the NICC admissions office. A transcript must be provided from each college or university attended to be considered for credit transfer evaluation (4A2, 4A3).

The opportunity to obtain college credit is also available through the successful completion of several examinations (4A2, 4A3):

- College Level Examination Program
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support
- Excelsior College Exams
- Institutional proficiency examinations from individual departments
- American Council on Education evaluation of in-house trainings at employers.

Through two federal grants from the Department of Labor's *TAACCCT* program, NICC recently evaluated its current policy for transferring credit for prior learning (CPL) to incorporate best practices. NICC currently uses a portfolio process to provide students with the opportunity to earn CPL (4A2).

In addition, a variety of NICC career pathway (non-credit) certificates and coursework, as well as third-party credentials, that are recognized as comparable to credit coursework, can be transferred to NICC. Approved certificates and courses are maintained on a matrix by the vice president of academic affairs and are revisited as new courses and certificates are offered that may ladder into credit programs or provide equivalent learning (4A2, 4A3).

Credit may also be granted to veterans for experiences or coursework completed in the Armed Forces. Students are required to provide an official military transcript and NICC evaluates the request for credit based on recommendations in the *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* produced by the American Council on Education (4A2, 4A3).

**Specialized Accreditation**

The decision to seek accreditation is based on the significance of the accreditation to the field and the value for students. The application and implementation of accreditation, as well as ongoing maintenance, falls to the program deans, directors and faculty members who have the most expertise with the program. Advisory committees are utilized to address special functions within accreditation requirements as well. Accreditation standards are a part of routine program functions. NICC currently maintains eight program accreditations, as well as accreditation of its concurrent enrollment programs with high school students, known as senior year plus (4A5).

**Assessing Outcomes Attained by Graduates**

Graduate assessment includes tracking of program retention and completion through an internal report called program metrics. In addition, many programs have incorporated industry exams or prepare students for such exams (4A6). These are detailed in Table 1P4.A.

**Table 1P4.A. Incorporation of Industry Exams**

Programs requiring industry exams for graduation	Programs preparing students for industry exams after graduation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial Electrician</li> <li>Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning</li> <li>John Deere Tech</li> <li>Associate Degree Nursing</li> <li>Wind Turbine Maintenance and Repair Technician</li> <li>Carpentry</li> <li>Construction Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respiratory Care</li> <li>Radiologic Technology</li> <li>Practical Nursing</li> <li>Associate Degree Nursing</li> <li>Dental Assisting</li> <li>Health Information Technology</li> <li>Cosmetology</li> <li>Welding</li> <li>CNC Machining</li> <li>Massage Therapy</li> <li>Certified Nurse Aide</li> <li>Emergency Medical Technician</li> </ul>

In addition to graduate success, the College tracks job placement by program through an annual alumni survey detailed in previous sections. Deans and program faculty are required to regularly evaluate and set goals for program quality based on program metrics reports; licensure and exam results; accreditation feedback as applicable; and job placement rates. At times, these reviews trigger curriculum changes or sustainability reviews to improve program quality and student learning and success (4A6).

**Assessing Program Rigor across all Modalities**

To ensure rigor across modalities, all instructors maintain common course guides to ensure equivalent student experience. Internally NICC uses faculty comparisons to assess that rigor is maintained through all modalities. For example, composition faculty at the College randomly select and review portfolios from high school students enrolled in concurrent enrollment composition courses to ensure internal validity of the common rubric (3A3, 4A4).

NICC is an accredited member of NACEP, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. The College adheres to the NACEP standards to ensure quality in concurrent enrollment programming in the areas of curriculum, faculty, student, assessment and program

evaluation. Adherence to these standards ensures that courses offered in the high school are of the same quality and rigor as courses offered on-campus; students are held to the same standards of achievement; instructors meet the same hiring criteria of the college and have annual, discipline-specific professional development; and programs are accountable through required impact studies, student surveys and course and program evaluations (3A3, 4A4, 4A6).

In 2010, NICC committed to decreasing the success gap of students in online courses and programs as compared to their face-to-face peers. To NICC, this gap represented an opportunity to improve program design through quality of its delivery mode, while maintaining rigor. As part of this commitment, the College formed a statewide consortium with Quality Matters consisting of several Iowa community colleges. In addition, the College began tracking the GPA and withdrawal rates of students enrolled in various delivery modes as compared to the College average to determine if student success was similar by delivery mode. This information is used to develop interventions and faculty development to improve outcomes where deficient as described in 1R4.

1R4. What are the results for determining the quality of academic programs?

**Online Learner Results**

In this time of delivery mode enhancement and growth of online education, NICC believes that high quality program design should meet the needs of all learners. Thus, its commitment to the Quality

Matters consortium detailed in 1P4. While the College does not yet have results from the Quality Matters assessment of courses to share, it has conducted two in-house workshops and trained 12 instructors. The ultimate result the College hopes to reach is a decrease in its gap of online learner success when compared with face-to-face student success. Table 1R4.A. shows assessment of this gap for the three years NICC has tracked this measure.

**Table 1R4.A. Success Rate of Online Learners Compared to Non-online Learners**

	Fall 2009	Fall 2012	Fall 2013
Success Rate (non-online students)	75.7%	76.8%	75.7%
Success Rate (online only)	65.30%	65.68%	65.79%
Success Rate Gap	10.4%	11.1%	9.9%

NICC is pleased with its progress in this area, however, a growing understanding of this gap, has led the College to dig deeper into the factors of engagement of course design, as well as student characteristics that might account for the existence of a gap at all. This resulted in several improvements in the delivery of distance learning, detailed in 1I4. In addition to tracking this measure, the College compares student success across modalities to monitor maintenance of rigor across modalities. This measure also assists the College in considering delivery mode best practices to assist students. Table 1R4.B. details this comparison.

**Table 1R4.B. Comparison of student GPA and withdrawal rate across modalities**

2011	100% Online	Hybrid	ICN (video)	Face to Face	All Delivery Methods
Withdrawal Rate	9.5%	5.8%	4.7%	5.5%	6.3%
Average GPA	2.60	2.99	3.05	2.86	2.82
2012	100% Online	Hybrid	ICN (video)	Face to Face	All Delivery Methods
Withdrawal Rate	10.2%	5.5%	6.3%	5.6%	6.6%
Average GPA	2.66	2.84	2.99	2.90	2.85
2013	100% Online	Hybrid	ICN (video)	Face to Face	All Delivery Methods
Withdrawal Rate	9.9%	6.6%	6.3%	5.1%	6.2%
Average GPA	2.66	2.99	3.05	2.94	2.89

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This data is compared in two ways with national studies, both of which reveal that NICC is performing at a higher level than peers in the studies. For example, a recent report from the *Community College Research Center* looked at withdrawal rates over a period of two years at two large community college systems. The study found the withdrawal rate to be at 32% at the southern state system and 18% at the western state system, both considerably higher than the NICC withdrawal rate. In another comparison of online performance compared to traditional formats<sup>2</sup>, it is shown that students enrolled in face-to-face sections earned a 3.16 on a 4-point scale while students in distance learning sections earned 2.28 on a 4-point scale. At NICC, distance learning and face-to-face students perform similarly, with a smaller gap in GPA achievement.

Insight gained from online delivery performance data, reinforces the importance of engagement,

considering that students exposed to any kind of synchronous learning environment, including hybrid or video (ICN), perform better and withdraw less than purely online students.

**Concurrent Enrollment Results**

Data to verify program quality in concurrent enrollment options is also tracked, primarily in the form of end of term evaluations from participating students. NICC also tracks senior high school students who take concurrent enrollment courses with the College one year later. These one-year after graduation survey responses are used internally by the high school partnerships team and are also shared with partner high schools in order to monitor concurrent enrollment program quality, access and student satisfaction. Table 1R4.C. details key responses from the survey of 43 students who graduated in 2013.

**Table 1R4.C. One-Year Out Survey (2013 grads)**

Survey Question	Percent
% rating overall experience with NICC high school partnerships “Excellent” or “Good”	100%
% who I would recommend NICC concurrent enrollment courses to other students	100%
% who Agree or Strongly Agree that by taking NICC courses they were better prepared academically for college	87%
% who Agree or Strongly Agree that by taking NICC courses they developed more realistic expectations about college	68%
% who Agree or Strongly Agree that by taking NICC courses they were more confident about their ability to succeed in college	81%
% who Agree or Strongly Agree that by taking NICC courses they improved their study skills	66%
% who attempted to transfer earned NICC credits to other current college or university	97%
% who responded that NICC transfer credits counted as credit toward their College degree completion*	89%
% who responded that NICC transfer credits exempted them from a course in College*	68%

*\*Of those who successfully transferred credit.*

Insights from these results indicate that students benefit from concurrent enrollment courses. It also indicates that despite taking concurrent courses, students are still unsure about College and expectations for their postsecondary education experience. This represents an opportunity for the high school partnerships team.

**Overall Program Quality Results**

As shared in 1P4, program quality is monitored by measures of student success. Table 1R4.D. provides an example of the College’s program metrics tool. The full version of these metrics includes all NICC programs and pre-programs separated by campus to monitor quality and equity campus to campus.

<sup>2</sup> "Assessing academic performance between traditional and distance education course formats" by Mark G. Urtel (2008)

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**Table 1R4.D. Program Metrics (incomplete sample)**

Program Title	Fall 2013 Headcount	Fall 2013 Completion	% Completion	Spring 2014 Headcount	% New	% Continuing (Retained)
AA Business Administration	95	91	95.79%	94	38.30%	61.05%
AA Communication	13	13	100.00%	11	54.55%	38.46%
AA Criminal Justice	82	76	92.68%	68	20.59%	65.85%
AA Early Childhood	22	23	104.55%	17	17.65%	63.64%
AA Human Services	38	33	86.84%	29	37.93%	47.37%
AA Psychology	37	35	94.59%	36	38.89%	59.46%
Accounting Clerk	19	18	94.74%	21	42.86%	63.16%
Accounting Specialist	28	26	92.86%	24	29.17%	60.71%
Agriculture Business	50	49	98.00%	41	9.76%	74.00%
Associate Degree Nursing	46	47	102.17%	39	43.59%	47.83%
Automotive Mechanics	16	16	100.00%	12	0.00%	75.00%
Business Specialist	52	49	94.23%	50	30.00%	67.31%
CNC Machinist Technician	15	15	100.00%	15	0.00%	100.00%
Computer Analyst-Bus & Web Programming	26	26	100.00%	19	31.58%	50.00%
Dairy Science Tech-General	36	36	100.00%	31	3.23%	83.33%
Dental Assisting	23	20	86.96%	17	0.00%	73.91%
Health Information Technology	35	33	94.29%	29	0.00%	82.86%
Industrial Electrician	29	28	96.55%	28	3.57%	93.10%
John Deere TECH	77	77	100.00%	77	0.00%	100.00%
Large Animal Veterinary Technician	30	30	100.00%	29	0.00%	96.67%
Medical Assistant (Diploma)	22	21	95.45%	21	4.76%	90.91%
Radiologic Technology	37	35	94.59%	34	0.00%	91.89%
Respiratory Care	26	25	96.15%	24	0.00%	92.31%
Welding	22	21	95.45%	33	36.36%	95.45%

This data is used internally in a variety of ways. The strategic enrollment management team uses it to monitor enrollment patterns and trends to inform recruitment strategies. Likewise, deans and program faculty use the program metrics to set annual goals related to enrollment and retention.

In addition to program metrics, the College also tracks program quality through assessment of completion metrics (sample provided in Table 1R2.A.), licensure/exam results (provided in Table 1R2.C.), and job placement data (provided in Table 1R2.B.). Each of these measures is monitored at the program level by the program dean and faculty. Insights from this data is used to drive curriculum improvements, recruitment efforts and student services interventions to ensure high program quality. For example, low or decreasing enrollment

in high-demand programs such as respiratory technician and industrial maintenance technician prompted the College to bring attention to these programs through regional recruitment and marketing efforts. As a result, enrollment increased.

Nursing provides another example of a program successfully utilizing data to drive improvements. The Nursing program at NICC has collected and monitored student data for many years (pre-dating incorporation of program metrics). Through results of standardized unit exams from the HESI testing company, Nursing faculty and administration were able to predict student success over time. When they noted a general decrease in HESI test scores and nursing course grades, they determined the program needed progression criteria for students to move into the associate degree nursing level of the program.

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Recently, the program also implemented an admissions exam to test students' math and reading comprehension skills. As a result, students are more likely to complete degree requirements and pass board exams.

Accreditation results are closely monitored at the College with an expectation that accredited programs are maintaining accreditation standards as a routine part of program operation. Table 1R4.E. details active accreditations.

**Table 1R4.E. Accreditation Schedule**

Program	Accreditation Body	Status	Initial Accreditation	Last Visit	Next Visit
Dental Assisting	CODA Commission of Dental Accreditation	Full accreditation	1977	2014	2020
Health Information Technology	CAHIIM Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education	Full accreditation	1990	2001	2015
Medical Assisting	CAAHEP/MAERB Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs/Medical Assisting Educational Review Board	Full accreditation	2014	2014	2019
Radiologic Technology	JRCERT Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology	Full accreditation	1988	2013	2021
Respiratory Care	CoArc Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care	Full Accreditation		2011	2021
Paramedic	CAAHEP/COAEMSP Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs/Committee on Accreditation of Education Program for the Emergency Medical Services Professions	Full accreditation	2019	2014	2019
Nursing	Iowa Board of Nursing	Full accreditation	1977		2019
Large Animal Vet Technician	American Veterinary Medical Association	Provisional	2014	2014	2019
Senior Year Plus	National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships	Full Accreditation	2012	N/A	2018

114. Based on 1R4, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College's program quality has improved over time as a result of data-informed enhancements or changes. For example, analysis of online student data revealed consistent profiles of at-risk online learners. As a result, the distance learning team implemented three strategies in efforts to decrease the success rate gap between online and non-online learners and improve online pedagogy:

- Introduced an online quiz titled "[Are Online Courses Right for Me?](#)"
- Created a handout titled "Characteristics of Successful Online Students at NICC."
- Joined the Quality Matter consortium

Recent improvements in concurrent course design have also resulted from data analysis. Based on responses on one-year post-graduate survey indicating that students were not sure how concurrent coursework prepared them for College expectations or how to ask questions about what courses would transfer into which programs at NICC and other institutions, the department hired two career specialists to work with assigned schools and be available for parent-teacher conferences, parent-student meetings, and high school and networking events to promote the program and help students discuss career pathways and how to transition to their next step after high school.

Deans and program faculty also regularly evaluate and set goals for programs based on program

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metrics reports, licensure results, accreditation feedback, and job placement rates. These reviews trigger curriculum changes to improve program quality. For example, based on the American Veterinary Medical Association accreditation visit in January 2014, the accreditation body made the following recommendations, which the College then implemented:

- Recommendation: Compensation, incentives, and employment security be sufficient to retain the credentialed veterinary technician staff members and attract qualified candidates for future needs.
- Improvement: Two part-time lab assistant positions were eliminated and replaced with a full-time teaching position and a part-time teaching position to increase compensation and incentives and to attract qualified candidates.
- Recommendation: All program personnel have sufficient time for development and delivery of instruction, curriculum development, student evaluation, student advisement and counseling, and professional development.
- Improvement: With adding a full-time Vet Tech position, and a full-time Animal Science position, the College was able to shift schedules so that all program faculty have sufficient time for the tasks outlined by the AVMA during their visit.

Another recent improvement based on the implementation of program metrics has been the development and pilot of the College Experience course in fall 2014 to improve outcomes for all students, but specifically A.A. and A.S. students who were underperforming according to the metrics reports.

Future improvements in program quality planned for the next 1-3 years include the following:

- Revamped program evaluation process
- Annual sustainability and improvement review for programs not meeting criteria for enrollment and student success
- Analysis of standardized advisory committee survey to better gauge and track employer satisfaction and input
- Training 30 faculty on the Quality Matters rubric for quality distance education design by end of fiscal year 2015

- Meeting with 80% of online faculty in 12 departments chosen for Quality Matters review process each term
- Reviewing 10 online courses using the Quality Matters rubric by end of fiscal year 2015
- Improved tracking of concurrent enrollment students to determine if they remain on the career pathway they start in high school as they move into post-secondary education to determine enhancements to concurrent student education.

### ACADEMIC STUDENT SUPPORT

1P5. Academic Student Support focuses on systems designed to help students be successful. Describe the processes for developing and delivering academic support to students. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

#### Academic Needs of Underprepared and At-risk Students

The needs of underprepared and at-risk students are determined using the same methods outlined earlier for all incoming students. At-risk students are also identified and engaged through partner referrals from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) providers, Vocational Rehabilitation, alternative learning high school graduates, high school re-engagement programs and human services agencies.

In addition, the College retention team reviewed data in 2013 on student persistence and identified academic program populations at high-risk for attrition based on program retention trends: A.A., pre-nursing and A.A. with concentration in criminal justice. Based on this information, NICC launched a new College Experience course, piloted in fall 2014 as a requirement for all A.A. and A.S. students. In fall 2015 all first-time students will be required to take the course (3D1, 3D2).

NICC also serves approximately 150 at-risk students per year through its long-standing *TRIO-Student Support Services* program. The *TRIO* program identifies and recruits students who are first-generation, who disclose disabilities and/or who

report low-income on the FAFSA. Personal interviews with program staff and surveys assist personnel in identifying these students' unique barriers and needs for academic support. *TRIO* participants receive intentional and intrusive support throughout their program participation (3D1, 3D2).

**Support Services to Help Students Select and Complete Courses and Programs**

NICC is committed to helping students select a program that matches their needs, interests and abilities. This is accomplished in several ways (3D2, 3D3):

- Clear, concise and accurate materials that portray the College's programs and expectations
- Career development tools and counseling to help students align interests and abilities with viable career paths and programs of study
- Required, holistic academic advising to assist students in career goal setting and selecting required courses on their program path
- Enrollment specialists and career coaches to support students with financial barriers and students transitioning from adult literacy or non-credit coursework into academic programs
- Advisor assigned at the time of acceptance to the College who makes an early outreach with accepted students
- Learning centers staffed by faculty to assist students with placement test preparation or brush up skills
- Participation in National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) to educate students, parents and internal stakeholders on how to discuss information with students on programs that may be non-traditional for their gender.

For students considering online courses and programs, the distance learning department has implemented an [online quiz](#) to provide students with a realistic expectation of the workload and

characteristics of online coursework. Students are given immediate feedback with each answer they choose on 11 questions and then are provided with summary recommendation statement upon quiz submission (3D2, 3D3).

A new state program is also leading to earlier interventions of College staff in students' career pathway and program selection process. A state grant leveraged with a federal Department of Labor *Youth CareerConnect* grant is providing new funds to NICC and its community partners to lead early career exploration and work-based learning opportunities for high school students in the region (3D2, 3D3).

**Ensuring Faculty Are Available for Students**

All faculty are required to inform students on their syllabus of their office hours and how to contact them. Full- and part-time faculty are required to maintain office hours for students as part of their contract. The syllabus is distributed the first day of class and available on the Xpress learning management system courseroom. Faculty are also required to maintain the Xpress grade book, to ensure students have access to their grades. Faculty are also available to students through program orientations, visit days, and program events on campus (3C5).

**Identifying and Meeting Learning Support Needs of Students**

Attendance tracking and academic alert systems inform staff members if students are succeeding in their studies and provide opportunities for NICC to offer additional support. Student support needs are also determined through placement testing, counseling and advising sessions, and disability services.

To meet identified needs the College offers a number of services, detailed in Table 1P5.A.

**Table 1P5.A. Academic Support Services Available to Students (3D1, 3D3, 3D4, 3D5)**

Academic Support Service	Description of Services
Learning centers at Peosta, Calmar, and Dubuque locations	Centers provide high-skill (often faculty) individual or group tutoring, instruction in English, math, reading, science, study skills, test-taking, time management, effective use of research and information, and more.

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Peer tutoring	Arranged with peer tutors recruited from students who have already mastered a course, this option is free of cost to students.
Writing Centers	Located within the campus learning centers, the writing centers assist NICC students with any academic writing needs and effective use of research and information.
Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs	Instruction includes adult basic education courses in basic skills attainment, "brush up" tutoring, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, and high school equivalency courses.
ALEKS math remediation program	Available to students as a math remediation tool.
Disability services	Services provides access, accommodations and advocacy for students who have disabilities. Examples include accessible textbooks, additional time on exams, sign language interpreters and mobility assistance.
Library	Provide students with face-to-face and online assistance for research needs.
Support Though the Encouragement of Peers (S.T.E.P.)	This peer-driven support group for students with disabilities has a mission to empower students with disabilities through life management and academic skills.
Online Tutoring	NICC offers complimentary online tutoring assistance for most course subjects for online students through Smarthinking service.
Academic Advising	All students, every term, are required to work with a professional or faculty advisor to review academic performance, goals and future planning.
Enrollment Specialists	These staff work intensively with students on financial aid warning and suspension to develop and implement an academic success plan and track student progress.

**Learner Support Needs of Faculty**

The support needs of faculty are addressed in a variety of ways. In addition to encouraging and supporting off-campus professional development opportunities, the College has a district-wide faculty development committee that plans an annual faculty development day in October and a convocation in January. The committee is responsible for allocating \$25,000 of faculty development funds annually for these and other professional development events (3C4).

In addition, faculty are surveyed after convocations in August and January regarding the material presented and informational needs and supports for future meetings. The department deans facilitate department meetings at least twice at the beginning of each term, offering an additional opportunity for faculty to share needs and concerns.

In 2012, the College developed and promoted an internal faculty professional development website, which includes training opportunities, instructional information, and research on best practices. Deans, the distance learning director and the technology training coordinator are involved in reviewing and updating this site. The distance learning team and

technology training coordinator also offer district-wide trainings for faculty during fall and spring semesters. The training calendar is posted on the site and evaluations are completed on every offering. Recently, the coordinator conducted a global survey to identify upcoming trainings (3C4). The results are shared in 1R5.

The College also addresses the support needs of concurrent enrollment. NICC partners with its local Area Education Agency to offer one full day of professional development each semester for concurrent and NICC instructors in the areas of industrial technology, family consumer sciences, business, health and agriculture. NICC pays for substitute instructors and the instructors spend the morning sharing and collaborating as a group and typically spend the afternoons touring a local business to stay current on what is happening in their industries to share back in the classroom. For arts and science instructors, NICC also hosts workshops and invites concurrent instructors to on-campus in-service days for faculty as well. Finally, the College records as many professional development sessions as possible and posts them to its online site for anytime access by instructors (3C, 3C4).

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**Qualified, Trained, and Supported Support Services Staff**

NICC requires that staff members who provide student academic support have a bachelor's degree or master's degree in the appropriate field with previous experience and training. Minimum qualifications are provided on all posted job description. Each description is reviewed and revised as needed (3C6).

Upon hire, NICC student services division provides ongoing training and cross-training for staff on research and trends, best practices, College resources and policies and procedures related to student engagement and success. All professional level student services staff have a budget allocation for annual professional development as well as a division budget allocation for webinars and all-staff trainings (3C6).

Learning center staff who provide academic support services are faculty who are required to be credentialed through the *Quality Faculty Plan* just like instructional faculty under Iowa Code, Chapter 260C. Unlike other faculty, learning center faculty are not required to have a master's degree and additional credits in a specific discipline because they are teaching in a non-credit environment. NICC requires that they have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and demonstrated proficiency in the area in which they provide tutoring in the Center (3C2, 3C6).

**Communicating Academic Support Services**

Students are informed of academic support services before enrollment at Welcome Wednesday visit days, new student orientation, on the [webpage](#) and through [iNdex](#), a comprehensive guide for student success reviewed with students during their first advising appointment. Students who seek the assistance of counselors and disability services are also referred to academic support services as appropriate. Learning center services are communicated to students through course syllabi, presentations from learning center faculty, and the Xpress learning management system. Online and other students are made aware of the Smartthinking tutoring available online during orientation, through

handouts available at the learning center, and through a direct link in their online course room. These services are also discussed in-depth during the new College Experience course (3D2).

**Determining Goals for Retention, Persistence and Program Completion**

College-wide retention and completion goals are set by the President's cabinet through analysis of trend data. The goals are determined through program metrics developed in fall 2013 to assist departments in meeting the college-wide fiscal year priorities of increased retention and enrollment (See Table 1R4.D for example). Program metrics reports were initially ran for a two-year period so each dean could evaluate programs under their area and identify trends in enrollment, retention, and completion. Goals were then identified departmentally by deans and shared via the College's annual goal setting process. Retention data was also analyzed closely in 2013-2014 to determine a profile of students who struggled most to persist. This data led to the pilot of the College Experience course for A.A. and A.S. students, which is being expanded to all new students in fall 2015 (4C1, 4C2, 4C3). More information related to retention, persistence and completion goals is provided in sections 2P2, 2R2, and 2I2.

**Evaluation Methods**

To assess the satisfaction and participation with academic support services and the processes in place to identify needs, NICC utilizes both formal, benchmarked surveys (CCSSE, SENSE, AHEAD), as well as internal surveys (students services, learning center, etc.). Internal surveys allow departments to customize questions to ascertain information not always readily available via formal survey tools. When a program is grant-funded, such as the *TRIO-Student Support Services* grant, annual outcomes are used to evaluate the program's success. The College also invests in software tools to track student usage and progress to determine return on investment of interventions.

1R5. What are the results for determining the quality of academic support services?

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The quality of most academic support services are tracked through student usage, as well as student satisfaction. To assess the quality of academic support services, and the processes in place, NICC tracks the following:

- CCSSE and SENSE survey results for applicable questions
- Student services' student satisfaction survey results
- Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) survey results to assess disability services from the perspective of students, faculty, and administrative staff
- *TRIO-Student Support Services* grant outcomes
- TutorTrac usage for online students
- Learning center usage and survey results
- Faculty professional development needs

survey results

- Internal retention and completion data (*detailed in 2R2*)
- Success rate of students placed on an academic plan for suspension of financial aid
- Success rate of students receiving warnings of suspension

NICC administers CCSSE and SENSE surveys every two years and monitors results related to student rated importance, usage and satisfaction with academic support services. CCSSE and SENSE provide comparison data with other similar colleges and other Iowa colleges. Table 1R5.A provides comparative SENSE data for NICC, Iowa colleges and the national cohort in the six SENSE categories:

**Table 1R5.A. 2014 SENSE Comparative Results**

Benchmark	Your College	Iowa		2014 Cohort	
	Score	Score	Difference	Score	Difference
Early Connections	60.7	61.0	-0.4	50.0	10.7
High Expectations and Aspirations	48.3	45.9	2.4	50.0	-1.7
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	61.2	55.1	6.1	50.0	11.2
Effective Track to College Readiness	49.2	46.3	2.8	50.0	-0.8
Engaged Learning	47.8	51.2	-3.3	50.0	-2.2
Academic and Social Support Network	58.2	51.4	6.8	50.0	8.2

This data demonstrates that NICC scored higher or effectively equal to the Iowa cohort and the national cohort in the measures of *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, *Early Connections*, and *Academic and Social Support Network*, three areas critical to evaluating student support services. Table 1R5.B provides additional longitudinal SENSE data on key indicators related to academic support.

**Table 1R5.B: Key SENSE Indicators Related to Academic Support Services**

Indicator	2009		2012		2014	
	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges
% Agree or Strongly Agree: Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me	74.5	62.4	74.4	62	82.7	63.3
% Agree or Strongly Agree: An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them	39	38	46	39.8	53.1	42.5
% Agree or Strongly Agree: All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	67.9	66.3	74.3	68.3	79.6	70.4

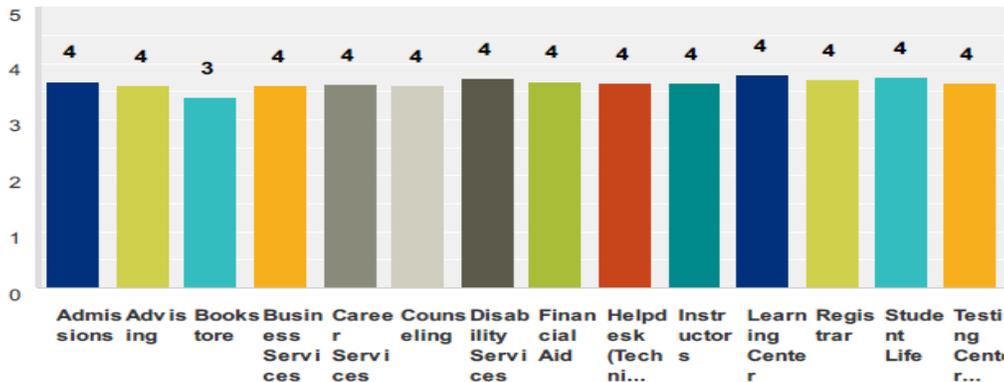
The SENSE survey results show impressive growth in NICC’s performance over time and in comparison to other medium colleges. This suggests that that College efforts to improve process to reach all students to help set academic goals and develop an academic plan are paying off. While SENSE tracks behaviors and satisfaction of entering students, CCSSE tracks behaviors and satisfaction of mostly returning students in the spring. Table 1R5.C provides CCSSE results since 2008 and in comparison to other medium colleges for indicators related to academic student services.

**Table 1R5.C.: Key CCSSE indicators Related to Academic Student Support Services**

Indicator	2008		2011		2013	
	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges
How much does this college emphasize "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much" providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	74	71	71	73	74	74
Sometimes or Often Utilize Academic Advising/Planning	68	55	66	58	62	59
Sometimes or Often Utilize Skills Labs	46	38	43	40	37	41
Sometimes or Often Utilize Services for people with Disabilities	8	8	9	9	11	9
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with Advising/Planning (of students not reporting NA)	92	87	90	88	93	88
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with Skills Labs (of students not reporting NA)	89	87	90	88	89	88
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with Services for people with Disabilities (of students not reporting NA)	68	69	79	71	84	72

These results demonstrate tremendous gains in the satisfaction with services for people with disabilities. In this area, NICC has outpaced its peers. One area in which NICC has focused improvement efforts in student engagement is learning center resources. While the College outperforms its peers, it believes more students would benefit from out-of-class-tutoring. To dig deeper into NICC student satisfaction with specific services, student services implemented a new survey in spring 2014 for students to relay satisfaction with academic support services. Table 1R5.D summarizes results of the first student satisfaction survey. Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 5.

**Table 1R5.D: 2015 Student Services Survey Results. (Sample = approx. 520)**



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This first survey indicates strong satisfaction of students with NICC academic support services across the board. It will be repeated annually to both new and continuing students.

To track quality of disability services at NICC, the College monitors both participation in programming over time and satisfaction of various stakeholders through the AHEAD survey (first administered in spring 2013). Table 1R5.E shows longitudinal participation results.

**Table 1R5.E: Disability Services Participation**

	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
# of students receiving accommodations	92	105	80	84	102	90

The results show that disability services participation at NICC remains consistent, demonstrating that students are aware of and comfortable coming to the department for academic support. In fact, participation represents approximately 25% of students who self-identify as having a disability upon enrollment at the College. This premise is corroborated by students results of a spring 2013 survey conducted by AHEAD survey results. Results for student, administrative staff, and faculty groups are detailed in Table 1R5.F.

**Table 1R5.F: AHEAD Survey Findings**

Survey Cohorts	Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement
<b>Students</b> were asked questions about interactions and experiences with disability services, academic experiences at the college, and accessibility to students with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% responded that processes for establishing services were excellent or good</li> <li>• 93% responded that processes for determining reasonable accommodations were excellent or good</li> <li>• 79% responded that the availability of support in developing academic skills was excellent or good</li> <li>• 93% responded that staff availability was excellent or good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quieter testing area</li> <li>• Hiring mentors who were "more qualified"</li> <li>• more timely conversion of books through Kurzweil</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative staff</b> were asked about overall consultation, collaboration and support by the department to their departments when they are serving individuals with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% responded that overall consultation, collaboration and support was "excellent" or "good"</li> <li>• 84% responded that overall service to students with disabilities was "excellent" or "good"</li> <li>• Identified strengths include peer support programs, use of technology, welcoming to students, and seamless services for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory training for as part of orientation</li> <li>• Staff need to work on not "enabling" the students with disabilities and assist them with learning how to be as independent as possible.</li> <li>• Continuous ongoing opportunities for faculty and staff for professional development opportunities</li> <li>• Work with the advising department to establish ways of identifying and communicating the needs of students to build appropriate and effective education plans</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty</b> questions focused on information about the effectiveness of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85.2% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with consultation of individual student needs</li> <li>• 87.7% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with early identification of students who use accommodations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27% were not satisfied with information on ways to teach students with disabilities effectively and design courses more accessibly</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>88.9% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with opportunity to provide feedback on recommended accommodations</li> </ul>	
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Based on these results, it is clear that disabilities services is providing a much needed academic service for students, but also relied upon by faculty and staff for training and professional development to better serve students with disabilities across the College. This insight has been used to drive improvements in this area described in 115.

The *TRIO-Student Support Services* program reports outcomes annually to the federal Department of Education to monitor the effectiveness of the program. Table 1R5.G shows two years of results for the roughly 160 students the program serves annually.

**Table 1R5.G: TRIO Results, 2012-2104**

Indicator	TRIO Target	2012-2013	2013-2014
Good academic standing	80%	88%	88%
Persisted fall to fall	68%	81%	84%
% graduated with a degree w/in 4 years	20%	51%	60%
% graduated and transferred to a 4-year college with an AA degree within 4 years	10%	26%	34%

The NICC *TRIO* program continues to be a bright spot in academic support. *TRIO* students out-perform the college body as a whole in persistence and graduation rates. The College believes this is due to the deep engagement, cohort model of learning, intensive advising and required tutoring that these students receive.

The NICC learning centers utilize TutorTrac system to monitor student usage of the center and make improvements for student learning and support.

Additionally, online tutoring is tracked directly through the Smarthinking online tutoring system. Table 1R5.H. shows results for learning center and Smarthinking (online) contact hours, as well as individual student and total visits.

**Table 1R5.H: Learning Center & Smarthinking Tutoring Participation**

	2012-2013					2013-2014				
	Calmar	Peosta	Dubuque	TOTAL	Online	Calmar	Peosta	Dubuque	TOTAL	Online
<b>Total Visits</b>	2968	6423	643	10,034	1918	4503	8331	2430	15,264	1403
<b>Unique Students</b>	449	922	132	1,503	517	482	897	291	1,670	409
<b>Hours of Contact</b>	3296	5908	1357	10,561	1318	6618	9707	4419	20,744	953

The data from TutorTrac and Smarthinking is used by learning center staff and administrators to determine the type of staffing needed, optimal hours of operation, and overall center awareness and usage. These results demonstrate growth in tutoring service access, particularly in the number of contact hours students are spending with tutors, although the reverse is true for online tutoring. This demonstrates to the College the critical importance of continuing face-to-face tutoring options for students.

In 2013-2014, the Calmar Learning center also conducted an internal survey to 380 campus students. While 79% responded that they were “aware of the services provided by the center,” only 38% reported using the center. Of students who did not use the learning center, 18% found it unnecessary for them and 16% reported off-campus obligations. The learning center also conducted a follow-up survey in spring of 2014 of 106 students who did use the center; 88% of them indicated that the center “helped them be successful.” Based on these results, the Calmar Learning center determined a desire to increase usage and

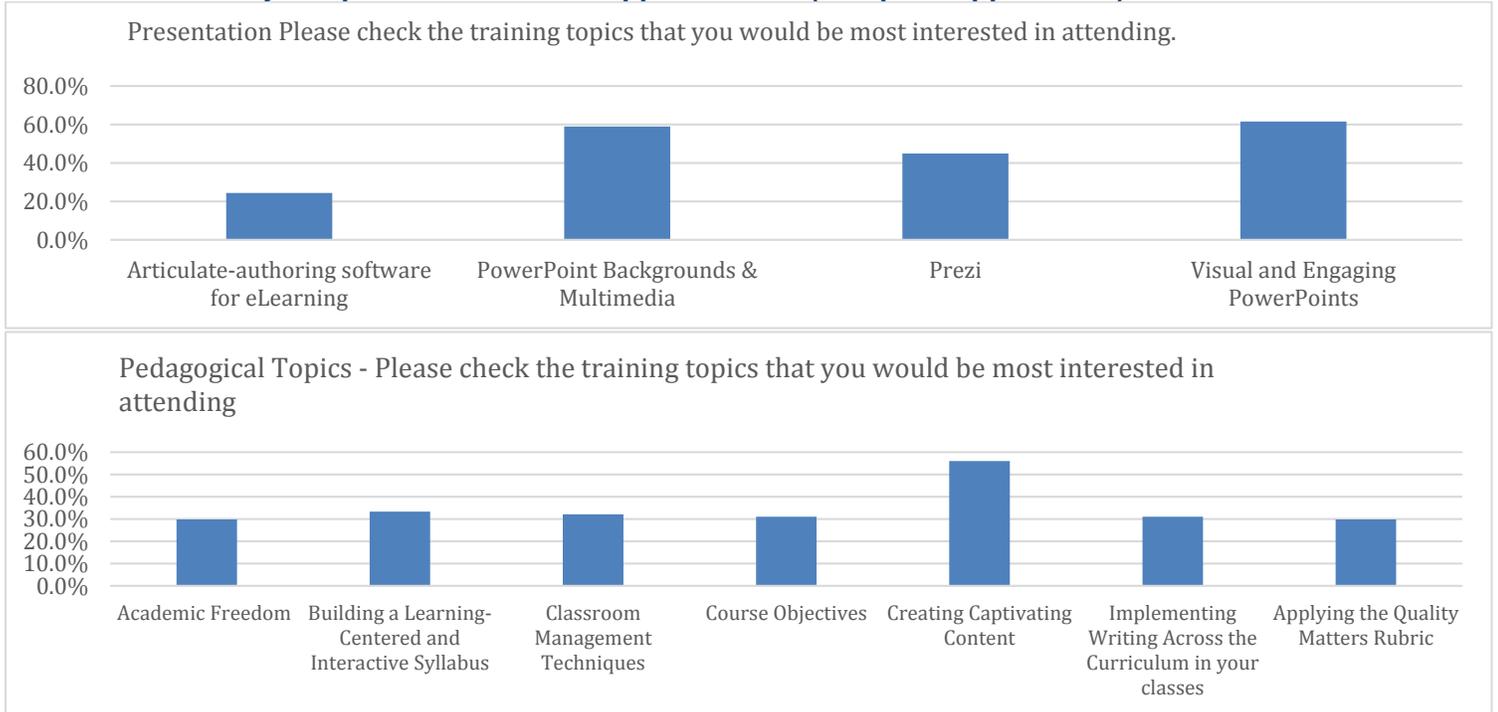
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engagement with the center. Improvements are described in 115.

technology training survey conducted annually. Table 1R5.I. highlights key survey findings.

Faculty needs related to support services are tracked through surveys as well, such as the

**Table 1R5.I: Faculty Response Related to Support Needs. (Sample = approx. 110)**



Faculty response to training surveys provides insight into the variety of topics of interest to faculty. It is clear from the survey, that trainings need to be diverse, with the understanding that individual training session attendance may be low as interests and support needs vary.

Despite every early effort to keep students making satisfactory academic progress, interventions continue to be available for students who receive a warning or suspension status for failure to do so. These students work closely with enrollment specialists to return to good standing. Table 1R5.J demonstrates success rates of students.

**Table 1R5.J: Success of Warned or Academic Plan Students**

	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Students on Academic Plan	255	99	244
% meeting terms of Academic Plan	60%	79%	66%
Students on Warning	207	n/a	153
% returned to good standing	18%	n/a	33%

These results indicate the critical role of enrollment specialists to connect students to academic support services to help them remain at the College or meet terms for good standing and financial aid.

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115. Based on 1R5, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College is collecting preliminary results and developing a data capture plan for students enrolled in the new College Experience course. Planned assessment capture will include both assessment of the course and assessment of student success. The assessment plan elements will include the following:

- Formal instructor feedback at three intervals
- Student course evaluations
- Follow-up survey with student during following semester
- Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) pre-and post-test during course
- Course completion rate
- Next term retention rate
- Completion and/or transfer rate

These results will be compared internally with students of the same demographic who were not in the experience course in previous years.

In addition, the College has utilized the CCSSE and SENSE surveys since 2006 to determine the needs and perceptions of students. Numerous committees and work teams access this data to determine service needs. For example, the NICC advising processes were analyzed and enhanced to a required every term model based on student feedback. Increased communication with students early in the enrollment process, more personal approach to faculty advisor trainings, improved written and web materials and a new publication called [iNdex](#) were all changes based on survey data.

Before students even enroll, NICC is moving towards a three-pronged approach in relation to student placement to ensure students are in the right program from the beginning: academic/aptitude testing, career interest, and motivation/behavioral assessment to tailor academic support needs. To date, placement scores have been updated as the College transitions from the ACCUPLACER to the ACT Compass tool and demographic questions added to the process that will assist advising in determining expectations of students and to allow students to self-identify their learning patterns.

The College is also working closely with high schools and communities to educate students and adults on the many on-ramps, credentials, and opportunities to begin or continue their education at NICC. Two grants, a state intermediary grant and a federal *Youth CareerConnect* grant, are supporting the College's efforts in this area. Both initiatives kicked off in fall 2014 with goals to connect more than 750 high school students with mentoring, work-based learning, and internship experiences over the next three years.

Supporting these initiatives includes the College's 2014 participation in the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE), which provided professional development to faculty and staff related to recruiting, advising, teaching, and supporting students interested or enrolled in programs that are non-traditional for their gender (e.g. males in nursing or females in welding). This includes development of a tool-kit for career counselors and advisors to use in advising on non-traditional careers. The College is using results of its NAPE action plan to improve enrollment and outcomes for this population.

Auxiliary support services have made improvements as well. As a result of lower than expected learning center usage (shared in 1R5), the learning center in Calmar decided to promote itself more when the results indicated that some students did not know the services they offered. The actions initiated included:

- Learning center representation at new student orientations
- Working with faculty to have student groups visit the Center during the first weeks of class
- Learning center staff visiting the college experience courses

Learning center staff in Peosta also hired additional math tutors in response to the overwhelming use of Center assistance for this area. TutorTrac data also assisted in improving staff patterns, by demonstrating that most students used the center from the 11am-1pm hours.

Disability services, likewise, quickly created quality initiatives taken directly from student, administrative

and faculty feedback in the AHEAD survey (Table 1R5.F). These included the following:

- The testing technician has been made aware of students' desire for quieter testing areas and works to make sure that all who enter and leave the testing center use a quiet voice during the times students are testing.
- To address the "more qualified" mentors issue, the S.T.E.P. coordinator and director work closely with current mentors to make sure that they know that the mentors are not to provide instruction in specific subject matters as they are not tutors.
- The disability services department is developing regular, ongoing trainings to assist with staff and faculty training and orientation.
- The disability services department and advising department have established a process where the line of communication remains open about shared students and their needs.
- The department reviewed its processes for book conversion and significantly improved its efficiency in obtaining book lists, identifying students who need the service, and uploading books.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

1P6. Academic Integrity focuses on ethical practices while pursuing knowledge. Describe the processes for supporting ethical scholarly practices by students and faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

Academic integrity is guided by the College's *Academic Freedom Policy* and *Student Conduct Code*, including an academic integrity policy. The *Academic Freedom Policy* states that it is the policy of NICC to support the principles of academic freedom, which is crucial in the development of critical thinking, the fostering of creative and alternative ideas, the encouragement of free expression, all within the bounds of institutional policy and decorum. The policy applies to the comments, actions, and expressions of faculty and students of NICC in the classroom and any other academic session (2D, 2E1, 2E3).

Faculty members at NICC have the following rights under the protections of academic freedom (2D):

- To determine the content of a course consistent with the course guide and other state or federal requirements that may apply to a course
- To determine the pedagogy for a course or program;
- To create and implement the methods of instruction; and
- To create and require the methods of, timing, and character of assessments.

Faculty members of NICC are likewise charged with the following responsibilities related to academic freedom (2D, 2E1, 2E3):

1. The obligation to frame discussion and content in a manner related to the course content. Faculty have the right to introduce topics related to the course subject matter, but must take caution to not introduce or infuse matters or opinions that have no relation to the course or the field of study;
2. The obligation to protect the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of the students in the teaching and methods employed in the course;
3. The obligation to protect the integrity and civility of the classroom environment, including, but not limited to, the privacy and dignity of students and classroom participants;
4. The obligation to conduct and manage all activity related to the course within the framework of the discipline;
5. The obligation to conduct themselves consistent with the requirements of the NICC *Faculty and Employee Handbooks*, as may be amended from time to time; and
6. The obligation to make reasonable efforts to assist students to achieve the academic goals set out in a student's plan of study or the course objectives.

Students rights and responsibilities are also outlined in the *Academic Freedom Policy*. Students have the following rights and protections under the conditions of academic freedom (2D, 2E1, 2E2, 2E3):

- To have ideas, material, and content presented on in the academic setting that is related to the subject matter of the course;

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- To learn in an atmosphere conducive to the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of the student;
- To be provided the legal and civil rights protections granted and required by law;
- To be allowed and encouraged to challenge ideas, concepts, and content without retribution and recourse;
- To be provided information on course expectations, grades, and other information directly related to performance or completion of a course;

And, like faculty, students are charged with particular responsibilities as well (2D, 2E1, 2E2, 2E3):

1. The obligation to participate in discussion and the free expression of ideas in a manner related to the pedagogy as determined by the faculty member
2. The obligation to not compromise the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of the faculty or fellow students during the conducting of the course;
3. The obligation to protect the integrity and civility of the classroom environment, including, but not limited to, the privacy and dignity of faculty, students and classroom participants;
4. The obligation to conduct themselves consistent with the requirements of the NICC *Code of Student Conduct*; and
5. The obligation to make reasonable efforts to achieve the academic goals set out in the plan of study or the course objectives.

The *Academic Freedom Policy* was developed by the academic affairs department, reviewed by the executive director of human resources, the vice president of academic affairs, and program deans, and approved by the College cabinet in June 2014. It is meant to define and explain the rights and obligations of faculty and students consistent with the legal rights and obligations of NICC as an educational entity, and not intended to bridge or expand rights under any federal or state law (2E1).

In addition, academic dishonesty, in any form, such as plagiarism or cheating, is a violation of the NICC *Student Conduct Code*. Student conduct/behavioral

complaints are funneled to the vice president of student services or the associate dean of student services who function as conduct officers for the College. These administrators review all conduct reports and forward academic dishonesty reports to the appropriate academic dean for action. Implementation of Maxient software in spring 2015 will make this process paperless and more efficient (2E1).

In 2014 the NICC finalized an *Academic Dishonesty Policy* to provide more guidance for faculty handling these infractions. The policy was developed to ensure it follows the same process as for other misconduct cases. To assist faculty, the *NICC Faculty Handbook* also outlines procedure for handling academic dishonesty and recommends that a statement be placed in the College syllabus defining plagiarism and the consequences.

If a violation of academic dishonesty occurs, the instructor completes an *Incident of Concern Report*. This form is available through the College's Xpress portal. A copy is given to the vice president of student services and the student. The vice president provide a copy to the program dean (2E1, 2E3).

In an effort to prevent and detect plagiarism, the College also provides Turnitin.com service, a web based plagiarism prevention tool. The Turnitin service is integrated into the Xpress courseroom for easy access by instructors and students. All student submissions that are eligible for scanning by Turnitin are scanned automatically upon student assignment submission in Xpress (2E2, 2E3).

#### 1R6. What are the results for determining the quality of academic integrity?

The number of academic dishonesty reports that were submitted for archival before 2014 were fewer than twelve. This number was not indicative of the actual number of violations, however. Upon investigation by the College's conduct officers, it was determined that faculty were handling the dishonesty concerns immediately, but were not clear on the reporting process. Thus, very few infractions were reported. The revised policy and procedure

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and department trainings will address this oversight beginning fall 2014.

116. Based on 1R6, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The vice president of student services addressed faculty on these issues at the fall convocation as well as at the faculty professional development day. Faculty were informed of the revised conduct code, forms and automation of the process. The importance of addressing and reporting academic dishonesty was also addressed.

The College reviews the *Student Conduct Code* annually and revises on a 3-5 year schedule. A complete revision occurred in 2013-2014 based on the NCHERM model Code for Community Colleges. The Code forms have also been revised and will be online, fill-able and automatically routed to the appropriate administrator with the Maxient software system. With this software, tracking of misconduct cases, communication management and process compliance will now be automated. Training on Maxient is set for the College's Behavioral Intervention Team in spring 2015 for fall implementation.

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**AQIP Category Two: Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholder Needs**

*prioritized by how well they match the college mission and vision.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Meeting the needs of its students and communities is core to the mission of Northeast Iowa Community College. In fact, last year, the College served 1 in 7 district residents aged 18-65 through academic programs, concurrent high school programming and Business and Community Solutions’ economic development and continuing education programming. The College also engages in countless partnerships with local and state governments, federal programs, economic development entities, donors, alumni, and community non-profits.

Meeting stakeholder needs has long been a strength of the College, as noted in its 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report: *NICC has defined processes to create, prioritize and build relationships with organizations and employers that depend upon a supply of its students. External partnerships are*

While building on this strength, NICC has focused since 2010 on meeting student needs by improving their front door experience at the College and implementing other improvements to increase retention and completion.

The College’s efforts in the *Meeting Student and Other Key Stakeholders Needs* category will apprise readers of processes, results and improvements related to:

- Current and Prospective Student Need,
- Retention, Persistence, and Completion,
- Key Stakeholder Needs,
- Complaint Processes, and
- Building Collaborations and Partnerships

The following table provides a self-assessment of the College’s maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Aligned 2014: Integrated
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Aligned
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive financial literacy programming for students</li> <li>• Cross-departmental retention team to monitor and integrate retention efforts across the College</li> <li>• Program orientations established in addition to College orientations</li> <li>• Behavioral intervention team established to quickly respond to unusual behavior concerns</li> <li>• Increased counseling and student health education</li> <li>• Launch of career pathway certificates to quickly meet employer needs for skilled workers and prepare students for academic programs</li> <li>• Partnerships with local high schools to re-engage high school dropouts</li> <li>• Improved and automated complaint process</li> <li>• Establishment of Career Learning Link to provide career coaching and workplace learning experiences for high school students</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active: Improve Placement Processes</li> <li>• Active: Evaluate Student Onboarding and Placement</li> </ul>

Looking ahead, NICC is focusing efforts in *Category Two* on a comprehensive process and data capture system for onboarding students. Currently, the College does not have a customer relationship management system, and relies on various data systems to integrate information about its students. Integration of this data will allow the College to provide more seamless support to students. NICC is also focusing on enhanced and expanded relationships with its K-12 school district partners to increase college and career readiness of high school graduates and provide clear pathways to College and career for those students.

**CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENT NEED**

2P1. Current and Prospective Student Need focuses on determining, understanding and meeting the non-academic needs of current and prospective students. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Identifying and Determining Key Student Groups to Target for Educational Offerings and Services**

Meeting the non-academic needs of current and prospective students is integral to the intake and enrollment process at NICC. All students at NICC are required to meet with an advisor prior to registering for classes, which provides an opportunity for students to self-disclose any non-academic needs and also for advisors to share with students up-front information on available supports. Student groups are also identified through their participation in non-academic opportunities through Campus Life, such as clubs. Some student groups identified for particular support services (academic and non-academic) upfront at NICC include the following:

- Veterans
- Nontraditional learners by age (over 25)
- Students with disabilities
- Online learners
- First-generation students
- Students transitioning from Adult Education and Literacy
- Students transitioning from certificate, non-credit training
- English Language Learners
- Hispanic students
- African-American/black students

New student groups to identify and target for educational services at NICC are determined through opportunities to participate in new initiatives, such as grant-funded projects, through state funding requirements, through economic conditions and local community initiatives, and through the College leadership team's determined priorities (3D1, 3E2).

For example, a recent veterans initiative in the State of Iowa produced legislation aimed to provide critical services to veterans to succeed in transition to

civilian life and employment in the state. Additionally, NICC is currently exploring opportunities to serve international students and students in the foster care system as it seeks new recruitment opportunities through existing partnerships in our communities. Other examples of new student groups to target for educational services include ex-offender population, opportunity youth (neither working nor in school), and students who have completed some coursework but not completed a program.

**Meeting Changing Student Needs**

Meeting the changing needs of current and future student body is a challenge, but one in which NICC engages its entire faculty and staff. This is accomplished through leadership at the presidential level through a common message of serving all students who walk through NICC's doors and encouraging a diverse, global College community. This has led to the beginning of a culture shift at the institution where it is understood that all faculty and staff play a role in meeting students' needs for success. Nevertheless, face-to-face interaction at the time of admission and ongoing advising and counseling services provides the immediate referral to students for non-academic supports (1C1, 1C2, 3D1).

**Supporting Subgroups with Distinctive Needs**

Because different sub-groups require particular types of engagement and services to be successful, internal committees are typically formed to zero in on key student groups and provide recommendations for service to that population. Currently, NICC is in the second year of an AQIP Action Project designed to address the diverse needs of certain sub-groups from the recruitment through program and course placement onboarding process. At the end of this Action Project, the College will have addressed improvements to the onboarding process for particular sub-groups who may have specific needs, while improving the onboarding process overall for all students (1C1, 1C2, 3D1).

One commonality, among all sub-groups, is the increased student population who are under-prepared for college-level course work (nearly 85%), which has led NICC to evaluate processes for

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ensuring these students' success, i.e. evaluation of remedial services, evaluation of placement processes and entrance testing processes (3D2).

Despite the attention to sub-groups and their needs, NICC still maintains a focus on individual students, rather than stereotyping all students with a particular trait or sub-group identification as needing the same

support. This was based on research by a former adult transition committee, which determined that the majority of NICC students need the same types of interventions to be successful, regardless of their sub-group. Nevertheless, through the processes of identification and determination of need, NICC has designed and implemented successful non-academic services for particular student groups, as well as for all students, as outlined in Table 2P1.A.

**Table 2P1.A. Non-Academic Services by Sub-Group (1C1, 1C2, 3D1, 3D2, 3E2)**

Sub-group Served	Non-Academic Service
<b>Veterans</b>	NICC offers support to its veteran population through active chapters of the Student Veterans Association at both campuses. Additionally the Calmar campus operates a program called Vet2Vet, which provides additional mentoring and assessment services for veterans.
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	Disability Services department operates a club called S.T.E.P. (Support Though the Encouragement of Peers), which is a peer-driven support group for students with disabilities. This type of peer mentoring provides support for students in terms of advocacy and self-reliance in addition to the academic supports of the office.
<b>First-generation students / low-income students</b>	Since 2002, NICC-Peosta operates a <i>TRIO-Student Support Services</i> program to promote student development for first-generation, low-income students by providing opportunities to grow personally and socially in addition to academically.
<b>All students</b>	NICC's Student Life, Diversity, and Leadership department offers all students an opportunity to engage at NICC to develop leadership, teamwork, communication and social skills by participating in various clubs, professional organizations and honor societies. It also operates the on-campus student government program, iMPACT, and provides extracurricular activities, including intramural sports and service opportunities throughout the year.
<b>All students</b>	NICC's counseling department provides one-on-one, free, confidential counseling for all students in the areas of stress management, anxiety, depression, grief counseling, alcohol/drug issues, eating disorders, gambling, and financial hardships. The Counseling department at NICC also makes available a monthly e-magazine for students entitled <a href="#">Student Health 101</a> . Each month's issue includes topics on physical, mental, emotional and personal health.
<b>All students</b>	NCC's Financial Aid department is a very active non-academic student support. The financial aid staff works with current and prospective students to provide information on available options and assisting them with the various stages of the financial aid process. The office provides financial literacy counseling to students individually, publishes a monthly student newsletter, and is active on social media to assist students with financial stability and responsibility.
<b>All students</b>	An integral part of academic success is a clear pathway for students to attain their career and educational goals. NICC's career services provides this support through assistance for students in determining a career path, as well as job search and employment search assistance. Current students and alumni can search employers, jobs and internships on the <a href="#">Career Connect</a> service.
<b>Students Transitioning from Adult Education and Literacy or Non-Credit Training</b>	NICC provides career coaches and enrollment specialists for students who are enrolled at the College in non-academic programming to assist them in development of an individualized education plan for continuing to meet their goals after they attain a short-term certificate or a High School Equivalency Diploma. This support allows students to make a seamless transition to academic program enrollment, building on their earlier success.
<b>Students in Crisis</b>	NICC operates a student crisis fund on both campuses, internally funded through community and internal support, to assist students in need of short-term, emergency funding.

### **Deploying Non-academic Support Services**

When sub-groups needing non-academic supports are identified, deployment of these services is both a top-down and grassroots effort. For example, individual departments are tasked with development of quality initiatives to meet the College's strategic priorities. Often these take the form of supports to particular sub-groups to improve their ability to succeed at NICC. Through this process, such passionate faculty and staff initiatives as the S.T.E.P and Student Crisis Fundraisers are deployed, cultivated, and supported by the College (3D1).

### **Communicating to Students about Non-academic Support Services**

NICC faculty and staff are also accustomed to thinking student-first so as a need arises, faculty and staff are adept at making personal referrals for students with internal and external assistance as needed. Other deployments occur through regular College processes where students receive information from the recruitment, enrollment, and intake advising process on disability services, student life, counseling availability, veterans services, and career services for example. Processes are communicated to students through mandatory program orientations, the College iNdex resource guide, the College website, catalog and the College Experience course in addition to advising opportunities. Services are also often promoted around campus on posters and video monitors. Faculty and staff are made aware of such services through professional development days, annual convocations, and internal news.

### **Qualified, Trained, and Supported Staff**

Staff members hired to provide non-academic student support are screened through the job posting and hiring process to meet certain education and experience requirements as determined by the NICC hiring guide. For example, student services staff are required to have a bachelor's degree with a master's level preferred. Disability services staff must have a master's degree (3C6).

NICC is committed to ongoing professional development, internally and externally, for front-line staff working with students to understand the diverse

needs of students and changing tools and methods of communication. Such training includes reviewing generational differences and communication preferences for students, who vary from high school age to retirement age, as well as socio-economic education to better understand the culture of students in poverty (3C6).

During faculty and staff development days, disability services staff provides specific training around particular disabilities and raise awareness about the population of students with disabilities. Many College staff have received "safe space" training and open their offices to LGBT students. Other front-line staff have received mental health first aid training in order to identify and handle students experiencing a mental health crisis to provide immediate assistance. To meet students' mental health needs, both campuses employ a full-time licensed mental health counselor to both meet with students and provide outreach and education to faculty and staff regarding students' mental health issues (3C6).

### **Assessing Student Needs and Supports**

To assess student needs and the degree to which their needs are met, NICC uses the following methods:

- Regular administration of SENSE and CCSSE surveys since 2006
- Internal student services satisfaction survey launched in spring 2014 with over 500 responses to assess satisfaction and use of a variety of academic and non-academic services
- Follow-up with students served by Student Crisis Fundraisers
- Outcomes monitoring of S.T.E.P. program and Vet2Vet mentoring programs
- Monitoring of student participation in financial literacy programming

2R1. What are the results for determining if current and prospective students' needs are being met?

The results of the CCSSE survey provide insights for three cycles of administration regarding students perceptions of how the College supports their non-

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academic needs, how frequently they use specific non-academic services, and their satisfaction with those services. These results are used diligently to identify needs and develop, revise, or continue

initiatives in response to student satisfaction. Table 2R1.A. provides results most applicable to this category

**Table 2R1.A. CCSSE Non-Academic Services Results**

Indicator	2008		2011		2013	
	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges	NICC	Other Medium Colleges
How much does this college emphasize "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much" helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	23%	24%	20%	26%	25%	27%
How much does this college emphasize "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much" providing the support you need to thrive socially	27%	30%	29%	33%	39%	35%
How many students report "sometimes" or "often" utilizing financial aid services	51%	43%	64%	62%	55%	53%
How many students report "sometimes" or "often" utilizing job placement services	9%	11%	13%	11%	15%	12%
How many students report "sometimes" or "often" utilizing career counseling services	22%	27%	21%	28%	19%	29%
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with financial aid services ( <i>of students not reporting NA</i> )	84%	79%	86%	82%	91%	83%
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with job placement services ( <i>of students not reporting NA</i> )	54%	63%	69%	62%	68%	63%
Somewhat or Very Satisfied with career counseling services ( <i>of students not reporting NA</i> )	74%	77%	81%	77%	79%	77%

An analysis of the results reveal that in 2008 NICC was only ahead of other medium colleges in two categories, but by 2013 had gained the edge in six of the eight categories, a marked improvement. NICC also improved its own results from 2008 to 2013 in every category except the number of students utilizing career services. NICC attributes these improvements to its own raising of awareness of non-academic supports overall, and specifically new initiatives related to career facilitation and financial aid services. Financial aid services in particular become an area of growth at NICC in response to additional CCSSE results that track tracks students most likely reasons for withdrawal. At NICC, students number one reason they would be likely or most likely to withdraw is consistently lack of finances, with 48% expressing this concern on the survey in 2013.

To supplement the CCSSE results, a new survey through NICC student services department tracks

satisfaction results of students related to non-academic support areas in addition to academic areas. These results were summarized in Table 1R5.D. Similar to academic services, the survey indicates strong satisfaction of students with NICC non-academic support services, including career services, financial aid, counseling, and student life.

To analyze the impact of particular interventions and initiatives, NICC tracks student success during their time at the College and beyond to job placement and transfer. In the case of those students served by the Student Crisis Fund, for example, 97% of students accessing funds were retained through the end of the term, showing the success of the intervention to alleviate the crisis.

The disability services department serves students' academic as well as non-academic needs. Accommodation results were provided in Table 1R5.E. Mentoring results are shared here in Table 2R1.B. as a non-academic support.

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**Table 2R1.B: Disability Services students participating in mentoring activities (non-academic)**

	SP12	FA12	SP13	FA13	SP14	FA14
# of students receiving mentoring	13	37	39	48	56	39

In addition, the department operates a specific peer mentoring program called S.T.E.P. The S.T.E.P. mentors focus on students who have difficulty with: managing their time and attention; switching focus from one task to the next; planning and organizing; remembering details; curbing inappropriate speech or behavior; and appropriate socialization. Students that typically have difficulty with these skills have disorders including: mental illness, ADHD, learning disabilities, head injuries, Autism/Asperger's Syndrome, and intellectual disabilities. In fall of 2014, 25 students were identified with these specific disorders. These 25 students accepted services from the S.T.E.P. program. Outcomes have been phenomenal. Of the 25 students that were served, 22 have registered and are taking classes in the spring 2015 semester.

The department also offers a third type of mentoring for the veterans sub-group through its Vet2Vet program. This program is still in the building process, but has served 16 veterans or family members since its inception in 2014. 10 are currently retained by the program and College and one student has graduated.

Another result is demonstrated through participation in financial literacy programming designed in response to CCSSE results showing students are most likely to withdraw from classes as a result of financial difficulties. Table 2R1.C provides participation results of these new services. Life Skills courses are required for students appealing for financial aid but they are open to all students. Financial Literacy 101 is online financial literacy program available to all students but used specifically with students on academic plan, and Cash Course is an additional financial literacy tool newly promoted on campus in 2014.

**Table 2R1.C: Student Participation in Financial Literacy**

	Lessons Completed	Student Success
Life Skills Courses	1000	86%
Financial Literacy	1194	88%
Cash Course	120	N/A

*\*Cash course and life skills courses began fall 2014 and Financial Literacy began January 2011.*

These results point to the direct effect of developing and promoting the right tools to students and sometimes requiring the tools. These promotions were in response to a spring 2014 survey revealing that students' top financial deficits were 1) budgeting, 2) saving, 3) loan management, and 4) credit.

2I1. Based on 2R1, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Based on CCSSE questions related to students likelihood to withdraw, NICC increased its activities to aid students' financial health in the last year. New and planned improvements include the following:

- Review of loan debt and successful repayment strategies with students
- Contacting students on de-registration list when they do not have aid in place to offer assistance with financial aid process or payment options
- [CashCourse](#), a free online financial literacy tool for students
- Hosting *Smart Money Week* on both campuses
- Financial literacy committee created to provide more outreach activities
- Piggy Bank Press monthly newsletter posted visibly for students with quick tips for financial health and contact information
- Life Skills courses offered through the satisfactory academic appeal process
- [Financial Literacy 101](#) online courses for those on Academic Plans (not making satisfactory academic progress)

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- Financial literacy videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, featuring NICC student Josie in “What would Josie do?” segments
- Budgeting information provided via Welcome Wednesday visit days and orientation
- Module of College Experience course dedicated to financial literacy

Furthermore, the President has initiated a committee that is reviewing the student financial barriers to access and success. This committee is reviewing scholarship funding, default rates and policies related to deregistration for non-payment, unpaid bills, and financial aid appeal.

NICC is also seeking improvement of students’ engagement with career counselling and job placement services. As a result in September 2013 the College opened an AQIP Action Project: Evaluating Student Onboarding and Placement. Goals for year two of the Action Project include increasing the number of students who receive career counseling services in advance of their program placement to ensure best fit with aptitude, placement scores and student motivation. This improvement will partner well with the growth of the College’s success model, which serves students at the College’s centers and those taking non-academic career pathway programming with a career coach to facilitate transitions from intake to placement to education to employment.

The counseling department has also purchased the monthly online newsletter, Student Health 101, to allow them to add specialized information to the national newsletter and be proactive in communication with all students, not just those coming into the counseling offices.

**RETENTION, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION**

2P2. Retention, Persistence, and Completion focus on the approach to collecting, analyzing and distributing data on retention, persistence, and completion to stakeholders for decision-making. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:.

**Collecting Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion Data**

Through its Ellucian Colleague ERP system, all students entering NICC are provided a federal cohort branding. Through this branding, as well as entering statuses, NICC is able to systematically track all entering students through term completion, next term retention, annual persistence, and completion or transfer. NICC’s institutional research department produces a number of retention, persistence, and completion reports, including the following:

- fall to fall retention for new degree-seeking students, who entered in a fall term, disaggregated by key indicators and demographics.
- a multi-year trend for term retention as well as fall to spring and fall to fall retention for various groups of entering students, i.e. including all entering, all degree-seeking, full-time and part-time degree-seeking, and others.
- State of Iowa Completion Metrics Report: The report contains graduation, transfer, and persistence rates, as well as enrollment patterns and performance in developmental courses for all new NICC students enrolled in the fall term, including new transfer students.
- Conversion of concurrent enrollment students taking courses in high school who persist to become enrolled college students
- Program completion metrics
- Success of various sub-groups of students as requested by committees and department, i.e. College Experience course students, veterans, developmental education students, etc.

The College also participates in data sharing with the National Community College Benchmarking Project. These internal and external reports are available to faculty and staff through the Xpress portal and updated annually. (4C2, 4C4).

**Determining Targets**

Targets for persistence and completion are set by the President’s cabinet annually to set fiscal year priorities. With an increased national focus on performance factors, the College has engaged in numerous conversations to define student success and determine realistic, attainable, measurable

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targets for students outcomes. In this current fiscal year 2015, the College determined the following targets (4C1):

- Short-term Goal: Retain or complete 60%+ of students from fall 2014 to fall 2015. (current: 47-59% since 2005)
- Long-term Goal: Increase 3-year graduation and/or transfer rate to 40%+ for fall 2014 cohort (current: 37-38% since FY13)
- Increase overall high school yield to 18%+ (currently 16-17%) by targeting concurrent enrollment students with career and technical credits toward an NICC program and offering more career and technical opportunities at high schools that ladder into NICC programs

### Meeting Targets

These targets are shared with faculty and staff College-wide through the aligned departmental goal-setting process through which all departments are asked to engage in initiatives or improvements to help meet the priority targets. Many departments in the College have set measurable goals related to retention and completion targets. In fact, the vice president of academic affairs required deans to set retention goals for each of their programs as part of this goal-setting process (4C1, 4C3).

To meet longer term persistence and completion goals, NICC has focused on best practices from The Center for Community College Student Engagement, which stresses the impact of the student's front-door or first three week experience. Therefore, NICC pays close attention to term retention and credit threshold accumulation as well. The College also joined the Phi Theta Kappa Commit to Complete, Complete to Compete (C4) initiative to bring heightened awareness to the student body of the College's commitment to their success (4C1, 4C3).

As both the national and internal focus on persistence and completion has grown, NICC has closed an AQIP Action Project related to retention and established an ongoing cross-departmental retention committee at the College to monitor, advance, and assess retention initiatives. This

committee reports to the College's strategic enrollment management committee, which monitors retention as it relates to College enrollment and revenue. Related, those working with the College's current AQIP Action Project, Evaluating Student Onboarding and Placement, are also identifying onboarding policies and practices that lead ultimately to improved student persistence and completion. This Action Project is being implemented by both student services, the College's center directors, high school partnership team, adult education and literacy department, and staff and leadership from the College's continuing education and economic development division, known as Business and Community Solutions (4C3).

### Analyzing Data and Information

Data on retention and completion has also been widely distributed to faculty, deans, and staff in recent years. The vice president of academic affairs had implemented a culture of owning and responding to student success data through development of program metrics reviewed by deans regularly and shared with faculty. The President has reinforced this message through faculty and staff addresses. Finally, the College devotes a section of its weekly internal newsletter to data and trends, including commentary and graphical depictions of data, including data related to retention and completion (4C2).

To assess retention, persistence, and completion goals, the College regularly produces and circulates reports pulled from the Ellucian Colleague ERP system and the Informer reporting tool. The selection of the reports to be used is two-fold: 1) whenever possible, NICC utilizes reports that allow for comparison through benchmarking or common definitions with peers; and 2) when an existing report does not adequately assess an initiative or target, the College develops a customized report that can be produced to assess a goal or initiative. This process of report development is both grass-roots and top-down. The institutional effectiveness department, which oversees institutional research, leads the development, production, and communication of reports and reports tied directly to measurement of the College's strategic priorities. This includes participation in statewide and

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benchmarked assessments. Departments engaging in initiatives related to retention, persistence, and completion are also encouraged to develop measurable targets for their initiatives; often the institutional research office is instrumental in developing these customized reports (4C2, 4C4).

**2R2. What are the results for student retention, persistence, and completion?**

Table 2R2.A details the higher-level outcomes/measures tracked, the tool utilized, and the target monitored.

**Table 2R2.A: Retention, Persistence, Completion Outcomes Tracked**

Outcome	Tool Utilized	Target Monitored (linked to current strategic priority)
Multi-year trend for term, next term, and fall to fall retention for various sub-groups of entering students	Ellucian Colleague/Informer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase term retention</li> <li>Retain or complete 60%+ of students from fall to fall</li> </ul>
Graduation, transfer, and persistence rates, for all new students enrolled in the fall term	State of Iowa Completion Metrics Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase 3-year graduation and/or transfer rate to 40%+ for fall 2014 cohort (current: 37-38% since FY13)</li> </ul>
Graduation, transfer, and persistence rates, for all new students enrolled in the fall term by program	State of Iowa Completion Metrics Report, by program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual program goals set by deans and faculty related to retention and completion</li> </ul>
Peer comparisons for completion and transfer	National Community College Benchmarking Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase 3-year graduation and/or transfer rate to 40%+ for fall 2014 cohort</li> </ul>
Retention of sub-groups	Ellucian Colleague/Informer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various targets set by departmental and committee initiatives, e.g. increase retention of students signing C4 challenge, increase retention of students participating in College Experience pilot, increase retention of minority students, etc.</li> </ul>

A summary of results from the various reports follow in Tables 2R2.B-2R2.D

**Table 2R2.B: Multi-Year Retention, Persistence, Completion Trend by Entering Student Status**

FIRST TERM RETENTION	COHORT YEAR				
	FA'09	FA'10	FA'11	FA'12	FA'13
All, First-time students	84.1%	83.0%	82.2%	86.5%	81.1%
FALL TO SPRING RETENTION	FA'09	FA'10	FA'11	FA'12	FA'13
All, First-time students	77.8%	77.1%	74.3%	77.8%	71.4%
FALL TO FALL RETENTION	FA'09	FA'10	FA'11	FA'12	FA'13
All, First-time students	52.3%	52.9%	51.6%	56.4%	52.8%
150% (3 YR) GRAD RATES	FA'09	FA'10	FA'11		
All, First-time students	26.5%	25.7%	28.7%		
First time, Full-Time, degree-seeking students	30.7%	28.9%	33.1%		

This trend report goes back to the Fall 2005 cohort and in addition to “first-time, all” students, the report tracks these other first-time student cohorts: transfer, full-time, part-time, degree-seeking, and transfer. One key insight gained from this report was the decision to begin tracking transfer students separately as a unique population with additional barriers and needs. Similarly, a steady decline in first-term retention of students led to the development of key improvements in that area. As a result, for the Fall 2014 cohort, first-term retention for degree-seeking students was up 5%. Perhaps more exciting, minority students also showed a higher than

average increase, pointing to success of term retention efforts at the College. The Iowa Completion Metrics report is another resource the College uses to track retention by cohort group. Details are provided in Table 2R2.C.

**Table 2R2.C: Three-Year Trend Completion Metrics Report, 2013 and 2014 reporting years**

	ENTERING STUDENTS FALL 2010				ENTERING STUDENTS FALL 2011			
	Two Year Grads		Three Year Grads		Two Year Grads		Three Year Grads	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Grad Rate, All	20%	7%	31%	17%	25%	6%	34%	18%
Grad Rate, No Prior College	16%	4%	26%	9%	21%	2%	29%	6%
Transfer Rate, All	7%	6%	9%	9%	9%	6%	11%	8%
Transfer Rate, No Prior College	7%	5%	8%	8%	7%	3%	10%	5%
Grad OR Transfer Rate, All	27%	13%	40%	26%	34%	12%	45%	26%
Grad OR Transfer Rate, No Prior College	23%	9%	34%	17%	28%	5%	39%	11%

The Completion Metrics Report has a three-year history. It was a project designed to transition all Iowa community colleges to the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, which they have adopted and NICC is currently piloting. The completion metrics, while never shared by colleges across the state comparatively, has nonetheless provided useful insight to NICC. One area in particular the report highlights is the importance of prior college experience as a factor in retention and completion. This data, coupled with the College's participation in several rounds of Department of Labor TAACCCT grants has led NICC to evaluate, revise and enhance its process for granting credit for prior learning and onboarding students with and without prior college experience. In fact, in fall 2014 the college piloted a College Experience course for students enrolled in A.A. or A.S. programs. This report is also used to monitor the transfer and or

graduate rate of all students at the College in the 3-year timeframe.

An example of the Completion Metrics Report utilization at the program level is detailed in 1R2.A. These program level reports have assisted the College's academic program deans in understanding the factors of retention and completion surrounding their programs (i.e. cohort program v. open enrollment, effect of entrance requirements, effect of employment offers before graduation, etc.).

For benchmarked data, the College subscribes to the National Community College Benchmarking Project. Comparative results are provided in Tables 2R2.D.

**Table 2R2.D. National Community College Benchmarking Project Completion and Transfer Trends**

Measure	Survey Year 2013				Survey Year 2012		
	NICC	Peer Mean	Peer Comparison	National Median	NICC	Peer Mean	National Median
Completed: FT Students in 3 Years	30.07%	26.63%	3.44%	19.14%	32.92%	30.04%	20.16%
Completed: PT Students in 3 Years	9.14%	8.67%	0.47%	6.33%	16.67%	11.30%	6.50%
Transferred: FT Students in 3 Years	9.66%	15.01%	-5.35%	16.29%	12.42%	16.60%	16.81%
Transferred: PT Students in 3 Years	6.29%	7.93%	-1.64%	9.09%	6.67%	10.56%	10.56%
Completed or Transferred in 3 Years: FT Students	39.73%	41.64%	-1.91%	35.82%	45.34%	46.65%	37.49%

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Completed or Transferred in 3 Years: PT Students	15.43%	16.60%	-1.17%	15.76%	23.33%	21.86%	18.42%
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*\*Note: The peer group used includes other NCCBP participants with the following characteristics: public community college, rural & multi-campus environment, IPEDS population between 4 and 7M, District population between 200 and 400M, and a semester calendar.*

The NCCBP trend is useful mostly for its comparative features. While NICC is significantly ahead of the national median as well as its peers in completion rates, it lags its peers in transfer students. Knowing that well over 50% of the NICC student body is enrolled in career and technical programs has caused the College to ask questions such as “Do our students seek transfer or completion?” “What do our students want and how do we define their success?” “What is our distinct advantage as an institution?” These are questions the current administration continues to ask as the new strategic plan is developed.

**2I2. Based on 2R2, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?**

In 2013, student services formed a retention committee to identify students most at-risk of non-completion and to determine academic supports needed for them to succeed at a higher rate. Through analysis of all degree-seeking, non-high school students enrolled in fall 2012, the team determined the following:

- 32% of students earning 0 credits were in two programs, A.A. and Pre-Nursing
- 31% of students with less than a 2.0 GPA were also in the same two programs

The team found this data to provide clear evidence of the need for a college experience course for this cohort of students, particularly A.A. students who are often undecided on their career path and not typically in a cohort setting conducive to peer engagement and natural learning communities.

Within one year this course was piloted for students in fall 2014. Anecdotal evidence at mid-term from students enrolled in the College Experience course demonstrates an enhanced connection between faculty and students and peer to peer support (4C3).

Other new processes to improve student persistence include the following (4C3):

- Piloted Care-a-thon in fall 2014 to call all new students to offer a welcome, answer questions and make referrals; 1,327 new students called, leading to 74 assistance referrals
- Required attendance tracking by all faculty to use in the early academic alert process
- Program orientations (in addition to College general orientations) now in place for most career and technical and allied health programs in partnership with students services staff
- Phi Theta Kappa led completion initiative: Commit to Complete, Complete to Compete implemented on both campuses; 246 students signed the pledge in fall 2013 and spring 2014 and are being tracked through completion or transfer
- Behavioral intervention team created to monitor incidents of concern that could lead to student attrition and/or suspension
- Expanded career development training for staff connected with onboarding students to foster earlier career decision-making.
- Evaluation student onboarding AQIP Action Project in second year with focus on early career facilitation of students
- Existing and planned efforts are tracked by the retention committee and detailed in Table 2I2.A.

**Table 2I2.A: Summary of Retention Improvements/Initiatives Monitored by Retention Team (4C3)**

Strategy/Initiative	Lead Team(s)	Data Needed/Utilized	Status
Care-a-thon	Retention Committee	New student report	O
Re-engagement of student stop-outs	Advising, Student Services	Withdrawal report, retention report	D
Career pathways and expanded career advising	Career Services, High School Relations, BCS	Undecided student report, Program change numbers	P

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Review and remove student financial barriers	De-registration, Outstanding Balances, Financial Aid Appeals, and Registrations Holds (DOAH) Committee	Default profile, unpaid bill, scholarships	P
SENSE and High Impact Practices Institute	Team: President, VPAA, VPSS, Dean, Faculty	SENSE 2014	D
COMPASS implementation and cut-score revisions	Dev. Ed. Task Force	Placement level report and Dev. Ed. completion report	D
Multiple assessment measure for course placement	Dev. Ed. Task Force	Placement level report and Dev. Ed. completion report	D
Pre-advising survey for goal planning	Advising, Student Services	New student	D
Staff cross-training for one-stop service	Student Services, BCS		P
Advising model review	Labor Management, Advising, Student Services	Assigned advisors and loads	D
Accelerated development education and expanded programming	Dev. Ed. Task force	Placement level report and Dev. Ed. completion report	D
Required college experience course	College Experience team	Outcomes of pilot	P
Effective early alert system	Retention Committee, Academic Deans	Current Alert information, usage and process	P
Engaging part-time students	Retention Committee, Academic Deans	PT retention	D
Dubuque Center retention and programming	Dubuque Center Task Force	Disaggregated retention, Center recommendations	D
Required reading placement	Dev. Ed. Task force	Placement level report and Dev. Ed. completion report	D
Faculty workshops and forums	Faculty professional development committee, Academic Deans	Retention, persistence promising practices	O
Utilizing CCSSE/SENSE/Student Satisfaction survey data	All committees	CCSSE/SENSE/SS survey results	O
Late start class sequence	Academic Deans	Late start enrollment reports	P
Discouraging enrollment after class has met once	Academic Advisors, Student Service	Success rate for late enrollment	O
Online retention: Quality Matters	Academic Deans, Distance Learning committee	Trainings report; course evaluations	P
Supplemental education for gatekeeper courses	Academic Deans, Learning Center faculty		D

Key: D=In development O=ongoing, C=complete

**KEY STAKEHOLDER NEEDS**

2P3. Key Stakeholder Needs focuses on determining, understanding and meeting needs of key stakeholder groups including alumni and community partners. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Determining Key External Stakeholder Groups**

NICC defines *stakeholders* as those groups who are vested in how a project is designed and its success, but don't necessarily have direct responsibilities and tasks like a *partner* would (See 2P5 for partnership processes).

Part of the College's mission is to meet the needs of its communities, which includes those who have a vested interest in the success of the College. NICC determines key stakeholder groups by their level of vested interest in the activities of the institution. These include:

- **Legislators, and state agencies**, who have a vested interest in good stewardship of taxpayer dollars
- **Employers** who have a vested interest in an available, qualified workforce
- **Alumni** who have an interest in the quality and reputation of their alma mater to achieve employment
- **Community leaders** who have a vested interest in the quality of education in their communities and an educated citizenry
- **Donors** who have a vested interest in seeing their charitable contributions put to good use

NICC works to keep its stakeholder groups consistent for the most part, although individual membership changes frequently within the groups, and it is imperative the College continues to reach out to new members among its stakeholder groups.

**Determining New Stakeholder Groups**

The College also seeks and determines new stakeholders (and good fit with existing stakeholders) through engagement with them in integrated College processes. In 2012, the College embarked on a feasibility study in advance of its first major gifts campaign. The goal of the study was to

evaluate the greatest needs of the College in relation to what stakeholder groups were willing to support at the College. This process provided valuable insight into the alignment of the College's perceived needs and stakeholders' perceived needs. The results proved favorable, and the College proceeded to move forward with a campaign after modifying its goals to meet the needs and wishes of its stakeholders (1D1, 1D3).

In spring 2015, the College is again engaging its stakeholders in the development of its next strategic plan, set to begin July 1, 2015. By asking stakeholders to be part of the process, the College shows them it is committed to meeting their needs, while also ensuring the mission and vision of the College are still aligned with stakeholder groups (1D1, 1D3).

**Meeting Changing Needs of Key Stakeholders**

To ensure the College is meeting stakeholder needs, staff and faculty regularly communicate and collaborate with them in formal and informal ways.

**Legislators:** For legislative stakeholders, the College leadership commits to meeting with each of the 16 legislators at least once during the legislative off season. The College also provides a series of four monthly communication pieces leading up to the new session to keep this stakeholder group informed of how their investments in education are producing quality outcomes. Throughout the legislative session, the President and his cabinet visit the state capitol and locally participate in legislative events. The College also regularly hosts legislators for events on campus, and, in fall 2013, began hosting legislative-business tours to bring two stakeholder groups together with the College to discuss shared needs and solutions (1D1, 1D3).

**Employers:** Employers are engaged in multiple ways at the College to ensure NICC is meeting their workforce needs. Employers are required to serve on career and technical program advisory committees, where they assist in curriculum development, provide field experiences for students, engage program faculty, and analyze program outcomes. In addition, since 2010, the College has moved to the development of sector boards for high-

growth industries. These boards bring together leaders in education, community, and business around key issues in the industry, typically attracting and retaining a qualified workforce. NICC currently has sector boards in place for the information technology, health care, and advanced manufacturing industries and a cross-sector Human Resources Alliance. As a result, NICC has developed robust certificate training programs to meet immediate workforce needs around its district. Employers who hire recent graduates are also contacted following a student's placement to determine satisfaction (1D1, 1D3, 3E2).

**Alumni:** Engagement of alumni is an opportunity at the College. While the College has well-established alumni processes for recent graduates, longer-term alumni are not as systematically engaged. Recent graduates are contacted six months after graduation to determine job placements and hiring wage. For less recent alumni, the College has strong traditions in place, such as electing alumni hall of fame representatives each year and engaging targeted alumni groups for fundraising campaigns (i.e. dental assisting), but overall alumni activities have been sporadic and tend to be program specific led by passionate faculty. With the launch of the College's first major gifts campaign came a more strategic outreach to various alumni groups of the College. Details on planned improvements are in section 2I3 (1D1, 1D3).

**Donors:** Through the Campaign for Excellence (major gifts campaign) feasibility study, NICC was able to gain valuable feedback to help move forward with the campaign and strategic planning. Respondents resoundingly endorsed the College's proposed campaign to seek private-sector support for student access and success, institutional and instructional technology, high growth, high demand industries, and agricultural programming. Based on feedback from 165 interviews with stakeholders on eleven proposed initiatives, the College narrowed its focus to the four initiatives highly supported by the feasibility study results that aligned with the College strategic plan (1D1, 1D3).

**Community Leaders:** Community leader stakeholders include government leaders, non-

profits, economic developers, conservation organizations, chambers of commerce, and various cross-organizational boards and committees. To meet the needs of these stakeholders and ensure alignment of vision and values, the College regularly communicates a consistent message to these leaders and ensures active external meeting participation by its leadership team. Nearly all members of the President's cabinet are active on external committees, providing valuable two-way communication with community leaders. As a result of participation in a local committee dedicated to improving youth outcomes, the College launched an innovative and successful partnership with a local school district to re-engage high school dropouts. A broader communication tool launched in 2014 is an electronic newsletter called *Community Connect* produced every other month and distributed widely across the district. This publication shares the College's latest press releases, upcoming partnership opportunities, new initiatives, and critical information on how the College is meeting stakeholders' most pressing needs, typically surrounding workforce (1D1, 1D3, 3E2).

### Assessing Partnership with Key Stakeholders

The primary method NICC uses to directly assess stakeholder needs and satisfaction is to simply ask them. This might be through formal interviews, such as those conducted through the campaign feasibility study, but more often through one-on-one conversations, advisory committee discussions, sector board discussions, legislative-business tours, open forums, and community/board meetings that the College participates in to determine how it can be part of the solution to local issues. In addition, formal reports can glean valuable information, such as alumni placement, donor giving through the major gifts campaign, and workforce skills gaps reports that represent unmet community needs.

2R3. What are the results for determining if key stakeholder needs are being met?

To determine stakeholder value and alignment with NICC mission, vision, and activities, the College tracks the following outcomes related to the four key stakeholder groups detailed in 2P3:

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- State funding and outcomes of signature programs (legislators, employers)
- Student placement and employer satisfaction (alumni, employers)
- National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) market penetration statistic (Community leaders, employers)
- Campaign for Excellence results (employers, community leaders, alumni)

In 2013 and 2014 the State of Iowa legislature passed new programs to assist community colleges to meet the state’s skilled worker shortage. To ensure the College is meeting the legislature’s goals for this legislation, the College tracks the following outcomes for these signature programs, detailed in Table 2R3.A. These outcomes also assess the needs of the employer partners who were imperative in the design of the program implementations locally at NICC within the constraints of the legislation.

**Table 2R3.A. Outcomes of Signature State Funding Programs**

Program	Objective	Funding	Most Recent Outcomes
<b>Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund</b>	Finances new program innovation, development, and capacity building, particularly for career and technical education	FY14: \$703,181 FY15: \$676,112	In FY14, 636 students completed training in programs supported by WTED funds and expanded Project Lead the Way and career academies in Welding and CNC.
<b>Pathways for Academic Career &amp; Employment (PACE) funds</b>	Provides funding to enable low-income, low-skill participants to acquire training to secure gainful, quality employment	FY14: \$248,931 FY15: \$246,844	In FY14, 133 students completed a program through PACE support, with an overall employment rate of 98 percent. 267 students were served overall by the program.
<b>GAP Tuition Assistance</b>	Provides tuition assistance for non-credit programs not eligible for federal financial aid that lead to high-wage, high-growth job placement	FY14: \$99,614 FY15: \$99,199	In FY14, Northeast Iowa Community College served 82 approved GAP participants, with an employment rate of 100% (and 90 % new employment).
<b>Adult Education and Literacy</b>	Finances instruction for high school equivalency diploma, English language learning, and basic skills education	FY14: \$193,376 FY15: \$192,586	In FY14, 607 students enrolled in AEL programs and 144 completed a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED).
<b>Work-based Learning Intermediary Network</b>	Support community college partnerships with K-12 districts to educate students, educators and parents about high-demand careers in Iowa through employer-based learning opportunities.	FY14: \$96,667 FY15: \$96,667	In FY14, Northeast Iowa Community College established the Career Learning Link program, hired a director and served more than 700 students and educators in workplace tours and career programming.

Through these new programs, the State of Iowa also awarded the Iowa Department of Education funding to develop state reports; therefore, NICC does have comparative data of outcomes related to all four programs within the State of Iowa. For the GAP Tuition program, of the 15 community colleges, NICC was the only College to spend its full allocation on student training assistance, was 4<sup>th</sup> in the number of approved participants, and 1<sup>st</sup> in number of completers placed into new employment. For PACE programming, the College was 1<sup>st</sup> in new employment and 2<sup>nd</sup> in participant completers

among its peers. The success of the College’s state-funded program implementation has helped the College attain additional federal funding through the Department of Labor *TAACCCT* and *Youth CareerConnect* programs, as well as through local and national non-profit and private donors.

Alumni survey data related to job placement for recent program graduates (provided in table 1R2.B and 1R1.C) also points to strong alignment among NICC programming and employer needs in terms of hiring. To confirm these results and determine how

satisfied employers actually are with their hires, NICC also conducts an employer survey each year and asks them to rate the graduates on a number of

technical and soft skills. These results for 92 unique employers who hired 98 NICC graduates are evidenced in Table 2R3.B.

**Table 2R3.B. Employer Satisfaction with Hired NICC Graduates (fiscal year 2013)**

Attribute	Excellent	Very Good	Adequate	Fair	Not Adequate
Rate skills within the profession	29%	53%	16%	2%	0%
Rate quality and thoroughness	27%	53%	16%	3%	0%
Rate customer service	31%	47%	14%	5%	0%
Rate communication	29%	52%	15%	2%	0%
Rate computer skills	28%	38%	14%	3%	0%
Rate teamwork	50%	37%	11%	1%	0%
Rate ability to work with minimum supervision	27%	50%	15%	5%	2%
Rate ability to learn	41%	49%	7%	2%	0%
Rate problem solving	16%	58%	18%	5%	2%
Rate cooperation	47%	42%	10%	1%	0%
Rate Attendance/Punctuality	51%	43%	6%	0%	0%

Note: Employers could respond N/A or skip a question; not all rows total 100%.

These results clearly demonstrate strong employer satisfaction. In every category less than 20% of hires are ranked as adequate and 5% or less as fair. This informs the College that its programs are equipping students with the skills (both technical and soft) that they need to be successful in the workplace.

NICC also tracks overall “market penetration” on the NCCBP survey. This indicator, detailed in Table 2R3.C, evidences the College’s reach throughout its district beyond academic program enrollment to additional stakeholders, such as those served through partnerships with alumni and employers.

**Table 2R3.C. NCCBP Market Penetration of Non-Credit Students**

Year	% Market Reach	Percentile Rank
2011	10.56%	96%
2012	10.77%	97%
2013	10.16%	97%

These results clearly point to a strength of the College in reaching and serving its stakeholders. The outcomes are all the more impressive when compared with a peer mean of 2% market reach and a national median of 0.97%.

Finally, the outcomes of the Campaign for Excellence speak volumes to the positive relationships the College has with its stakeholders. Not only did the campaign exceed its \$10 million

goals in less than 30 months, but received impressive gifts from stakeholders detailed in Table 2R3.D.

**Table 2R3.D. Campaign Gifts from Stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Amount Donated
Employers/Foundations	\$8.4 million
Alumni	\$42,965
Retirees	\$39,875
Individual Donors	\$1.5 million

Additionally, the College’s internal stakeholders strongly supported the campaign, with 100% giving by the Foundation Board and Board of Trustees and a nearly unprecedented 98% giving by NICC faculty and staff.

2I3. Based on 2R3, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

As a result of regular communication with stakeholders regarding their needs, successful initiatives have been launched recently at NICC to meet stakeholder needs (1D1, 1D3):

- Development of Degree after Five A.A. programming and a night welding program, targeted at working adults and marketed to area employers wanting to upskill staff
- Implementation of scholarships luncheons on both campuses to connect donors with student scholarship recipients

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- Successful first major gifts campaign, exceeding the College's \$10 million goal.
- Legislative campaign including opportunities for legislators to engage with the College, local employers, and students during the off-session
- Launch of industry sector boards with a representation of community, employer, and education partners to develop a unified strategy to solve problems related to economic development and employment.

In the alumni arena in the next 1-3 years, the College hopes to advance the following for alumni cultivation:

- Initiate a plan to update alumni records and prioritizing the capture of current email addresses.
- With these updates, develop a plan to cultivate support and awareness of the College to alumni through social media. This could support alumni, for example, by connecting them with career opportunities via social media
- Serve as a catalyst to engage alumni to connect with other alumni and students through social media.
- Conduct an alumni survey to ascertain communication preferences, how the College can serve them now, general impression of their time and value with the College, and would they recommend the College to others.

2P4. Complaint Processes focuses on collecting, analyzing and responding to complaints from students or key (non-employee) stakeholder groups. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Collecting Complaint Information

Complaint procedures are clearly posted on the [College website](#) with a direct link for students or other key stakeholders to file a complaint. This process is also available in the College catalog. The College process is as follows (2A):

1. In the event of a concern or complaint at Northeast Iowa Community College, issues should be resolved at the lowest level possible to maximize efficiency. Students are

encouraged to make an informal inquiry to an instructor, advisor or assigned dean/director as soon as possible following the event that gave rise to the complaint.

2. Staff, visitors, community members or other individuals are encouraged to make informal inquiries to the designated staff person with assigned responsibility in the area of concern as soon as possible to reach a resolution.
3. When resolution is not reached or not practical though informal inquiry, formal complaint may be issued. A formal complaint is required in writing, is signed by the individual and is submitted to the provost of the respective campus. The provost will forward the complaint to the appropriate College representative for resolution.

The handling of a formal complaint (considered to be a complaint in writing, signed by the individual and presented to the college representative with the responsibility to handle the complaint) is described in the following procedure (2A):

1. Complaint is logged into the complaint log by the assigned college representative with the authority to handle the complaint.
2. Meeting(s) are arranged with the individual, and if necessary, the charged party according to NICC policy to the related charge.
3. The issue/complaint is resolved.
4. Resolution of the complaint is updated in the complaint log by the college representative with the responsibility to handle the complaint.
5. Copy of the complaint log is submitted biannually to the office of institutional effectiveness.
6. The office of institutional effectiveness in conjunction with the area of assigned responsibility will review if process changes are indicated.
7. Process changes are reflected in the following documents as appropriate: Student handbook, college catalog, board policy, employee handbook, and institutional policy and procedures.

NICC also posts a [student grievances policy](#) on the website specifically for distance learning students. This is a federal requirement and provides students with contact information for the Iowa Student Aid Commission in the case that an issue cannot be resolved locally (2A).

**Determining Actions from Complaint Information**

What the College learned from its former complaint process was that many complaints were immediately resolved, addressed and not documented and supervisors often didn't know when to log a complaint. The College also learned that many complaints were tracked in other reporting forms such as grade appeals by students and misconduct reports. With the refinement of the process, a report is generated each fiscal year with aggregate results of types of complaints.

**Communicating Actions**

Actions are communicated on a case-by-case basis. Student concerns and corresponding actions are communicated to the student by the responsible college official of the designated area. Should a concern cross areas, all parties are contacted. External stakeholder concerns are handled in the same manner (2A).

**Evaluating Complaint Processes**

The method used to evaluate complaint resolution is evaluated biannually at the President's Cabinet meetings and will include review of trend related to number of complaints, type of complaints, and origination of complaints (student or other). The provosts at both campuses will also bring any qualitative analysis and corresponding recommendations at these meetings to identify improvement opportunities related to process (2A).

2R4. What are the results for student and key stakeholder complaints? This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of the following:

NICC tracks all complaints submitted by students or other stakeholders. Tracking is maintained by the campus provosts. Table 2R4.A. provides summary of results for FY14.

**Table 2R4.A. Aggregate Summary of All Student or Stakeholder Complaints by Department in FY14**

Department	Count in FY14	Originator	Type of Complaint	Results
Academic Affairs	2	2-Student	2-Academic	2-Referred to grade appeal committee
Calmar Provost	4	3-Community 1-Student	2-Customer Service 2-Other	4-Informal Resolution

Based on results, the College has set the following targets:

- 100% of formal complaints will be responded to within 2 business days of receipt
- 100% of formal complaints will have a resolution documented
- 100% of formal complaints will be reviewed by respective areas to determine if a process or service issue needs to be addressed. Results will be documented.

date of contact, date of resolution, and date of internal discussion to review policy and procedure.

Insights one year into the new process indicate that very few students and stakeholder file formal complaints. This shows that most issues are resolved satisfactorily before a formal complaint is filed; it may also show that students and stakeholders are still not aware of the online link to file a formal complaint and that awareness of this avenue should be raised.

In FY 14, all of the complaints were responded to by a College representative with a documented resolution. Complaint reporting is being modified to ensure the staff member following up documents

2I4. Based on 2R4, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

While the College tracked behavioral incidents, misconduct reports, and medical incidents for years, the need for formalization of the general complaint process was recognized in December 2012. The College’s former processes for collecting complaint information was primarily informal and anecdotal, and required many supervisors to track complaints, which was unwieldy. The new complaint log policy and process has been developed and now in place on the College’s website provides much more access for students and external constituents.

Future improvements will be to continue refining the tracking summary to ensure all information is fully captured to allow the College to measure itself against its targets. In addition, the College is piloting the routing of online forms through its electronic document system to improve efficiency and response time (2A).

2P5. Building Collaborations and Partnerships focuses on aligning, building, and determining the effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships to further the mission of the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Selecting Partners for Collaboration**

NICC defines *partner* as a person or organization associated with NICC in some action or endeavor and who shares in both the risks and rewards of the joint effort. Partners often have different levels of

investment in a project but the key is that a partner brings something to the table—knowledge, skills, and/or resources—and stands to benefit in some way from the success of the project (See 2P3 for a discussion of *stakeholder* processes).

NICC prioritizes partnerships based on strategic planning and alignment with College mission. Key partnerships are chosen to align with the College’s strategic plan, including to promote student access and support (Strategic Priority 6), to engage in continuous improvement of the College’s internal and external programs (Strategic Priority 4), to develop and implement a strategic enrollment management plan (Strategic Priority 3), to expand and diversify College resources and to maintain fiscal integrity (Strategic Priority 2). Key partners include 1) K-12 school districts, 2) Workforce system, 3) 4-year educational entities, and 5) Employers with formal agreements (1D3):

**Building, Maintaining, and Evaluating Effectiveness of Partnerships**

Partnerships are built and maintained though a number of avenues. These include sharing space, sharing staff, formal memorandums of understanding, and in-kind donations of equipment and time. Communication with partners is critical to maintaining a strong relationship. This occurs through regular attendance at partnership advisory meetings including key partnership staff, sharing of internal e-newsletters, and shared publicity/press surrounding partnership (1D3). A brief description of integral partnerships and how they are evaluated follows in Table 2P5.A.

**Table 2P5.A. Summary of Partners, Nature of Collaboration, and Assessment Indicators (1D3)**

Partner	Collaborations	How Effectiveness Assessed
K-12 Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal agreement to offer college credit through concurrent enrollment in high school and college coursework</li> <li>Formal participation in Youth CareerConnect grant program, funded through Dept. of Labor, to increase high school students engaged in career pathways while still in high school and attaining credentials and college credits toward a full degree program at NICC</li> <li>Re-engagement programs in Dubuque and Oelwein to reach out to high school drop outs through shared staff, space, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment in college coursework while in high school</li> <li>Enrollment at NICC following graduation</li> <li>Attainment of certificates and credit while in high school</li> <li># of drop outs re-engaged and achieving high school equivalency</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % incoming high school students that are college ready</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Investment Boards and local workforce system providers formally partner with NICC on several grants including: a) Round 1, 2, and 4 Department of Labor <i>TAACCCT</i> grants, b) Dept. of Labor <i>H1B Technical Skills Training</i> grant, c) Dept. of Labor <i>Youth CareerConnect</i> grant; The local workforce partner provides case management and support services to participants</li> <li>• Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance referrals to education at NICC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of referrals to grant program</li> <li>• # of referrals to NICC</li> </ul>
<b>Other 2-year and 4-year Educational Institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal partnership in <i>H1B Technical Skills Training</i> Grant and Department of Labor <i>TAACCT</i> grants Rounds 1, 2, and 4.</li> <li>• Formal articulation agreements for students wishing to transfer</li> <li>• Memorandum of Agreement with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College for Manufacturing Center of Excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful implementation of grant outcomes</li> <li>• FY14 grads: percent transferred</li> </ul>
<b>Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlike stakeholder employer partners, these employers have formal agreements with the College</li> <li>• Through its John Deere TECH program partnership with John Deere Corporation, NICC receives annual equipment loans, student scholarships, \$25,000 cash, professional development for faculty, curriculum input, career placement opportunities for graduates, student recruitment assistance, and student internships</li> <li>• Through its Gas Utilities Construction and Service program partnership with Black Hills Energy Co., NICC was provided a 50% FTE instructor from Black Hills until his retirement in 2013, student scholarships, technical program support, recruitment assistance, and equipment donations.</li> <li>• Prudential Retirement in Dubuque, IA partners with NICC to place veterans into entry-level positions with training provide by NICC.</li> <li>• 16 information technology companies partnering on NICC's Dept. of Labor <i>H1B Technical Skills Training</i> grant to upskill workforce</li> <li>• NICC brokers state-funded job training agreements for local companies to train new and existing employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years of relationship</li> <li>• # of employees trained through <i>H1B</i> grant</li> <li>• # of new and existing employees trained through job training agreements</li> </ul>

The partnerships are effective to the degree that the partnership objectives are met and the outcomes assessed align with targets or provide improved benefit to the College and partner. Lead partnership staff assess the outcomes typically every fiscal year, but as often as quarterly depending on the nature of the partnership (1D3).

2R5. What are the results for determining the effectiveness of aligning and building collaborations and partnerships?

The current results for the partnerships described in 2P5, and their comparison to internal or external targets are detailed in Table 2R5.A.

**Table 2R5.A. Current Results of Collaborative Partners**

Partner	Collaborations	Current Results (FY14)	Target if applicable
<b>K-12 Districts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal agreement to offer college credit through concurrent enrollment in high school and college coursework</li> <li>• Formal participation in <i>Youth CareerConnect (YCC)</i> grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,700 high school students enroll in more than 20,000 credits each year</li> <li>• Approx. 16% of in-district high school graduates enroll at NICC the fall term after graduation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% compliance with NACEP accreditation standards</li> <li>• High School Yield: enroll 18%+ high</li> </ul>

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	<p>program, funded through Dept. of Labor, to increase high school students engaged in career pathways while still in high school and attaining credentials and college credits toward a full degree program at NICC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-engagement programs in Dubuque and Oelwein to reach out to high school drop outs through shared staff, space, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of Jan. 2105, 15 high schools signed MOUs to partner on YCC grant</li> <li>• As of Jan. 2015, 62 students enrolled</li> <li>• As of Sept. 2014, 224 high school drop outs were re-engaged; 31 earned high school diploma and 50 earned high school equivalency diploma at NICC</li> <li>• Dubuque Schools drop-out rate decreased 35% in first year after program</li> <li>• NACEP accreditation granted 2013</li> </ul>	<p>school senior graduates the following fall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YCC grant: enroll more than 700 juniors and seniors by end of 2018.</li> <li>• Re-engage 50 drop outs per year; 75% to achieve diploma or equivalent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce System</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Investment Boards and local workforce system providers formally partner with NICC on several grants including: a) Round 1, 2, and 4 Department of Labor TAACCCT grants, b) Dept. of Labor H1B Technical Skills Training grant, c) Dept. of Labor Youth CareerConnect grant; The local workforce partner provides case management and support services as eligible to participants they refer</li> <li>• Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance referrals to education at NICC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 175 workforce partners referrals to grant-funded training programs</li> <li>• YCC grant: Workforce Investment Board is the fiscal agent of the grant and shares in attainment of outcomes through grant-hired staff</li> <li>• 45 students were served at NICC through WIA support</li> <li>• 7 students were served at NICC through Trade Adjustment Act funds (TAA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YCC grant: enroll more than 700 juniors and seniors by end of 2018.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other 2-year and 4-year Educational Institutions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal partnership in H1B Technical Skills Training grant and Department of Labor TAACCCT grants Rounds 1, 2, and 4.</li> <li>• Formal articulation agreements for students wishing to transfer</li> <li>• Memorandum of Agreement with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College for Manufacturing Center of Excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOUs with 7 community colleges in WI, MN, and IA to form Bridges2Healthcare TAACCCT Round 1 consortium in 2011; as of Sept. 2014, consortium served 3247 participants and awarded 2173 credentials</li> <li>• Signed MOU in 2012 with state consortium of 15 community colleges to participate in Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing (I-AM) TAACCCT Round 2 grant; as of Sept. 2014, 249 students served and 336 credentials have been awarded</li> <li>• Signed MOUs in 2012 with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Clarke University and Loras College to participate in H1B Technical Skills Training grant; 1927 enrollments in grant programming; 100%</li> <li>• 18% of FY14 grads transferred to a 4-year institution after graduation; 59% of these transfers were to in-district institutions</li> <li>• Signed MOU with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in 2013 to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges2Healthcare : Serve 4,500 participants and award 5,200 credentials by Sept. 2015.</li> <li>• I-AM: Far exceeded goal to serve 148 students and award 136 credentials by 2016;</li> <li>• H1B: On pace to meet goal to serve 2,183 participants and award 2118 credentials by April 2016</li> </ul>

		share a position to lead a manufacturing hub in Dubuque, IA;	
<b>Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlike stakeholder partners, these employers have formal agreements with the College</li> <li>• Through its John Deere TECH program partnership with John Deere Corporation, NICC receives annual equipment loans, student scholarships, \$25,000 cash, professional development for faculty, curriculum input, career placement opportunities for graduates, student recruitment assistance, and student internships</li> <li>• Through its Gas Utilities Construction and Service program partnership with Black Hills Energy Co., NICC was provided a 50% FTE instructor from Black Hills until his retirement in 2013, student scholarships, technical program support, recruitment assistance, and equipment donations.</li> <li>• Prudential Retirement in Dubuque, IA partners with NICC and Workforce OS to place veterans into entry-level positions within the company with career development and training provide by NICC.</li> <li>• 16 Information Technology companies partnering on NICC's Dept. of Labor <i>H1B Technical Skills Training</i> grant to upskill current workforce</li> <li>• NICC brokers state-funded job training agreements for local companies to train new and existing employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MOU with John Deere Corporation has been active for 25 years.</li> <li>• 537 John Deere program graduates; 76% employed 6 months later</li> <li>• The MOU with Black Hills (formerly Aquila) Corporation has been active for 7 years.</li> <li>• 24 graduates from Gas Utility program partnership; Since FY08, 60% employed</li> <li>• 21 veterans graduated; 15 were hired by Prudential; 10 retained after 9-12 months</li> <li>• 1927 enrollments of incumbent workers in <i>H1B</i> grant programming;</li> <li>• NICC secured \$4.1m in state job training assistance in FY14, for 81 new jobs and 631 current employees; 38% of training funds were spent with NICC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prudential Partnership: 15 veterans per year to complete training and attain employment</li> <li>• <i>H1B</i>: On pace to meet goal to serve 2,183 participants and award 2118 credentials by April 2016</li> <li>• State Job Training: 50% of training funds to be spent with NICC</li> </ul>

Based on the results in Table 2R5.A, the College determined the following insights:

- There is growing need to build upon concurrent enrollment partnerships to align student offerings in high-growth, high-demand career pathways.
- There is growing need to partner with K-12 districts in ways beyond offering credit to raise the level of college and career readiness of graduates.

- There is opportunity to strengthen partnerships with the workforce system through shared funding mechanisms and streamlined services
- Well-executed grant partnerships and influx of funding can quickly build capacity for multiple institutions to meet skilled workforce needs and grow and enhance programming.
- Well-communicated agreements and transfer policies for other institutions are imperative for student success, given the large number of students who transfer among institutions

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- Formal agreements with business partners are hugely beneficial to both the employer partner and the students who are quickly placed in employment.
- Community colleges are well-positioned to work with local businesses to develop, customize, and find training they need locally to expand and upskill their workforce; this model in the State of Iowa of placing community colleges in the customer service role to broker the agreement reaps benefits to businesses, the College, and the state.

214. Based on 2R4, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Exciting partnership opportunities have formally solidified at NICC based on strategic priorities of the College, funding opportunities, and corroborating data pointing to their need:

**Northeast Iowa Career Learning Link:** Based on best practice research on career pathway implementation, the College was able to launch a new program for local high school partners that meets legislative and employer stakeholder needs to provide K-12 students with more career information regarding high-growth, high-demand careers and accelerate their credit attainment and credential attainment for such careers while in high school. Supported by a Dept. of Labor *Youth CareerConnect* grant and the State of Iowa's Work-based Learning Intermediary Network fund, this programming includes increased opportunities for students and teachers to engage in work-based learning experiences as part of their education.

***Re-engage Dubuque and Re-engage Oelwein:*** Informed by local high school drop-out data and an increased capacity to serve more students through NICC high school equivalency diploma programs, the College worked with its local Area Education Agency and willing school district partners to launch best practice re-engagement programs with two local districts, which are showing promising results.

***Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence:*** Based on a shared need from businesses for more

skilled workers in advanced manufacturing, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) and NICC signed an MOU to jointly work to meet the needs of manufacturing employers in the Greater Dubuque region by developing programs to meet workforce needs, creating processes for businesses to access prototyping, 3D printing, and consulting services, and communicating local supply chain information to make local businesses more efficient. In 1-3 years, this partnership hopes to achieve designation as a national manufacturing hub and garner federal and local funding to implement its business plan.

In the next 1-3 years, the College hopes to solidify partnerships with the following groups to fulfill elements of its strategic plan based on data pointing to need:

***Pilot Early College Program with South Winneshiek School District:*** Amid declining population and difficulty retaining qualified teachers to teach high-level math and science coursework, NICC and South Winneshiek School District have been awarded a grant to survey the community and develop an early college model that can be implemented to allow students to begin NICC programs while in high school through expanded concurrent enrollment opportunities and sharing of space, instructors, and services.

***Keystone Area Education Agency Partnership on College and Career Ready Students:*** Because only 15% of students entering NICC are college-ready and through its engagement in high school programming through Career Learning Link, NICC is exploring models of partnering on developmental education for students while still in high school to ensure they graduate ready for college or careers.

***Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA):*** With the reauthorization of the WIA act into WIOA, NICC is partnering with its local providers to ensure seamless integration of the WIOA goals. This partnership will likely result in formal MOUs in the future when the state and federal regulations are finalized.

**AQIP Category Three: Valuing Employees**

**INTRODUCTION**

Just as it is committed to ethics and quality in its education and training delivery for students, Northeast Iowa Community College is also committed to quality hiring, development, and evaluation systems for faculty, staff and administration. The College has improved considerably since its last portfolio submission in 2010, guided by the 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and subsequent Strategy Forum, high-impact Action Projects, and expansion of human resources capabilities.

In 2011, the College’s Appraisal Report noted: “*The College has identified a need to collect more data on employee satisfaction and growth. Initial data are presented that show strong employee satisfaction. An opportunity exists to identify what factors*

*contributed to these results and how the College can reinforce and enhance these factors.*” The College believes it has confronted this opportunity to collect more data through institutionalization of the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) every three years and a strategic analysis of survey results and development of related actions.

The College’s efforts in the *Valuing Employees* category will demonstrate to readers processes, results and improvements related to:

- Hiring,
- Evaluation and Recognition, and
- Development

The following table provides a self-assessment of the College’s maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Aligned 2014: Integrated
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Integrated
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey to guide improvements</li> <li>• Implementation of the PeopleAdmin talent management system in allows NICC to collect and analyze applicant data much more efficiently</li> <li>• Transformation of collective bargaining process from traditional/position-based bargaining to interest based bargaining</li> <li>• Implementation of labor/management teams with both unions to improve communication and work collaboratively to solve workplace issues</li> <li>• Hiring of two new full-time staff to increase opportunities for staff and faculty training and development</li> <li>• Increased compensation and broadened paid leave for staff and faculty completing professional development and degree attainment</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed: Monitor and Improve Employee Satisfaction</li> </ul>

NICC is focusing future efforts in *Category Three* on developing a more robust new employee orientation and evaluation model, as well as increasing faculty and staff diversity. A consultant has been hired to begin work on a comprehensive compensation and classification study which will include all non-faculty employees. The Board of Trustees is committed to implementing changes in compensation and classification at the conclusion of the study. A project that will make professional development more systemic and transparent to all employees is in the beginning stages and two new wellness and life stage program managers will begin work in the summer of 2015 broadening employee access to programming and information to enhance their work and personal health and wellness.

**HIRING**

3P1. Hiring focuses on the acquisition of appropriately qualified/credentialed faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that effective, high-quality programs and student support services are provided. This includes but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Recruiting, hiring and orienting employees**

The College has three employee classifications—faculty, nonbargaining staff, and support staff. While the onboarding processes vary depending on the classification and position of the new hire, the College places a high level of importance on recruitment, hiring, and orientation. The College leadership and hiring managers understand that the quality of the programs and services offered by NICC is first and foremost impacted by the people providing them and the qualifications, talent, and experiences that they possess.

**Designing hiring processes**

When a position vacancy occurs, the President requires the hiring manager to consider how the position aligns with the needs of students and communities and how its goals might be met in other ways. If an affirmative decision for replacement is reached, the manager reviews, with other members of the department, whether there are changes that should be made to the duties or qualifications of the vacant position and/or to other positions within the department. A draft of the job description is shared with the Cabinet-level administrator responsible for the position and with human resources (HR) for revision and approval.

Each job description and posting includes the qualifications required for the position, which are consistent across employment classifications. Exceptions to the minimum qualifications are seldom allowed in hiring. In the rare instance in which an exception is considered to be posted minimum qualifications, the position is reposted with the new qualifications to allow newly qualified applicants access to the search (3C2, 3C6).

In 2012, NICC implemented a web-based talent management and applicant tracking system—

PeopleAdmin. HR staff make any approved changes to the job description in PeopleAdmin and then create a job posting in the system. Once the posting has been created, it is accessible immediately on the NICC website for all positions except support staff, which are posted internally only (via PeopleAdmin accessible through a private URL) for five days according to the collective bargaining agreement between the support staff and the College. All other positions are publicly posted to maximize the pool of qualified applicants. Advertising and posting varies by the type of position. See Table 3P1.A. for detail.

**Table 3P1.A. Position Advertising and Posting**

Position Classification	Sources
<b>Full-time Faculty</b> <b>Executive Staff</b> <b>Administrative Staff</b>	<b>National:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chronicle of Higher Education</li> <li>• HigherEdJobs.com</li> <li>• Indeed.com</li> <li>• Diversity publications and websites</li> <li>• Trade and professional publications and websites</li> </ul> <b>State/Regional:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Trade and professional publications and websites</li> <li>• Job boards</li> <li>• Workforce websites</li> </ul> <b>Local:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICC website</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> </ul>
<b>Part-time Faculty</b> <b>Professional Staff</b>	<b>State/Regional:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Diversity publications and websites</li> <li>• Trade and professional publications and websites</li> <li>• Job boards</li> <li>• Workforce websites</li> </ul> <b>Local:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICC website</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> </ul>
<b>Support and Service Staff</b>	<b>State/Regional:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job boards</li> <li>• Workforce websites</li> </ul> <b>Local:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICC website</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> </ul>

Regardless of how they learn of an open position, all prospective applicants must complete all phases of a uniform search process in order to be considered for a position. All applications are received electronically through PeopleAdmin. Applicants

must complete a standard application for the staff or faculty opening. Every applicant is also required to submit electronically a cover letter and a resume or vitae. Other documents (including transcripts, writing samples, portfolios, and projects) may be required dependent upon the position.

During the recruitment phase, the hiring manager establishes a search committee and submits names to HR. Search committee composition varies dependent on the position. With the exception of temporary positions, a minimum of three members is required and, for district-wide positions and those with significant responsibility (deans, directors and above), committee members are chosen from across the College with representation from all employee classifications.

All search committee members are given secure access to PeopleAdmin. This access allows search committee members to review applicants conveniently; it eliminates copying and distributing sensitive application materials; and it facilitates the use of a common matrix of attributes with which each candidate is scored by each search committee member. The search committee chair has access to all matrix rankings from the committee in PeopleAdmin. The completed matrix becomes a tool for candidate selection and an artifact from the search for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) purposes.

Prior to the selection of candidates for interview, the search committee meets to review the matrix for the position and the guidelines for the search process to ensure that the search is conducted according to legal requirements and College policies. The search committee then selects the candidates for interview based on the scores in the attribute matrix and consideration of the applications and supplemental materials. In high profile searches and in searches where a large number of qualified candidates are identified, phone interviews may be utilized to narrow the pool prior to on-campus interviews.

Candidates are typically interviewed at the campus or center where the position is located. District-wide and high profile positions may include events, such as open forums and meetings with community

leaders, at multiple locations. The search committee recommends a preferred candidate to the hiring manager who submits the selection for approval by the President. An offer is made to the successful candidate, which is contingent upon the results of the background screening required by the position and approval by the Board of Trustees.

Once the employment recommendation is received in HR from the hiring manager, the new hire is welcomed to the College with an offer letter from the executive director of HR. The letter details the terms and conditions of the offer and includes an acceptance of offer for the new hire's signature and the paperwork required to enter the new hire into the Ellucian Colleague ERP system.

Orientation of new employees is dependent upon the position status (full- or part-time), classification, and position. All full-time employees meet with a member of the HR staff for a 90-minute orientation that includes information about benefits, leave, the collective bargaining agreement (if applicable), the mission, vision, and values of the institution, accreditation with the HLC through the AQIP pathway, and any questions the new hire may have.

The hiring manager provides the hands-on orientation to position-specific duties, departmental practices, and the technology and equipment necessary to perform the duties of the position. This department-level orientation also includes training on the employee portal (NICC Xpress), the Ellucian Colleague ERP, and web-based leave and work time reporting.

The technology training coordinator, the instructional design coordinator, and the distance learning coordinator have created training videos and step-by-step handouts to assist with orientation and new hire training and have made them available in a common location on the employee portal.

### **Academic Credentialing Standards**

Academic credentialing standards for Iowa community college faculty are set by the Iowa Legislature (in compliance with HLC guidelines), the Iowa Department of Education, and the 15 Iowa community colleges. In 2003, legislative action

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removed oversight of community college faculty from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners through licensure and required each community college to establish, implement, and maintain a *Quality Faculty Plan*. A change passed by the legislature in 2008 requires all faculty who teach in an Iowa community college to meet minimum

qualifications set in statute and to maintain credentialing under the college plan. Table 3P1.B. describes the minimum standards for community college faculty as set forth in the Iowa Code and the Iowa Administrative Code (3C2).

**Table 3P1.B. Minimum Faculty Qualifications (3C2).**

Classification	Minimum Qualifications
<b>Arts &amp; Science Faculty</b>	Instructors in the subject area of arts and sciences shall meet either of the following qualifications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possess a master's degree from a regionally accredited graduate school, and have successfully completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate level courses in each field of instruction in which the instructor is teaching classes.</li> <li>2. Have two or more years of successful experience in a professional field or area in which the instructor is teaching classes and in which post baccalaureate recognition or professional licensure is necessary for practice, including but not limited to the fields or areas of accounting, engineering, law, law enforcement, and medicine.</li> </ol>
<b>Career &amp; Technical Faculty</b>	Instructors in the subject area of career and technical education shall be registered, certified, or licensed in the occupational area in which the state requires registration, certification, or licensure, and shall hold the appropriate registration, certificate, or license for the occupational area in which the instructor is teaching, and shall meet either of the following qualifications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A baccalaureate or graduate degree in the area or a related area of study or occupational area in which the instructor is teaching classes.</li> <li>2. Special training and at least 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in the occupational area or related occupational area in which the instructor teaches classes if the instructor possesses less than a baccalaureate degree.</li> </ol>

All NICC faculty meet or exceed the minimum credentials set forth in Iowa Code. The credentials are reviewed by the hiring supervisor and documented on a *Faculty Experience Evaluation* form, then by the vice president of academic affairs, and then by human resources, who maintains on-going records for compliance with quality faculty plan credentialing and notifies faculty by letter every year of their credentialing status. The *NICC Quality Faculty Plan* has exceeded statutory requirements for CTE faculty teaching transfer-level courses by requiring those faculty to possess a Master's degree in the discipline taught. There is a waiver that allows new faculty who have at least 50% of the requirements for their Master's degree to be assigned transfer-level courses after the faculty member shows evidence of how he/she will complete the degree requirements for the Master's degree within three (3) years (3C2, 3C3).

requires all faculty teaching concurrent enrollment classes to be credentialed by the same standards as faculty teaching classes offered outside of concurrent enrollment (3C2).

**Ensuring Sufficient Numbers of Faculty**

Faculty are classified as full-time, part-time regular, and adjunct. Full-time and part-time regular faculty are covered by the collective bargaining agreement between NICC and the NICC Higher Education Association (NICC-HEA). Adjunct faculty are employed at-will. Faculty are added in program areas and departments based on need and the College is responsive to requests by the deans to provide additional faculty (3C1). Table 3P1.C. provides additional detail.

NICC is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) which

**Table 3P1.C. Faculty Number and FTE**

Classification	Count	% of Total	FTE	% of Total
Full-time Faculty	121	39.3%	121.0	62.3%
Part-Time Regular Faculty	70	22.7%	35.0	18.0%
Adjunct Faculty	117	38.0%	38.1	19.7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>194.1</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NICC, 2014 IPEDS data

The work week for a full-time faculty member is 35 hours with full-load on credit assignment set at 15 credits and for contact hour assignment at 23 hours per week. This schedule leaves ample time for full-time faculty interaction with students and participation in college activities. In addition to their base pay, full-time faculty are paid a stipend for club sponsorship, program evaluation duties, and mentoring responsibilities. Part-time and adjunct faculty receive meeting rate pay on an hour-for-hour basis for their participation on committees, program evaluation, and for attendance at on- and off-campus professional development activities (3C1, 3C5).

**Ensuring Sufficient Staff to Provide Student Support Services**

Student support services are essential to the success of NICC. The student services division has participated in extensive cross-training and analysis of departmental functions using ‘lean’ principles to enable the staff to work more effectively and efficiently. The purpose of these activities is to ensure that the 45-person staff understand basic information in the areas of admissions, academic advising, financial aid, etc. to enable them to assist students until an appointment with a specialist can be scheduled (5A1).

In 2012, a new student services position—enrollment specialist—was established to assist students needing more guidance with registration and financial aid. The initial appointment was one half-time staff member at the Peosta campus. The following year, that position was increased to full-time, and duties for a full-time staff person at the

Calmar campus were realigned to provide a second full-time specialist. Also in 2013, a full-time enrollment specialist was hired at the NICC Dubuque Center. Based on local needs, the enrollment specialists at the Calmar and Peosta campuses are focused on the financial aid process as data showed this process was a major barrier to student success. At the Dubuque Center, the specialist is focused on the one-stop philosophy of providing services including recruitment, advising, mentoring, financial aid counseling, and job placement assistance (5A1).

In addition to the services provided by the student services division, many other staff and provide student support services. The College has three learning centers to provide academic support to students of all abilities. These centers are located on the Calmar and Peosta campuses and at the Dubuque Center. Credentialed faculty members, learning center associates, and tutors staff these centers, which are open from early in the morning through the late afternoon hours (5A1).

With growing compliance requirements, the College also recently invested in this area to meet student needs for screening and participation in clinical site learning and other compliance issues. This area has grown from zero dedicated staff to two full time positions in three years (5A1).

Students are also encouraged to join in the life of the College by two full-time professional staff and student workers in the Student Life, Leadership, and Diversity offices at the Calmar and Peosta campuses. A U.S. Department of Education *TRIO* grant funds the *Student Support Services* (SSS) office at the Peosta campus. Focused on low-income, first-generation college students and students with disabilities evidencing academic need, there are two full-time professional staff, a full-time administrative assistant, a part-time peer tutor coordinator, and several peer tutors who staff the SSS program (5A1).

3R1. What are the results for determining if recruitment, hiring, and orienting practices assure effective provision for programs and services?

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The College uses the following measures to track results for determining if recruitment, hiring, and orienting practices assure effective provision for programs and services:

- PeopleAdmin facilitates reporting on the number of open positions, the number of applicants, and the sources used by applicants to access information about the search. Knowing the average number of applicants per search and where candidates learn about open positions assists the HR staff in making crucial decisions about placement of position openings and the expenditure of advertising dollars.
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) reporting through PeopleAdmin tracks the diversity of candidates. This information is used to inform the HR staff and college leadership regarding the demographics of the candidates seeking positions and allows comparison of successful candidates to the pool of applicants.
- NICC calculates annually the voluntary, involuntary and combined turnover rates in employment and uses these measures to monitor the number of staff who leave the institution and for what reason. The College also tracks responses to employee exit surveys. Data from both these sources assist the College in making improvements in hiring and orientation of new employees.
- The Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) was administered in 2011 and 2014. This survey provides valuable information regarding employee perception of the College's ability to recruit, hire, and orient employees in a manner that sustains excellence in our programs and supports our students in reaching their goals. The survey is also benchmarked against a comparison group of similarly-sized, multi-campus U.S. community colleges.
- NICC collects Management Information System (MIS) data for reporting to the Iowa Department of Education on faculty meeting credentialing standards and degree attainment.

Results in Table 3R1.A illustrate the number of searches conducted by NICC in FY2014 categorized by position class.

**Table 3R1.A. Open Positions and Applicants**

Position Class	# of Searches	# of Total Applicants	Applicants per Search
Executive	1	50	<b>50.0</b>
Professional	20	597	<b>29.9</b>
Faculty	24	339	<b>14.1</b>
Student Svcs	2	140	<b>70.0</b>
Clerical	16	213	<b>13.3</b>
Service	6	52	<b>8.7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1,391</b>	<b>20.2</b>

Source: NICC—PeopleAdmin data FY2014

Applicants per search is an indicator of the level of interest in working for the institution by potential employees. NICC results indicate strong interest in several position classifications with lower levels of interest in faculty, clerical, and service positions.

Knowing where prospective employees are accessing information about open positions is essential to making good decisions about placing advertising. The data in Tables 3R1.B. (faculty positions) and 3R1.C. (staff positions) provide this information from January 2013 to January 2015.

**Table 3R1.B. Faculty Job Source Listings**

Source	Number	%
AccessDubuqueJobs.com	126	15%
HigherEdJobs.com	51	6%
Indeed.com	135	16%
Iowa Works	10	1%
Local Newspaper	71	9%
NICC Website	318	39%
Posting at NICC	29	4%
Other	79	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NICC—PeopleAdmin data January 2013 through January 2015

**Table 3R1.C. Staff Job Source Listings**

Source	Number	%
AccessDubuqueJobs.com	209	12%
HigherEdJobs.com	72	4%
Indeed.com	207	12%
Iowa Works	50	3%
Local Newspaper	250	15%
NICC Website	683	40%
Posting at NICC	71	4%
Other	159	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NICC—PeopleAdmin data January 2013 through January 2015

Applicants are required to respond to the EEO survey in order to successfully apply for a position at NICC. However, they may elect to provide no response to some or all of the questions on the survey. The data in Tables 3R1.D. and 3R1.E. illustrate the gender distribution of applicants in FY2014 and the percentage of the applicants by white or minority status for the individuals who responded to these questions on the EEO surveys.

**Table 3R1.D. Applicants by Gender**

Position Class	Applicants Reporting	% Female	% Male
Executive	43	37%	63%
Professional	503	74%	26%
Faculty	269	54%	46%
Student Svcs	112	68%	32%
Clerical	175	84%	16%
Service	41	83%	17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Source: NICC—PeopleAdmin EEO Survey Responses FY2014

**Table 3R1.E. Applicants White/Minority**

Position Class	Applicants Reporting	% White	% Minority
Executive	50	68%	32%
Professional	581	73%	25%
Faculty	332	54%	33%
Student Svcs	139	68%	25%
Clerical	212	84%	24%
Service	52	83%	29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>

Source: NICC—PeopleAdmin EEO Survey Responses FY2014

Results in Tables 3R1.F. and 3R1.G. provide comparative data with full-time employees by gender and white or minority status.

**Table 3R1.F. FT Employees by Gender**

Position Class	Total Employees	% Female	% Male
Executive	11	82%	8%
Professional	93	70%	30%
Faculty	121	56%	44%
Student Svcs	18	78%	22%
Clerical	44	100%	0%
Service	28	46%	54%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>

Source: NICC—Office of Human Resources—FY2014

**Table 3R1.G. FT Employees White/Minority**

Position Class	Applicants Reporting	% White	% Minority
Executive	11	91%	9%
Professional	93	94%	6%
Faculty	121	98%	2%
Student Svcs	18	100%	0%
Clerical	44	100%	0%
Service	28	100%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>3%</b>

Source: NICC—Office of Human Resources—FY2014

When comparing gender of full-time employees in to the gender of all applicants responding to that question on the EEO survey in FY2014, the distribution of female and male employees is similar to that of those making application for open positions. However, there is a significant difference in the data for white and minority employees and applicants. While the demographics of applicant data related to the gender distribution closely mirrors the gender distribution of the employee population, the same cannot be said of the data for white and minority applicants and employees. This is a disparity NICC intends to address.

Turnover rate (Table 3R1.H) shows the number of regular employees who left NICC voluntarily or involuntarily in FY2010 through FY2015 compared to the total number of regular employees in those years. The College's low turnover rate (at or below 0.10) can suggest stability in the workforce and positive morale.

**Table 3R1.H. Regular Employee Turnover Rate**

FY	Vol	Invol	Total	# of Empl	Turnover Rate
2010	54	1	55	554	.10
2011	44	1	45	570	.08
2012	37	4	41	598	.07
2013	24	4	28	572	.05
2014	29	4	33	577	.06
<b>AVG</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>574.2</b>	<b>.07</b>

Source: NICC—Office of Human Resources

Furthermore, the turnover rate has decreased during the same period of time that CESS data have indicated that overall employee satisfaction has risen significantly, which helps to validate the interpretation of a low turnover rate as an indicator of job satisfaction.

Table 3R1.I provides data from the voluntary employee exit survey responses from FY2012 through FY2014.

**Table 3R1.I. Employee Exit Survey Responses**

Measure of Satisfaction with NICC Experience	Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
I had a good working relationship with co-workers.	100.0%	0.0%
I had a good working relationship with my supervisor.	100.0%	0.0%
Training or job development met expectations.	88.7%	11.3%
Work assignments were distributed fairly.	100.0%	0.0%
I had a clear understanding of my job duties.	93.7%	6.3%
Working conditions met expectations.	84.3%	15.7%
The pay was fair for the amount of work required.	74.6%	25.4%
The benefits were competitive.	88.2%	12.8%
My work schedule met my needs.	100.0%	0.0%
Overall, I was satisfied with my job.	94.6%	5.4%

Source: NICC—Office of Human Resources

The employee exit survey data show a high (94.6%) overall job satisfaction by employees leaving the institution, again validating employee’s satisfaction with the institution as an employer.

Results from questions related to hiring and orienting new employees from the CESS survey are shown in Table 3R1.J. and Table 3R1.K..

**Table 3R1.J. 2011 to 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Hiring and Orientation**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution consistently follows clear processes for selecting new employees	4.35	3.16	1.19	4.40	3.49	0.91
This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees	4.40	2.83	1.56	4.42	3.12	1.30

**Table 3R1.K. 2014 Comparison Group CESS Results Related to Hiring and Orientation**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	Northeast Iowa CC			Comparison group		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution consistently follows clear processes for selecting new employees	4.40	3.49	0.91	4.38	3.11	1.27
This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees	4.42	3.12	1.30	4.39	3.13	1.26

The NICC data shows statistically significant improvement in the gap between importance and satisfaction in both measures. The comparison group data for 2014 in regard to following clear processes for selecting new employees shows a statistically significant difference between NICC and the comparison group with NICC’s gap being lower. However, NICC’s gap between importance and satisfaction on the measure for orienting and training

new employees, while not statistically significant from the comparison group, is higher.

The comparison of NICC CESS data for 2011 and 2014 gap between importance and satisfaction for both measures related to employee hiring and orientation decreased in a statistically significant way. This can be attributed to the implementation of PeopleAdmin and the supervisor and search committee training that accompanied this process.

While NICC employees surveyed with the CESS indicated a greater satisfaction with the new employee orientation process on the 2014 survey compared to the 2011 survey, the comparison College data shows a lower gap between importance and satisfaction than the 2014 NICC data show. Planned improvements for new employee orientation are detailed in 3I1.

Tables 3R1.L. illustrates that, for the past five years, all NICC faculty have been in compliance with the degree and credentialing requirements for their positions in alignment with the *NICC Quality Faculty Plan (3C2)*. While no faculty position at NICC requires a doctorate, Table 3R1.M. demonstrates that 5-8% of faculty who have taught for NICC in the last five academic years have an earned doctorate while at or near 50% have attained a Master's degree.

**Table 3R1.L. Faculty Credentialing Compliance**

Academic Year	# of Teaching Faculty	% in Compliance
2009-2010	382	100%
2010-2011	385	100%
2011-2012	363	100%
2012-2013	375	100%
2013-2014	348	100%

Source: NICC—Iowa Department of Education MIS report data

**Table 3R1.M. Faculty with Doctorate or Master's**

Academic Year	# of Teaching Faculty	# and % with Doctorate		# and % with Master's	
2009-2010	382	21	5.4%	176	46.0%
2010-2011	385	24	6.2%	202	52.5%
2011-2012	363	28	7.7%	183	50.4%
2012-2013	350	26	7.4%	177	50.6%
2013-2014	348	27	7.8%	171	49.1%

Source: NICC—Iowa Department of Education MIS report data

3I1. Based on 3R1, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The implementation of the PeopleAdmin talent management system in 2012 allows NICC to collect and analyze applicant data more efficiently than the paper system utilized previously. The information on where applicants learn about open positions has

changed how and where HR staff place advertising for open positions. It has also verified that prospective employees are intentionally seeking positions at NICC because the college website is, by far, the most frequent site used by applicants in learning about open positions.

PeopleAdmin is implementing a more robust reporting system in 2015, which NICC plans to utilize to learn more about job applicants in order to continue to make changes and improvements in our hiring processes.

Statistically, Northeast Iowa is not ethnically or racially diverse (just over 2% minority population) but the applicant data show that NICC is receiving applications from non-white applicants. However, the employee demographics do not reflect ethnic or racial diversity at the same level as the applicant data. The strategic plan currently under development includes a goal focused on diversity in the employment ranks of the College. The development and implementation of a comprehensive diversity plan is one of the strategies to support this goal. The HR office has recently added several online job boards targeted at recruitment of diverse populations and the use of these sources by applicants will be tracked. As the diversity plan is implemented, the desired result will be a more diverse workforce at NICC.

As the college has grown, orienting and onboarding of new employees has become more challenging. One challenge has been sufficient HR staffing to plan and implement a consistent college-wide orientation. A proposal to increase HR staffing by adding a full-time position at the Peosta campus was approved for FY2015 and the hire was completed in September 2014. Additionally, a compliance specialist position which reports to HR was added at the Calmar campus and the reporting relationship of the compliance director, located in Peosta, was moved from academic affairs to HR.

This additional staffing and moving compliance staff to HR has grown the department from 3.5 FTE to 6.5 FTE and planning is well underway for the roll-out of a comprehensive employee orientation program beginning in the fall of 2015.

## EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

3P2. Evaluation and Recognition focuses on processes that assess and recognize faculty, staff, and administrators' contributions to the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Designing Performance Evaluation Systems for All Employees

NICC has designed and implemented performance evaluation systems for all employees. The method and frequency of evaluation varies dependent on the status and classification of the employee. Evaluation of faculty and support staff are subject to the collective bargaining agreements established with each group. Evaluation of nonbargaining employees is governed by Board and College policies.

Faculty covered by the collective bargaining agreement are considered probationary for the first three years of teaching. During the probationary period, faculty are evaluated two times per year. This frequency of evaluation has been established to provide consistent, constructive feedback in the early years of teaching at the community college level. Only faculty who become employed with NICC after having taught three years or more at another Iowa community college may be exempted from probationary status (3C3).

The evaluation process for probationary faculty includes a self-evaluation and goal setting by the faculty member on the first evaluation of the contract year. The dean or supervisor performs a teaching observation prior to completing each of the two written evaluations and, within 10 days of each teaching observation, holds a review meeting with the faculty member. Both parties sign the written evaluation form and a copy is retained by the dean (supervisor) and by the faculty member. The original, signed copy of the evaluation is forwarded to HR for inclusion in the faculty member's official personnel file (3C3).

Once a faculty member has taught for three years and has been evaluated by the dean or supervisor six times, he or she is placed on a three-year rotation for evaluation. Non-probationary faculty must be

notified by their dean or supervisor within the first three weeks of the fall term that they are eligible for evaluation during the academic year. The evaluation process includes a self-evaluation and goal setting by the faculty member, a teaching observation by the dean or supervisor followed by a written evaluation, which is completed by the dean or supervisor (3C3).

The faculty member's self-evaluation and the dean's (supervisor's) written evaluation are discussed in a meeting held no more than 10 days following the teaching evaluation. Both parties sign the written evaluation form and a copy is retained by the dean (supervisor) and by the faculty member. The original, signed copy of the evaluation is forwarded to the HR office for inclusion in the faculty member's official personnel file (3C3).

Per the collective bargaining agreement, the faculty member's signature on the evaluation form may or may not signify agreement with the evaluation but does document that the faculty member has received and reviewed the contents. Non-probationary faculty members may grieve an "overall unsatisfactory evaluation". Probationary faculty members have no grievance rights in the evaluation process (3C3).

Support staff employees are evaluated annually by the direct supervisor. Within three weeks of initial hire or a new job assignment, the supervisor must meet with the support staff employee to familiarize the employee with the evaluation procedure. The evaluation is based on the supervisor's first-hand evaluation of the employee's work performance.

The evaluation process includes notification by the supervisor of an evaluation conference time and date. The supervisor prepares the written evaluation prior to the conference using a standard support staff evaluation form. At the conference, the supervisor discusses the formal written evaluation and also invites the employee to share progress, concerns, and ideas. At the conclusion of the conference, both parties sign the evaluation form and each retains a copy. The original, signed copy of the evaluation is forwarded to the HR office for inclusion in the employee's official personnel file.

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Per the collective bargaining agreement, a support staff employee may file a written objection to any evaluation that he/she deems “incomplete, inaccurate, or unjust”. The written objection must be signed by both the employee and the supervisor and forwarded to HR where the objection will be placed with the evaluation in the personnel file. A support staff employee is allowed to grieve “the accuracy of any evaluation”.

Nonbargaining employees are evaluated annually by the direct supervisor. The evaluation process for nonbargaining employees is governed by HR policy. The evaluation process includes notification by the supervisor of an evaluation conference time and date. The date is set far enough in advance to allow the employee to complete his/her self-evaluation, to document progress on the previous year’s goals, and to set goals for the upcoming year. The supervisor prepares the written evaluation prior to the conference using a standard evaluation form. A few days prior to the evaluation conference, the supervisor and employee exchange documents.

During the conference, the documents are discussed and the contents of a final, combined evaluation document are drafted. The supervisor is responsible for finalizing the written evaluation which includes elements from the self-evaluation, goals, and supervisor’s evaluation. When the final document is complete, both parties sign the evaluation form and each retains a copy. The original, signed copy of the evaluation is forwarded to HR for inclusion in the employee’s official personnel file.

The performance of the President of NICC is evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees. This process includes a 360-degree evaluation of the President by the members of the cabinet and feedback from all members of the Board of Trustees.

The board members assigned to oversee the evaluation provide the board secretary with the evaluation instrument to distribute to members of the board and cabinet. board and cabinet members respond to the elements of the evaluation and return the completed evaluation to the board secretary who compiles the results and provides them to the board

members in charge of the process. The results are shared with the President and the board sets the terms the President’s contract for the next fiscal year following the evaluation process.

**Soliciting Input and Communicate Expectations**

The College regularly solicits input from faculty, staff, and administrators in a variety of ways. Table 3P2.A. provides a listing of several examples and the narrative below the table provides further explanation.

**Table 3P2.A. Opportunities for Communication**

Activity/Forum	Solicits Input	Communicates Expectations
President’s Forums	X	X
All College Day	X	X
Faculty IBB	X	X
Support Staff IBB	X	X
Faculty LMT	X	X
Support Staff LMT	X	X
Faculty Convocation	X	X
Staff Convocation	X	X
College Senate	X	X
Friday Takeout	X	X
Employee Surveys	X	

The President holds quarterly open forums for employees across the district during which he discusses a topic or topics relevant to the life of the College. After providing information and perspective, Dr. Wee invites comments and questions from all those in attendance at the meetings. The most recent was held in February 2015 to discuss the development of the FY16-18 strategic plan.

Annually, all faculty and staff are invited to attend All College Day. Each year, approximately 400 full- and part-time staff gather face-to-face to learn and work together. This day provides an opportunity for the President to update staff and faculty on current issues and initiatives, to set forth goals and expectations, and to reflect on challenges and successes. Part of every All College Day is spent in large and small group discussion in which opinions and ideas from faculty and staff are solicited and collected for subsequent review and action.

In bargaining for the 2013-2014 contracts, NICC employed interest based bargaining (IBB) for the

first time. After several training sessions, faculty, administrators, and board members formed the faculty IBB Team and support staff, administrators, and board members formed the support staff IBB. Based on defining mutual interests and then conducting and reaching agreement in a manner that honors the interests for all parties, IBB has been a success at NICC.

As the direct result of the success of IBB, in 2014-2015, both the faculty and support staff approached NICC administration to request the formation of labor/management teams (LMT). The purpose of the LMT is to talk about issues and impediments to workplace communication and harmony in a non-confrontational, pro-active manner. Although NICC is in the beginning stages of this process, participants agree that the discussions have helped all involved solve several issues in a positive manner that has included soliciting input and communicating expectations.

Faculty convocations are held prior to the beginning of both the fall and spring terms while a staff convocation is held annually in late July or early August. The purpose of the convocations is to bring faculty and staff together at the beginning of the year (term) to provide information, solicit input on a variety of college projects and activities, and to set the tone/theme/expectations for the upcoming year (term). The large-group convocations are followed by department meetings where sharing and planning also take place.

The College Senate is comprised of staff, faculty, and student members elected by their constituent groups. College Senate members provide input on many issues and is a conduit for sharing policy decisions and information. The chairperson of the College Senate sits on the President's cabinet.

*Friday Takeout* is published each Friday in electronic format by the marketing department and is distributed to all faculty and staff who have an active email account. The publication provides valuable information and actively solicits feedback and information to and from the college community.

As has been noted previously, NICC surveys faculty and staff every three years with the Noel-Levitz *College Employee Satisfaction Survey*. In other years, the Chronicle of Higher Education's *Great Colleges to Work For* survey has been employed to solicit input from faculty and staff. Further, surveys on a wide variety of issues (satisfaction with technology resources, marketing/communication methods, scheduling of events and celebrations) are provided to staff and faculty each year via the employee portal, NICC Xpress.

### **Aligning Evaluation System with Institutional Objectives**

Several years ago, the evaluation system was intentionally aligned with institutional objectives by incorporating individual goal-setting in the evaluation process. Each individual goal must be tied to the institutional goals on the evaluation form by indicating the strategic area (from the College strategic plan) to which the individual goal is most closely tied. NICC makes the strategic plan widely available so employees have access to it and are familiar with the strategies and goals that comprise the plan.

### **Utilizing Established Policies and Procedures to Regularly Evaluate all Employees**

Regular evaluation is required and is monitored by staff in the HR office. As previously noted, evaluation is covered by each of the collective bargaining agreements and in HR and Board policy. All completed evaluations are submitted to the HR office where they are read by the executive director of HR prior to being scanned to the employee's electronic personnel record and filed in the paper file. The HR specialist records the name of the evaluator and the evaluation date for each evaluation submitted to HR through the Ellucian Colleague ERP system

If, during her review of an individual evaluation, the executive director of HR sees an issue of concern, she contacts the supervisor who conducted the evaluation to discuss the concern(s). Methods employed to address performance concerns include: performance improvement plans, targeted professional development, coaching and mentoring, and, as a last resort, disciplinary action.

### **Establishing Employee Recognition, Compensation, and Benefit Systems**

The employee recognition, compensation, and benefit systems are of paramount concern for any employer. NICC strives to address each of these key areas in ways that lead to retention and high performance.

Employee recognition involves formal and informal means of calling attention to employee contributions and accomplishments. First and foremost, NICC has a reputation for being a very caring workplace. Anecdotally, new employees frequently comment on the care and concern that is expressed by co-workers in the early days of employment. People go out of their way to greet new employees and to inquire if assistance is needed.

Supervisors are encouraged to establish and maintain frequent and open communication with all of their direct reports and most do this well resulting in the ability to recognize and remedy small issues that would otherwise develop into larger challenges or difficulties.

A sick leave donation program allows employees to anonymously donate sick leave to a staff or faculty member whose illness or the illness of an immediate family member has resulted in the exhaustion of all paid leave enabling the employee in need to receive up to 20 additional days of leave.

Annually, employee recognition events are held on each campus. Employees who have served the College for 5 years or longer (in 5-year increments) are recognized with a service pin and thanks from the President. In 2012, the first 45-year service pin was awarded to an employee who was in the first graduating class from the College, subsequently hired, and spent her entire working career at NICC. Also during this event, employees who have attained milestone events (earned a degree, received an award, are serving in a professional capacity) are recognized, the College gives three Extra Effort Awards, and those who are retiring from service are recognized with a plaque, a retirement pin, and celebration of their contributions to NICC.

Increases and changes in compensation and benefits for support staff and faculty are bargained through the interest based bargaining process. Those for nonbargaining employees are approved by the NICC Board of Trustees. The compensation philosophy of NICC is to provide fair and competitive compensation that enables employees to choose to stay with the college. The funding streams and changing economic climates provide significant challenges in this regard but they do not deter the college from continuing to do what it is able to reach these goals.

### **Promoting Employee Satisfaction and Engagement**

NICC promotes employee satisfaction and engagement in a variety of ways. By providing opportunities for input (as noted previously in this section) and by reviewing and responding to the suggestions and ideas from faculty and staff, the college shows that these responses are valued and important.

There are a number of standing and ad hoc committees at NICC and faculty and staff participation is actively encouraged. Additionally, annual events and celebrations such as Fall Fest, Student Crisis Fund Raisers, Coffeehouse Jam, wellness events, All College Day, employee recognition events, Foundation golf tournaments, and others require and welcome the participation of faculty and staff.

All full-time and part-time regular employees may take any class (credit or non-credit) that the college offers on a tuition-exempt basis. Employees are not limited in the number of courses in which they can enroll. This places the heart of NICC open for all to enjoy and has led to the attainment of full degrees for only the cost of fees and books and to countless opportunities to learn and explore.

3R2. What are the results for determining if evaluation processes assess employees' contributions to the institution?

To date, NICC has not designed or implemented a comprehensive way to measure or track outcomes or employee satisfaction related to employee

performance evaluation. While we accept and record the evaluations that have been completed, we do not disaggregate the information in the evaluations. For example regarding employee goals—How many were met/unmet? Which institutional goals were most often aligned with individual goals? How do employees feel about including goal setting and tracking in the evaluation process? Evaluation and monitoring of the evaluation process in a more purposeful way is something that has been discussed and will be addressed through the implementation of a new evaluation process in the near future. This will be discussed in in 3I2.

The Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS), administered in 2011 and 2014, does provide information regarding employee perception of the College’s evaluation process as well as their attitudes toward communication across the college, employee benefits and compensation, employee involvement, and recognition of employees. The survey is also benchmarked against a comparison group of similarly-sized, multi-campus U.S. community colleges and those results for elements appropriate to employee evaluation and recognition are demonstrated in Tables 3R2.A. and 3R2.B.

**Table 3R2.A. 2011 to 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Evaluation and Recognition**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014			IMP Sign Diff	SAT Sign diff
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP		
It is easy for me to get information at this institution	4.40	3.22	1.18	4.48	3.60	0.88	NS	***
I learn about important campus events in a timely manner	4.15	3.42	0.74	4.24	3.83	0.41	NS	***
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	4.47	3.03	1.43	4.40	3.47	0.93	NS	***
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	4.44	3.02	1.42	4.41	3.49	0.92	NS	***
I am empowered to resolve problems quickly	4.31	3.42	0.89	4.36	3.68	0.68	NS	**
I have the information I need to do my job well	4.62	3.65	0.96	4.56	3.89	0.67	NS	**
My job responsibilities are communicated clearly to me	4.54	3.73	0.81	4.49	3.89	0.61	NS	NS
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say	4.59	3.67	0.92	4.55	3.99	0.56	NS	**
My supervisor helps me improve my job performance	4.33	3.52	0.81	4.41	3.89	0.52	NS	***
My department or work unit has written, up-to-date objectives	4.12	3.51	0.61	4.21	3.83	0.38	NS	***
My department meets as a team to plan and coordinate work	4.23	3.50	0.72	4.29	3.81	0.49	NS	**
I am paid fairly for the work I do	4.52	2.96	1.56	4.54	3.31	1.23	NS	***
The employee benefits available to me are valuable	4.65	4.06	0.59	4.53	4.11	0.42	*	NS
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor	4.35	3.76	0.60	4.39	3.97	0.42	NS	*
The work I do is valuable to the institution	4.57	3.84	0.73	4.50	4.20	0.29	NS	***
I am proud to work at this institution	4.58	4.11	0.47	4.57	4.46	0.11	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its faculty	4.35	3.20	1.14	4.40	3.69	0.72	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff	4.41	3.03	1.37	4.42	3.51	0.91	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of administrators	4.10	3.76	0.33	4.23	3.94	0.29	*	*

**Table 3R2.B. 2014 Comparison Group CESS Results Related to Evaluation and Recognition**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	NICC 2014			Comp. Colleges			IMP Sign Diff	SAT Sign diff
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP		

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It is easy for me to get information at this institution	4.48	3.60	0.88	4.43	3.37	1.06	NS	***
I learn about important campus events in a timely manner	4.24	3.83	0.41	4.15	3.52	0.63	NS	***
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	4.40	3.47	0.93	4.43	3.05	1.38	NS	***
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	4.41	3.49	0.92	4.42	3.02	1.40	NS	***
I am empowered to resolve problems quickly	4.36	3.68	0.68	4.38	3.43	0.95	NS	***
I have the information I need to do my job well	4.56	3.89	0.67	4.60	3.62	0.98	NS	***
My job responsibilities are communicated clearly to me	4.49	3.89	0.61	4.54	3.67	0.87	NS	**
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say	4.55	3.99	0.56	4.56	3.84	0.72	NS	NS
My supervisor helps me improve my job performance	4.41	3.89	0.52	4.41	3.69	0.71	NS	*
My department or work unit has written, up-to-date objectives	4.21	3.83	0.38	4.16	3.50	0.65	NS	***
My department meets as a team to plan and coordinate work	4.29	3.81	0.49	4.25	3.61	0.64	NS	*
I am paid fairly for the work I do	4.54	3.31	1.23	4.50	3.33	1.18	NS	NS
The employee benefits available to me are valuable	4.53	4.11	0.42	4.55	3.92	0.62	NS	**
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor	4.39	3.97	0.42	4.40	3.86	0.54	NS	NS
The work I do is valuable to the institution	4.50	4.20	0.29	4.55	3.96	0.59	NS	***
I am proud to work at this institution	4.57	4.46	0.11	4.56	4.09	0.48	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of its faculty	4.40	3.69	0.72	4.40	3.28	1.13	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of staff	4.42	3.51	0.91	4.40	3.14	1.26	NS	***
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of administrators	4.23	3.94	0.29	4.22	3.73	0.49	NS	***

Table 3R2.B. illustrates several key results from Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) conducted in 2014 at NICC compared to the aggregate results of recent surveys at nine (9) comparison two-year colleges similar in demographics to NICC.

These results provide pertinent measures from the 2014 CESS administration compared to the 2011 NICC results and to recent results from the comparison colleges. Looking at the internal comparisons, improvement was shown in the gap between importance and satisfaction in every one of the 19 measures pertinent to employee evaluation and recognition.

Only two measures (value of employee benefits and meeting the needs of supervisors) showed a change of any significance between the importance rated in 2011 compared to the importance rated in 2014. However, 11 (58%) of the ratings for satisfaction improved at a statistical significance that would only be due to chance 0.1% of the time. Further, four of the ratings for satisfaction improved at a statistical significance. In total, 79% of these measures showed very significant improvement.

Likewise, when comparing the results from the 2014 NICC CESS to results at comparison colleges, NICC's improvements are significant. In Table 3R2.B., the red cells in the NICC satisfaction measures column represent those measures for which NICC had a lower mean score in the 2011 survey than the aggregate mean score of the comparison schools—17 of 19 measures (89%). The beige cells in the comparison colleges satisfaction measures column represent those measures for which NICC had a higher mean score in the 2014 survey than the aggregate mean score of the comparison colleges—18 of 19 (95%).

3I2. Based on 3R2, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The dramatic improvement in the CESS results in regard to evaluation, communication, and recognition can be attributed to a number of factors.

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These include a change in leadership, the establishment of the Institutional Effectiveness division, the institution of interest based bargaining, and an increase in the number of HR staff.

In October 2011, Dr. Liang Chee Wee was named President of Northeast Iowa Community College. Dr. Wee's leadership style includes direct, honest, and frequent communication in a variety of formats with the College community. As noted previously, he conducts open forums to discuss topics of interest and to solicit feedback. He frequently engages staff, faculty, and students informally in his walks about campus, in the cafeterias, and at campus events. Dr. Wee notifies staff members through all-college email of events that impact the College and invites staff and faculty to contact him directly if they have comments or questions. He always addresses the group at all-college and all-campus events such as convocations, faculty development programs, All College Day, and staff and faculty recognition.

At All College Day in 2014, Dr. Wee introduced the concept of "best self" during his presentation and challenged all NICC staff and faculty to honor our commitments, to be honest, to be accountable, to be kind, and to be charitable—every day. This concept has taken root at NICC and, under Dr. Wee's leadership, a cultural change is growing.

The hiring of the first executive director of institutional effectiveness in May of 2013 effectively created the institutional effectiveness division. The division brings together institutional effectiveness, marketing, grants and contracts, legislative affairs, accreditation processes and institutional research. The net result of this move has been to vastly improve institutional communication; focus on the accreditation and quality improvement processes; unity of message; a focused, effective legislative message and campaign; and a strategic planning effort that has involved the entire College.

Prior to the use of interest based bargaining for 2014-2015 contract negotiations with the faculty and support staff unions, the College employed an outside consultant to serve as its chief negotiator. The move to interest based bargaining empowers the internal teams to work together to develop

common interests and to negotiate for wages and benefits with these interests in mind. Further, this process continues to build trust, communication, and cooperation between the College and the faculty and support staff.

Through the annual V7 budget planning process in 2014, HR made the request for an additional full-time staff member at the Peosta campus. Despite the fact that approximately 53% of the college faculty and staff work at the Peosta campus, all 2.5 FTE HR staff were located at the Calmar campus. While Calmar HR staff traveled often to Peosta and were available by phone and email for consultation, the communication that takes place when a staff member is readily accessible was absent at the Peosta campus. A full-time HR coordinator was hired in September 2014 providing Peosta faculty and staff with an HR contact who is more accessible for routine and emergent HR needs.

While much progress has been made, improvements in the areas of evaluation and recognition are planned and necessary. The current evaluation system lacks consistent accountability. While most supervisors are compliant in their evaluation duties, there are some who do not complete evaluations in a timely manner. HR has reviewed and purchased the performance management module that is part of the PeopleAdmin suite of products and will coordinate the design and implementation an electronic evaluation system during FY16.

The system is flexible in regard to design of the evaluation instrument and can easily include individual goal tracking and reporting. It has a feature that allows supervisors to capture notes for individual employees to include in future evaluations or in performance conferences between evaluations. The use of 360 evaluations is also possible with PeopleAdmin's performance management system.

While the CESS response to the statement *I am paid fairly for the work that I do* improved significantly from the 2011 to 2014 survey administration, it was the only response on the 2014 survey for which the NICC mean response was lower than the mean response for the comparison colleges. As a result of

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this sentiment, a compensation and classification study for all non-faculty positions at NICC will be conducted beginning at the end of FY15. At their April 2015 meeting, the NICC Board of Trustees approved the recommendation to hire a consulting firm to complete the study. The study will involve the review and revision of all job descriptions, a comparable worth study for all positions included in the study, recommendations for the reclassification of support staff, nonbargaining staff, and non-teaching faculty positions, and recommendations for revised pay structures for these same employee groups.

## DEVELOPMENT

3P3. Development focuses on processes for continually training, educating, and supporting employees to remain current in their methods and to contribute fully and effectively throughout their careers within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Providing and Supporting Regular Professional Development for All Employees

There have been significant improvements in the provision of and support for professional development for all employees in the last several years at NICC. These improvements can be linked in part to:

- The receipt of a U.S. Department of Education Title III *Strengthening Institutions* grant.
- The hiring of an additional full-time staff member in the distance learning department.
- Changes in the incentives for degree completion for faculty and staff.
- Changes in the credentialing requirements set by the Iowa Department of Education.

The five-year Title III grant, awarded in 2010, has assisted NICC to update its technology to teach students, train faculty and staff, and stay current with ongoing technology advancement. A full-time technology training coordinator (TTC) was partially funded by the grant. During the life of the grant, the TTC has designed and implemented instructional programs and trainings for faculty and staff across the College including those that provide faculty with

new tools for teaching, skill upgrades and instruction in new software for staff at all levels, and documentation and training for new systems purchased with Title III funds including HR applicant tracking and document imaging. Training has been made widely available to all NICC faculty and staff with many sessions captured for individual viewing by those who are unable to attend the live session. The TTC position will be institutionalized by the College when the Title III grant ends in September 2015 and the training that can be offered will no longer be limited to the scope of the grant (5A4).

Working collaboratively with the TTC, the distance learning department has three FTE staff involved in supporting and training faculty who teach online and hybrid courses and who utilize other methods such as videoconferencing and the Iowa Communications Network to teach. In FY13, an instructional design coordinator position was added to the department to better support faculty in their course design (3C4, 5A4).

NICC has long supported faculty who continue their education after hire by salary advancements for degree attainment and interim steps between degrees. In bargaining for the 2014-2016 contract, the college and the faculty agreed to an adjustment to the schedule. For the lanes between degree attainment, faculty may use continuing education units (CEUs) for professional development activity or academic credit to qualify for the salary advancement. However, advancement for any faculty member at the MA/MS lane and above *must* include a minimum of 9 academic credits at the graduate level. The information in Table 3P3.A. compares the previous salary advancement levels for faculty to those approved in 2014 (3C4).

**Table 3P3.A. Faculty Salary Advancement for Professional Development**

Level of Attainment	Prior Year Contracts	2014-2016 Contract
< AA/AS to AA/AS	\$505.00	\$ 699.00
AA/AS to BA/BS	\$505.00	\$1,000.00
BA/BS to BA/BS+15	\$505.00	\$505.00
BA/BS+15 to BA/BA+30	\$505.00	\$505.00
BA/BS+30 to MA/MS	\$505.00	\$1,000.00
MA/MS to MA/MS+15	\$505.00	\$505.00
MA/MS+15 to MA/MS+30	\$505.00	\$505.00
MA/MS+30 to Doctorate	\$505.00	\$2,000.00

Source: *Collective Bargaining Agreement between NICC and the NICC Higher Education Association, 2014-2016.*

In addition to providing a salary advancement for degree attainment and interim steps, the collective bargaining agreement contains a provision for sabbatical leave, which may be used for degree pursuit. Faculty members may request sabbatical leave for one term at full salary and for a full academic year at half salary (3C4).

Non-teaching faculty and nonbargaining staff may also receive salary advancements for degree attainment. Prior to beginning a degree program for which the staff member plans to request a salary advancement, the degree pursuit must be approved by the immediate supervisor, the appropriate vice president, the executive director of HR, and the president. Once the staff member completes his/her degree and provides the HR office with an official transcript, the salary advancement is processed and effective immediately. The information in Table 3P3.B. provides the salary advancement levels for approved degree attainment by non-teaching faculty and nonbargaining staff (5A4).

**Table 3P3.B. Staff Salary Advancement for Degree Attainment**

Level of Attainment	Greater of	Or
AA/AS	\$500.00	5% of salary
BA/BS	\$1,000.00	5% of salary
MA/MS	\$1,500.00	5% of salary
Doctorate	\$3,000.00	5% of salary

Source: NICC HR Policies 6.7.2 and 6.7.3

In addition to providing the salary advancement at the time the degree is completed, staff members are allowed paid educational leave to support their studies. Table 3P3.C. documents the maximum number of paid leave days allowed by degree level for non-teaching and nonbargaining staff involved in approved degree pursuit.

**Table 3P3.C. Staff Salary Advancement for Degree Attainment**

Level of Attainment	Maximum Paid Leave
AA/AS	5 days
BA/BS	10 days
MA/MS	15 days
Doctorate	30 days

Changes in the credentialing requirements by the Iowa Department of Education have also impacted NICC's provision of and support for professional development for faculty. Effective July 1, 2011, all faculty teaching in Iowa's community college have to meet the minimum standards (see Table 3P1.B) to be qualified to teach and they must maintain their credentialing in accordance with the *Quality Faculty Plan* in the institution(s) for which they teach. Previous to July 1, 2011, adjunct faculty did not have to meet minimum standards or maintain credentialing (3C3, 3C4).

As a result of these changes, many more faculty became interested in professional development opportunities offered on- and off-campus. NICC responded by negotiating meeting rate pay (from \$12.00 to \$17.50/hour dependent upon the faculty member's lane) in the faculty contract and paying all part-time faculty who attend approved professional development activities the hourly meeting rate for their attendance at professional development activities (3C4).

Further, the faculty development committees at each campus became more active in scheduling events during the beginning of each term and on the annual faculty development day in October. The timing of the hires in HR (technology training coordinator) and distance learning (instructional design coordinator) coincided with the credentialing changes and

combined to provide many more on-campus offerings for faculty attendance (3C4).

To ensure the quality of the on-campus offerings, a professional development sub-committee of the Quality Faculty Plan committee reviews the learning objectives, content, and stated outcomes for professional development offered on-campus.

### **Ensuring That Instructors are Current**

In order to be qualified to teach in the assigned discipline, NICC faculty must meet the Iowa Department of Education's minimum requirements (Table 3P1.B). No faculty member is allowed to teach without compliance with these standards. While many faculty exceed these minimum standards, there are some who just meet them. A challenge currently being addressed is the discrepancy between Iowa's minimum requirements for Arts and Science faculty of a Master's degree with a minimum of 12 graduate credits in the discipline taught and the HLC guideline of a minimum of 18 graduate credits in the discipline. NICC is committed to meeting the standards required for accreditation by the Iowa Department of Education and the HLC. Toward that end, a transcript audit has been initiated to document the credentials for all Arts and Science faculty so the college will be prepared to address this issue going forward (3C2).

All NICC faculty must also take or have taken a course in teaching methods to be initially credentialed. Faculty who have already had a methods course may fulfill the requirement for 9.0 CEUs (90 clock hours) in the first three years with the college with other coursework and professional development activities. Faculty who have not had a methods course may take the three-credit course that is offered online, as a hybrid, or face-to-face at NICC several times a year or they may choose to register for a teaching methods course at another institution. All new faculty who do not have a minimum of three years of full-time teaching experience must also take a one-credit New Teacher's Workshop. NICC offers this course face-to-face each summer or faculty may enroll in a New Teacher's Workshop taught by another college or university (3C2).

To ensure that faculty stay current in their instructional area and in pedagogical processes, all professional development activity submitted by faculty members for credentialing credit must be approved in advance by the dean or supervisor. The dean or supervisor has the right to refuse approval for an activity that is not appropriate for credentialing credit (3C4).

After the initial three-year credentialing period, faculty are credentialed for five years. Each faculty member must complete a minimum of 6.0 CEUs (60 clock hours) of academic credit and/or professional development activity every five years in order to maintain credentialing. Though there are waivers for extenuating circumstances, willful failure to maintain credentialing will result in disciplinary action up to and including recommendation to the Board of Trustees for termination of the faculty member's employment (3C2, 3C4).

To assist faculty members in tracking credentialing, the HR office sends an annual notice to every active instructor shortly before the end of the spring term noting their renewal date and the number of CEUs accrued. For faculty in their initial credentialing period, the status of the mandatory classes is also noted (3C3).

### **Supporting Student Support Staff Members**

All student support staff members are provided a minimum of \$300 annually with which to attend professional development activities. The expectation is that every staff member will attend appropriate training and development annually. The division's annual report lists every staff member individually along with their position, education, years of service to NICC, years of experience in education, professional affiliations, and professional development activities attended during the fiscal year. This reporting has increased accountability and encouraged all staff members to actively participate in professional development (5A4).

The department holds all-staff retreats twice annually to focus on areas of common concern. The program for these retreats varies and has included in recent years presentations by student services

staff, presentations by NICC's Business and Community Solutions division, presentations by the academic affairs division, and presentations from outside consultants and trainers.

**Aligning Professional Development Activities with Instructional Objectives**

Faculty are given both opportunity and encouragement to tailor their own development opportunities to the instructional objectives they have set for individual courses and for their programs. The performance evaluation process provides an opportunity for deans and supervisors to discuss with faculty their professional development plans and how they align with instructional objectives (3C4).

At the institutional level, there have been no targeted efforts to align professional development activities with instructional objectives. However, a plan (now in its beginning stages) to provide a more comprehensive, institutional approach to professional development will be discussed in section 3I3.

3R3. What are the results for determining if employees are assisted and supported in their professional development?

The extent to which faculty and staff are assisted

and supported in their professional development can be measured by employee attendance at offerings provided by the College. The evaluation results from these offerings are also indicators of the success of these activities. Further, the importance they place on professional development and the satisfaction they express with the efforts of the College are also indicative of employee satisfaction with professional development supported by the college.

The information in Tables 3R3.A. details the number of professional development offerings provided by the technology training coordinator in grant years two through four of the Title III grant.

**Table 3R3.A. Professional Development Offerings and Attendance by Title III Grant Year**

Grant Year	# of Offerings	Total Attendance
Year 2	89	366
Year 3	129	541
Year 4	98	380
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>1,287</b>

Source: NICC Title III Grant Annual Reports

Results from the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) administered in 2011 and 2014 show how the College's faculty and staff perceive the importance of and their satisfaction with training and professional development. Tables 3R3.C. and 3R3.D. detail these results.

**Table 3R3.C. 2011 to 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Professional Development**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014			IMP Sign Diff	SAT Sign diff
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP		
I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills	4.32	3.22	1.10	4.34	3.75	0.59	NS	***
I have adequate opportunities for professional development	4.25	3.14	1.10	4.28	3.68	0.60	NS	***

**Table 3R3.D. Comparison Group CESS Results Related to Professional Development**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2014			Comp. Colleges			IMP Sign Diff	SAT Sign diff
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP		
I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills	4.34	3.75	0.59	4.35	3.49	0.85	NS	***
I have adequate opportunities for professional development	4.28	3.68	0.60	4.32	3.54	0.79	NS	NS

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Looking at the internal comparisons, improvement was shown in the gap between importance and satisfaction in both of the measures related to training and professional development. Neither of these measures showed a change of any significance between the importance rated in 2011 compared to the importance rated in 2014. However, both of the ratings for satisfaction improved at a statistical significance.

Analyzing the results comparing NICC to other similar colleges, there is a significant difference in the gap between the satisfaction in regard to adequate opportunities for training, suggesting this is an area of strength at the College.

3I3. Based on 3R3, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College has invested considerable resources in improving training and professional development activities in the last several years. With the addition of two full-time professional staff focused on developing and providing training and development for staff and faculty, NICC has been able to dramatically increase the opportunities available on campus. The CESS results reflect increased employee satisfaction in this area.

Changes in college policies and in the collective bargaining agreements have increased employee compensation for those who pursue advanced degrees and additional training and development. Additionally, part-time faculty are compensated for attending training and development activities and nonbargaining staff involved in degree pursuit have paid educational leave available to support their studies.

The technology training coordinator has collected data on program offerings, attendance, and satisfaction scores for the events planned and offered through that office. However, data related to other programming and a systematic method for evaluating the impact of training and development on the performance of staff and faculty are areas in which improvements need to be implemented.

At the 2015 All College Day, staff from human resources and academic affairs began initial work to develop a comprehensive plan for identifying, funding, and tracking staff and faculty development across the college. Elements of the plan include:

- Identification of information and competencies for all employee classifications.
- Identification of the minimum professional development requirements by employee classification.
- Identification and classification of on-campus professional development and training opportunities.
- Identification and classification of off-campus professional development and training opportunities.
- Identification of all funding sources for employee professional development and training opportunities.

To inform the further development and implementation of the plan, focus groups with faculty and staff were initiated in April 2015 and will continue through the summer and early fall with plan implementation slated for academic year 2015-2016.

Finally, hiring was completed in May 2015 for two, part-time wellness and life stage program managers (one at each campus). These individuals will be charged with developing and providing programming, activities, and information to enhance employee development in the areas of health and wellness.

**AQIP Category Four: Planning and Leading**

**INTRODUCTION**

To meet its mission of serving its students and communities and carrying out its vision of continuous improvement, Northeast Iowa Community College strives toward intentional planning, strategic action, threat mitigation and strong leadership in the region. While this responsibility does not rest on any one person’s shoulders, the hiring of a President Liang Chee Wee in 2011 certainly helped lead the College’s charge in this area. In fact, Dr. Wee was named to the *Des Moines Register’s* Iowa “People to Watch in 2014” list for his transformation of campus culture.

The College has improved considerably since its last portfolio submission in 2010, guided by the 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and subsequent Strategy Forum, high-impact Action Projects, and internal reorganization. In 2011, the College’s Appraisal Report noted: “*There is an opportunity to develop measurable targets that will*

*enable the College to make data-driven decisions in an environment of continuous quality improvement” and “Although NICC describes the role of its administrators with respect to communicating a shared vision, mission, and values, it does not offer information as to how its other leaders communicate these principles internally and externally.”* The College believes it has confronted these opportunities head on, resulting in a strong leadership and planning model.

The College’s efforts in the *Planning and Leading* category will demonstrate to readers processes, results and improvements related to:

- Mission and Vision,
- Strategic Planning,
- Leadership, and
- Integrity

The following table provides a self-assessment of the College’s maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Aligned 2014: Integrated
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Integrated
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalized annual goal-setting process aligned with mission/vision, strategic plan and AQIP</li> <li>• Commitment to Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey to guide improvements</li> <li>• Establishment of institutional effectiveness department to centralize data, reporting, accreditation, planning, and communication efforts</li> <li>• Development of strategic plan scorecards to monitor progress</li> <li>• Implementation of 360-evaluation process for President and his cabinet</li> <li>• Hiring of compliance staff and establishment of AQIP compliance team college-wide</li> <li>• College-sponsored leadership institute for the President’s cabinet</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed: College-wide Assessment Plan</li> <li>• Closed: Monitor and Improve Employee Satisfaction</li> </ul>

NICC is focusing future efforts in *Category Four* on the development of its next strategic plan. This plan will span three fiscal years beginning July 1, 2015. The College believes its process for this round of strategic planning represents an integrated model, grounded in data-informed strategies and broad engagement of internal and external stakeholders. NICC is also focusing planning efforts on development of a clear succession plan, based on data suggesting that many of its leaders, including trustees, are nearing retirement age.

## MISSION AND VISION

4P1. Mission and Vision focuses on how the institution develops, communicates, and reviews its mission and vision. Describe the processes for developing, communicating, and reviewing the institution's mission, vision, and values and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### **Developing, Deploying, and Reviewing NICC's Mission, Vision, and Values**

The current NICC mission and value statements were written by a College vision team in May 2004 from input received from staff, faculty, administrators, and Board of Trustees to guide the first strategic planning process after the College joined AQIP in 2003. The mission and vision statements were incorporated into the strategic plan, which was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2005 and reviewed again in 2008. The mission statement, vision statement, and values are provided in the institutional overview. These statements clearly identify the constituents of institution as the communities which the College serves; identify the nature of services as education and training; and identify the scope of services as accessible, affordable, and quality education and training. The statements also emphasize the College's focus on specific areas of its mission, which are further defined by the College's values of services, respect, innovation, stewardship, and integrity (1A1, 1B2, 1B3).

These statements are reviewed each time the College engages in a new strategic plan to ensure the College's academic programs, support services, enrollment profile, and activities are consistent with the mission and vision. They were most recently reviewed when the College developed its current strategic plan in 2011. This plan is set to expire in June 2015, and the College is currently engaged in its next strategic planning process, which includes a review of the mission, vision, and values of the College. This process is led by the President and his cabinet, with considerable input from the AQIP Quality Council teams, the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff, and key partners and stakeholders (1A1, 1A2, 1D3, 3B2, 3B3).

### **Ensuring Institutional Actions Reflect a Commitment to its Values**

Ensuring that institutional actions and initiatives reflect a commitment to its values occurs during two annual processes: 1) College annual goal setting, and 2) Allocation of budget.

Annually, strategic priorities are developed by the President and his cabinet based on the strategic plan. These annual priorities are disseminated to the Board of Trustees, through the College's annual report to partners and stakeholders, to faculty and staff through formal presentations and on the College website to the public. Additionally, all departments are expected to submit goals annually in September that align to the strategic priorities for that fiscal year. This provides assurance that departmental initiatives are linked to strategic priorities and also strengthens the College's ability to meet its goals through a shared impact (1A2).

Second, all departments are invited each year to identify and plan for needed expenses not currently budgeted that are necessary to carry out operations and new initiatives. The submission process requires that requestors link their budget item to one of the College's strategic priorities, again to ensure alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the institution (1A3).

### **Communicating Mission, Vision, and Values**

Currently, the mission, vision, and values statements are readily accessible to all NICC constituents through print materials (including annual report, business cards, College catalog, recruitment materials, etc.), the website, presentations, employee hiring and review processes, and departmental goal-setting processes. Clearly articulating these statements publically and internally explains the extent of the College's scope and constituency, as well as areas of emphasis (1B1, 1B2, 1B3).

In 2013, the College established its first office of institutional effectiveness, led by an executive director, to oversee functions related to AQIP, strategic planning, visioning and assessment. It is the responsibility of this office to ensure the mission, vision, and values of the College are widely

deployed and aligned with processes for departmental goal-setting and assessment. This includes communication of data and outcomes internally and externally, engagement in grant projects, and determination of how to report data and outcomes and what data to report (1B1).

### **Ensuring Programs and Services are Consistent with Mission**

The College ensures that academic programs and services are consistent with its mission through a number of systems (1A2, 1A3, 1B1):

- **Program Reviews:** The structure of program reviews focuses on the purpose of the program and if it meets the needs of the business community and students, a key component of the College mission.
- **Program Metrics:** Annually, departmental deans review enrollment, retention, and completion data for all programs, adhering to the College's value of stewardship and integrity and aligning with its mission to provide accessible and quality education
- **Tuition Rate Review:** The Board of Trustees sets the College's tuition and fee rate per credit hour each year with advisement from the vice president for finance and administration. This process is guided by the College's mission of affordability and accessibility
- **Policies:** The College ensures equitable availability of services for all students, including distance learning students, reflecting the College's values of respect and mission to provide accessible education. This includes an open-door acceptance policy.
- **Targeted Services:** The College provides services specifically to meet its mission of accessibility (i.e. disability services, distance learning, online tutoring, web-based advising, etc.), affordability (i.e. financial aid initiatives, partnerships, legislative advocacy), and its value of service (e.g. a student life office that provides opportunities for students to volunteer and give back to their communities).
- **Accreditation and third party credentials:** The College proactively seeks endorsement of its curriculum through voluntary and required accreditations and aligns curriculum with third-

party credentials when applicable to meet its mission of quality education and training.

- **Hiring Practices:** Led by the President, when a new position opens at the College through retirement or vacancy, the hiring supervisor is required to consider how the position aligns with the needs of students and communities and how its goals might be met in other ways. This aligns with the mission of affordability for students and value of innovation and stewardship.
- **Communication:** The College's website makes readily available for students consumer information required by law, but also job outlook and state wage information for all its programs where available. This aligns with the College's value of integrity.

### **Allocating Resources to Advance Mission, Vision, and Values**

The annual resource allocation and budgeting process for College initiatives, termed V7, provides an opportunity for internal stakeholders to request funds for planning in the areas of plant funds, infrastructure, staffing, and operating costs. To ensure these requests are aligned with the College's mission, vision, and values, they are first required to be linked to a current strategic priority of the College. They are then reviewed by the Quality Council's four quality teams to prioritize those that are found to be well-aligned with College mission and vision (1A3, 1D2).

In addition, the College's grants department, undergoes a grant review process before applying for any grants over \$10,000 that includes a review by the President's cabinet to ensure the investment will further the mission, vision, and values of the College without a significant burden on College resources (1A3, 1D2).

Resources allocated for student scholarships are disbursed through a scholarship review process, which includes a review by a scholarship committee of a common application against a common scoring rubric. This ensures integrity of the process (1A3, 1D2).

Finally, during the College's first major gifts campaign, acceptance of donations, cash or in-kind,

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was carefully governed by board approved policies to ensure donors understood the mission, vision, values of the institution and allowable uses of their gift (1A3, 1D2).

**4R1. What are the results for developing, communicating, and reviewing the institution's mission, vision, and values?**

The College uses the following measures to track results for developing, communicating and reviewing its mission, vision, and values:

- Regular board review of the strategic plan, which includes review of existing mission and vision of the College

- Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) administered in 2011 and 2014. This survey tracks employee's importance and satisfaction for a variety of elements, including campus culture and policies, institutional goals, and planning and decision-making. This survey provides valuable information regarding employee perception of the College's ability to communicate and adhere to its mission, vision, and values.

Table 4R1.A. describes the College's results and frequency of review since AQIP induction.

**Table 4R1.A. Review of Mission, Visions, Values**

Year of Review	Plan Timeline	Parties involved	Board Approval
2004	2005-2008	College Vision Team, led by Director of HR; President's Cabinet; Board of Trustees	June 2005
2008	2008-2010	Quality Council, College employees, stakeholder groups, President's Cabinet	Shared Fall 2008 via Provost Report
2010	FY2011-FY2015	The current Northeast Iowa Community College strategic plan was developed in Fall of 2010 by the Quality Council, led by the two campus provosts at the time, with wide representation from all faculty and staff levels at the College. The plan was reported to the board of trustees under a provost report rather than an action item, and thus not formally approved	Shared Fall 2010 via Provost Report
2015	FY2016	(in progress) President's cabinet; staff and faculty; key stakeholders	Est. May 2015

Through its growth as an AQIP institution these results reinforced to College leadership the importance of intentional, regular strategic planning and review of mission, vision, and values. The previous ad-hoc implementation of this process led to the establishment of a Quality Council in 2008 and then the forming of institutional effectiveness in 2013 to oversee and formalize these efforts. The College believes it has now reached an aligned process for reviewing mission, vision, values within a regular and seamless strategic planning process.

Table 4R1.B. and 4R1.C further points to the College's maturation in communicating and aligning with its mission, visions, and values as perceived by faculty and staff through the Noel-Levitz CESS surveys administered in 2011 and 2014. This survey asks faculty to rank both importance and satisfaction with various elements of the institution, including campus culture and policies related to mission, vision, and values.

**Table 4R1.B. 2011 to 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Mission, Vision, and Values**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of students	4.66	3.62	1.03	4.75	3.98	0.78

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The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well understood by most employees	4.22	3.41	0.81	4.42	3.90	0.52
Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution	4.32	3.52	0.81	4.44	3.90	0.54
The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values	4.36	3.49	0.87	4.53	4.03	0.50

In every measure detailed above the gap between faculty and staff ranked importance and satisfaction shrunk significantly from 2011 to 2014. The survey instrument also indicates that the increases in importance and satisfaction are statistically significant, meaning that it is because of College efforts and not chance that the College's gap decreased in these areas.

**Table 4R1.C. Comparison of CESS Results Related to Mission, Vision, and Values**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	Northeast Iowa CC			Comparison group		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of students	4.75	3.98	0.78	4.69	3.59	1.10
The mission, purpose, and values of this institution are well understood by most employees	4.42	3.90	0.52	4.26	3.38	0.88
Most employees are generally supportive of the mission, purpose, and values of this institution	4.44	3.90	0.54	4.30	3.47	0.83
The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values	4.53	4.03	0.50	4.37	3.48	0.89

Another value of using the CESS survey to ascertain this data is the availability to include a comparison group of like colleges. Based on the comparison of the same elements in 2014, NICC achieved higher satisfaction than its peers in every measure and a smaller gap between importance and satisfaction. Once again, these differences were determined to be statistically significant as a result of systems and processes in place at NICC to promote a campus culture and policies that align with its mission, vision, and values.

The obvious insight from the CESS data is that the College's intentional efforts to align its actions with mission, vision, and values of the College, while clearly and frequently communicating these efforts is changing campus culture. Furthermore, faculty and staff at all levels are recognizing the impact of a cohesive message linking the College's goals and priorities to its mission.

4I1. Based on 4R1, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Major improvements in the College's planning and leading strategy as it relates to mission and vision occurred following its 2010 portfolio appraisal. A cross-departmental College team of Quality Council leaders and other faculty and staff attended the 2011 AQIP Strategy Forum to learn how to move the College to a more mature level of AQIP engagement. One result of that forum was bringing a consultant to the College in fall 2011 and again for All College Day in spring 2012 to work with the College to help bring the nine strategic priorities to life by evidencing their connection to the College's mission and vision and helping faculty and staff engage with the priorities through annual goal-setting.

This process resulted in three consecutive All College Days at the College (2012, 2013, and 2014) dedicated to aligning mission and vision with faculty and staff initiatives and goals through the strategic priorities. This process, though still being adjusted

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and enhanced each year, has now led to a culture at NICC of thinking in terms of mission, vision, values and how to further the College's achievement of its priorities. With the hiring of the executive director of institutional effectiveness in May 2013, this process and its communication continues to evolve and improve as it becomes further aligned with data reporting, marketing and communications, and advocacy activities of the College.

In 2013, the College also approved institutionalizing the CESS survey on an every three year basis to continue to monitor staff and faculty perceptions regarding importance and satisfaction of mission, vision, and value alignment with college activities.

The next improvement in mission and vision process will occur with the College's release and approval of its next strategic plan, which represents a mature, aligned process including leadership, faculty and staff, and stakeholder input to result in what is hoped to be a clear, actionable, and measurable plan to implement in the next 1-3 years. This plan development includes an intentional review of mission, vision, and values.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

4P2. Strategic Planning focuses on how the institution achieves its mission and vision. Describe the processes for communicating, planning, implementing, and reviewing the institution's plans and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Engaging Internal and External Stakeholders in Strategic Planning

NICC has a history of engaging internal and external stakeholders informally in strategic planning, but recently has evolved a more integrated process for doing so.

Internal stakeholders are engaged in planning in multiple ways (5C3):

- Annual All College Day activities are dedicated to strategic planning, goal-setting, and

connecting departmental goals with mission, vision, and values

- Cross-departmental Quality Council teams meet monthly to implement and monitor strategic plan
- Board of Trustees engage in strategic planning retreat with each new iteration of the plan
- The President's cabinet engages in strategic planning retreats annually to preview, monitor, and update plan, as well as plan new iterations
- Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) administered to faculty and staff every three years
- President-hosted open forums are held twice annually to discuss strategic planning or assess current plan
- In the past, the College has contracted with a consultant to lead strategic planning focus groups with internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders (faculty and staff) are ultimately responsible for setting policy and processes to fulfill the College mission, improve quality, and respond to challenges and opportunities. This includes an expectation that each member of the President's cabinet is responsible for planning for the future in their respective areas, including collaboration as necessary with external and internal stakeholders. This includes planning for revenue shifts, funding shifts, demographic changes, economic needs, and technological advancements (5B3, 5C3, 5C4, 5C5).

External stakeholders are engaged in planning through direct and indirect channels. Directly, stakeholders are invited to review the strategic plan and provide valuable input through President-led focus groups, one-on-one visits, and sector board meetings (e.g. Manufacturing Alliance, HR Alliance, CEO exchange); these typically include critical partners. Additionally, state and HLC accreditation visits, strategy forums, portfolio appraisals, and AQIP action project feedback provide valuable information to guide strategic planning. Indirectly, the College uses information about stakeholders' interests, partnerships and investments with the College to assess if their needs are being met through the strategic plan. This includes assessing donors through the major gifts campaign, information from feasibility study interviews,

outcomes of partnerships, requests for partnerships, and through advisory board feedback (5C3).

### **Aligning Operations with Mission and Vision**

As described in 4P1, the strategic plan is closely aligned with the College's mission, vision, and values and used to guide annual priorities and actions of the College, including budget requests. After the AQIP Strategy Team attended the second strategy forum in May 2007, one of their recommendations was to establish a new AQIP committee structure that would reflect a stronger commitment to continuous improvement and encourage individuals from across the College to participate in planning and improvement processes. The result of this recommendation was the formation of the Quality Council. Since its inception in 2008, the Quality Council has been charged with oversight of the mission and value statements, the strategic plan and the planning process. The Quality Council developed the 2008-2010 strategic plan with input from across the College, as well as the current 2011-2015 plan. The current plan development was led by the chair of the Quality Council at the time, who is now the College's President (5C1, 5C2).

### **Aligning Efforts for Optimum Effectiveness**

The Quality Council model assists the College in aligning efforts across departments by deploying four Quality Council teams to oversee the plan, including monitoring annual priorities and annual goals set by departments to execute the plan and meet outcomes. In spring 2013 the College established its first institutional effectiveness department with an executive director to chair the Quality Council and oversee the strategic plan process. This has included a more streamlined annual goal-setting process for departments to submit and report on. After submission, each departmental goal is then assigned to one of the four quality council teams to oversee and monitor. In this way, the teams can quickly identify similar goals among departments and assist them to align efforts. For example, several diverse departments had goals related to retention, which led to the development of a cross-departmental retention team of passionate faculty and staff to oversee cross-departmental efforts to further the College's student retention goals (5B3).

### **Capitalizing on Opportunities and Strengths and Minimizing Threats and Risk**

A critical part of the College's annual cabinet strategic planning retreat is to set new fiscal year priorities and assess the overall strategic plan to account for potential threats or continuing threats to the College's well-being. This is accomplished in many ways: 1) review of strategic plan indicators, which include baseline measures, targets, and trends to quickly identify "red flag" areas where the College is not meeting its goals, 2) review of new or changing federal or state appropriations and legislations, 3) review of Educational Advisory Board (or other research bodies) reports related to institutional threats, 4) review of internal reports related to expenses and revenues, enrollment patterns, and revenue-generating program performance, and 5) qualitative feedback from cabinet members of departmental threats or concerns (5B3, 5C4, 5C5).

The College capitalizes on opportunities and institutional strengths by listening to the needs of its stakeholders and partners, looking for solutions to threats, and building from successes. This includes growth in partnerships with K-12 institutions to strengthen enrollment, revenue increases in the College's non-credit training division, enhanced and new programming critical to the region in high-demand industries such as agriculture, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology, execution of a major gifts campaign capitalizing on strong relationships and esteem in the College's communities, and success in developing and implementing cross-state and regional partnerships to attract an excess of \$30 million in grant funds since 2011 (5B3, 5C4, 5C5).

### **Implementing Strategies that Maximize Resources and Meet Future Needs**

The College reviews the majority of new budget and initiative requests on an annual basis through the aforementioned V7 process. To be considered, these requests must be aligned with the College's mission, vision, and values, and show how they further a current strategic priority of the College. They are then reviewed by the Quality Council's four quality teams to prioritize those that are found to be well-aligned with College strategic plan. The Quality

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Council is also tasked with assessing current resources, partnerships or alternative revenue sources that could be explored before a request is granted. For example, a request was made in recent years to match a grant from a local donor with institutional funds to build an interpretive center and classroom in the College’s outdoor learning lab. The project was well-aligned with the College’s Strategic Priority #9: Enhance Our College Environment; however, the Quality Council review team felt the project might be best supported with additional grants and fundraising rather than institutional funds and advised the requestor to seek funds for an additional year and resubmit. In that time, the project was able to raise \$21,000 additional dollars to match the original \$10,000 grant, enough to complete the project with limited institutional funds (5C1, 5C2, 5C5).

4R2. What are the results for communicating, planning, implementing, and reviewing the institution’s operational plans?

The College measures its operational plans (i.e. strategic plan) through scorecards linked to each of its nine strategic priorities. At a more micro-level, departments also annually report on the results of departmental initiatives that were developed to further a strategic goal of the College, as well as new budget requests submitted in support of strategic priorities. Additionally, the College administers the faculty and staff CESS survey every three years to gauge internal stakeholder perception and satisfaction of the planning process.

Table 4R2.A. summarizes results of the College’s scorecards for each of its nine strategic priorities. These scorecards represent comparison of results with internal targets set by the College through historical analysis and in comparison to external trends.

Table 4R2.A. Strategic Priority Scorecards

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN INSTRUCTIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL TECHNOLOGY MASTER PLAN				
Target	Baseline	Performance	Goal	Trend
NICC will increase the percentage of staff and administrators who feel confident that NICC is using the right technology in comparison to its peers by FA15.	FY10 31%	FY14 55%	62%	
There will continue to be zero breaches of information security (hacking, malware, loss of personally identifiable data).	FY10 0	FY14 0	0%	
NICC will update network infrastructure security features as released by the contracted services.	N/A	FY14 100%	100%	
NICC will provide 100% WiFi coverage inside NICC buildings.	N/A	FY14 85-90%	100%	
NICC will convert 200 NICC staff to VDI (virtual desktop imaging) by end of FY15.	0	FY15 65	200	
NICC will reduce the gap in enrollee success rate between online and face-to-face learners by fall 2015.	FA09 10.4%	FA13 9.9%	10%	
NICC will train 30 faculty through the Quality Matters review program by end of FA15.	N/A	FA14 13	30	
STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY COLLEGE RESOURCES AND MAINTAIN FISCAL INTEGRITY				
Target	Baseline	Performance	Goal	Trend
Maintain grant proposal success rate of at least 60%+.	FY13 71%	FY14 67%	60%+	
Request at least \$3m. In federal, state and local grants to NICC annually.	FY13 \$4.5m.	FY14 \$4.6m.	\$3m.+	

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Grow NICC Foundation permanently endowed donor directed fund balance.	FY12 \$631,048	FY13 \$716,978	\$1m.	
Achieve \$6.5m. of \$10m. Campaign for Excellence goal by Feb. 2015.	Jan. '14 \$4.7m.	Jan. '15 \$10.8m.	\$10m.	
Business and Community Solutions will increase annual revenue to \$4.5m.	FY12 \$3.1m.	FY14 \$3.6m.	\$4.5m.	
50% of State 260E training agreement funding in the district will be used for training with NICC by 2018.	FY11 7%	FY13 38%	50%	
NICC will maintain Moody's Investors Service investment rating of Aa2 or higher.	Aa2	Aa3	Aa2+	
NICC will maintain Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Composite Financial Index above 1.1, the level that assumes an institution adequately funds its mission-critical components, including well-maintained facilities and high-quality programs.	FY11 3.4	FY12 2.7	1.1+%	
NICC will continue to receive unqualified/non-modified auditors' opinion on our annual audit report.	+	+	+	
NICC will maintain cash balance sufficient to cover two months of operating expenditures based on previous FY monthly average.	+	+	+	
NICC will maintain health care side fund sufficient to cover at least six months of projected claims.	+	+	+	

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Trend</i>
NICC will increase academic and Business and Community Solutions enrollment 0.5-1% each fiscal year.	FY13 29,718	FY14 29,279	0.5-1%+	
NICC will increase total fall academic enrollment 0.5%-1%.	FA13 5204	FA14 4,959	0.5-1%+	
Business and Community Solutions will increase FY unique student enrollments 1%.	FY13 22,544	FY14 22,126	1%+	
Business and Community Solutions will increase FY student registrations 1.2%.	FY13 39,502	FY14 39,014	1.2%+	
At least 30% of HSED graduates will enroll in an academic program (up to three years later).	FY12 36%	FY13 35%	30%+	
NICC will complete or retain 60%+ of entering (non high-school) students from fall to fall terms.	FA12 56.4%	FA13 52.8%	30%+	

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4: EVALUATE THE COLLEGE'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Trend</i>
NICC will strive for 100% student pass rates on required and/or optional licensure and certification exams on initial or second re-test.	FY12 90%	FY13 92%	100%	
NICC students will demonstrate ability to "Communicate Effectively" through writing, as evidenced in the Writing Across the Curriculum assessment results showing a 0.5 increase or more in pre- and post-assessment results.	FA12 0.5 increase	FA13 0.5 increase	0.5+ increase	
NICC's entering students will perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement, as indicated on the SENSE survey by a benchmark score at or above 50.	FA09 49.5	FA12 47.9	Benchmark: 50+	
NICC's entering students will be advised on how to set academic goals for a clear plan and pathway, as indicated on the SENSE survey by a benchmark score at or above 50.	FA09 55.3	FA12 58.8	Benchmark: 50+	

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NICC programs will promote student engagement through challenging intellectual and creative work, as indicated on the CCSSE survey by a benchmark at or above 50.	SP11 48	SP13 47.8	Benchmark: 50+	
NICC programs will promote student engagement through services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skill development, as indicated on the CCSSE survey by a benchmark at or above 50.	SP11 47.2	SP13 48.8	Benchmark: 50+	
Business and Community Solutions will achieve a customer satisfaction "quality" rating that exceeds the LERN benchmark of 4/5.	FY13 4.7	FY14 4.7	4.0+	
Business and Community Solutions will engage repeat customers at a rate of 30%+.	FY13 18%	FY14 28%	30%+	
Business and Community Solutions will maintain a class cancellation rate below the national LERN benchmark of 15%.	FY13 12.6%	FY14 15%	<15%	

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #5: FOSTER AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Trend</i>
Increase readership of faculty and staff who "Always" read the Friday Takeout internal newsletter to 65%.	Sep. '13 37%	Feb. '13 46%	Feb. '15 65%	
Increase average monthly percent of new visitors to www.nicc.edu to 30%.	FY13 26%	FY14 28%	30%+	
Exceed state Perkins target for nontraditional students "who complete the core sequence or graduate from the identified non-traditional program they are enrolled in."	FY11 -15.88%	FY13 At Target	5%+ of Target	
Exceed state Perkins target for nontraditional participation of "individuals preparing for a career technical field in which < 25% of the enrollment is of one gender."	FY11 -1.97%	FY13 At Target	1%+ of Target	

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #6: PROMOTE STUDENT ACCESS AND SUPPORT**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Trend</i>
As measured by Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), NICC will achieve or exceed benchmark of other medium colleges for "providing effective track to college readiness."	FA09 -7.3	FA12 -3.5	0+	
As measured by Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), NICC will achieve or exceed benchmark of other medium colleges for "providing academic and social support network" for students.	FA09 +0.9	FA12 +5.3	0+	
As measured by Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), NICC will achieve or exceed benchmark of other medium colleges for providing "support for learners."	2010 -2.8	2012 -1.2	0+	
NICC will increase student access by increasing enrollment of the in-district 12th grade class to 18%.	2013 16.3%	2014 16.4%	18%	
NICC will maintain or increase student 3-year completion and/or transfer rates above 40%.	2010 cohort 37%	2011 cohort 41%	40%+	
Business and Community Solutions will increase the number of students who earn a career pathway certificate in high-growth occupations.	FY12 401	FY14 497	500+	
At least 25% of career pathway certificate completers will enter an NICC academic program up to three years post-completion.	FY12 33%	FY13 43%	25%+	

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY #7: SUPPORT FACULTY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Trend</i>
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Per Title III grant objective, employees utilizing the Informer reporting tool will be 70% proficient by Fall 2015.	FA11 43%	FA13 82%	70%	
Per Title III grant objective, identified web content managers will be 95% proficient in new content management system by fall '15.	FA12 56%	FA13 83%	95%	
All active employees will be compliant with Quality Faculty Plan requirements at initial credentialing stage by May 1, 2017.	N/A	FY14 57%	100%	TBD
All active employees will be compliant with Quality Faculty Plan requirements at renewal credentialing stage by May 1, 2017.	N/A	FY14 87%	100%	TBD
NICC will decrease the gap to less than 0.5 between faculty and staff ratings of importance and satisfaction for the statement: "This institution does a good job of meeting the needs of students" by 2014. (Based on the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey)	2011 GAP=1.03	2014 GAP=.78	<.5 GAP	
NICC will decrease the gap to less than 1.0 between faculty and staff ratings of importance and satisfaction for the statement: "There are effective lines of communication between departments" by 2014. (Based on the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey)	2011 GAP=1.63	2014 GAP=1.27	<.1.0 GAP	
NICC will decrease the gap to less than 1.0 between faculty and staff ratings of importance and satisfaction for the statement: "There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution" by 2014. (Based on the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey)	2011 GAP=1.59	2014 GAP=1.12	<.1.0 GAP	
NICC will decrease the gap to less than 1.0 between faculty and staff ratings of importance and satisfaction for the statement: "This institution consistently follows clear processes for orienting and training new employees" by 2014. (Based on the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey)	2011 GAP=1.56	2014 GAP=1.30	<.1.0 GAP	
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY #8: EMBRACE ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Trend</b>
To meet Higher Learning Commission expectations of a comprehensive assessment plan, 100% of courses will identify a Student Learning Outcome to formally assess and achieve for fall 2015.	N/A	FA14 25%	100%	TBD
To meet Higher Learning Commission expectations of a comprehensive assessment plan, 25% of programs will include or prepare students for a comprehensive program assessment (third party or internally-developed) to demonstrate achievement of program learning outcomes.	N/A	FA14 18%	25%	TBD
For the 2015 AQIP portfolio appraisal NICC will strive to achieve zero ratings of "Unclear or Incomplete" for review of the five Core Components.	N/A	N/A	0	TBD
For the 2015 AQIP portfolio appraisal NICC will strive to achieve a 3 or 4 on a scale of 1-4 for maturity level of institution for 100% of the six assessed categories.	N/A	N/A	100%	TBD
NICC will maintain program accreditation for currently accredited eight programs and Senior Year Plus concurrent enrollment program, and seek new accreditation for business programs.	FA12 6	FA14 9	10+	
Business and Community Solutions will offer 160 new or refreshed courses annually.	N/A	FY14 125	160	

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Through software and process enhancement, Business and Community Solutions will encourage 30% of clients to self-register.	FY13 14%	FY14 29%	30%	
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY #9: ENHANCE OUR COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT</b>				
<b>Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Trend</b>
In random observations, NICC faculty and staff will wear personal identification badges during the work day.	N/A	FY14 63%	75%	TBD
New staff starting October 2013 will participate in ISO awareness training within three months of hire.	0	Oct.-Dec. '14 67%	100%	
100% of Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) will be tracked, monitored, and investigated with findings reported to the ISO team for potential recommendations for process changes.	0	FY14 100%	100%	
Per Title III grant objective, NICC will improve business efficiency by storing 100,000 electronic images (in lieu of paper copies) by Sept. 2015.	FA09 0	FA13 321,101	100,000	
Per Title III grant objective, NICC will improve business efficiency by receiving and screening 95% of applications for employment electronically (eliminating paper files) by Sept. 2015	FA11 11.3%	FA13 100%	95%	
Per Title III grant objective, NICC will develop new online services and information that will be accessed by 100,000 web hits per year.	FA10 20,589	FA13 102,894	100,000	
NICC will meet 75% of Petal Project sustainability standards district-wide.	N/A	FY14 50%	75%	

The insights gained from the scorecards are numerous. At a glance, they allow the College's leadership team to recognized strengths and weaknesses in execution of its strategic plan. For example, unsatisfactory results related to retention (Priority 3) and student perception of programming (Priority 4) led the College to establish a retention team, revamp its program review process, and develop an AQIP Action Project related to better onboarding of students. In another example, the College determined from the scorecards that recent changes in the computer information systems department are showing improvements in the College's priority to implement a technology master plan (Priority 1), particularly in the area of staff satisfaction (4A1).

To analyze department planning related to the strategic plan and grassroots continuous quality improvement initiatives, the College implemented a comprehensive goal-setting and reporting process in 2011, following the recommendations of a 2011 AQIP Strategy Forum. Results from this process are detailed in the Quality Overview, 6R1.

Another result the College tracks is how the annual budget requests through the V7 process align with the strategic plan. This provides insight into strategic activities where operational budgets may be insufficient or where faculty and staff have desire to initiate substantive improvements. Table 4R2.K. shows how FY14 requests aligned with strategic priorities.

**Table 4R2.K. V7 Non-Staffing Requests Funded by Strategic Priority (fiscal year 2015)**

Strategic Priority	Amount Funded
Strategic Priority 4: Evaluate College's Internal and External Programs and Processes	\$550,705
Strategic Priority 5: Foster a More Effective and Efficient Communication Strategy	\$66,295
Strategic Priority 7: Support Faculty and Staff Development	\$27,080
Strategic Priority 9: Enhance College Environment	\$267,872
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$911,952.00</b>

Insights from this reveal to College leadership that the vast majority of budgetary requests are to further

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student access and support. This is not surprising given the College-wide focus on retention, the AQIP Action Project relate to onboarding, and the increased risk factors students bring to College.

Finally, the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) administered in 2011 and 2014 provides results of faculty and staff perception and satisfaction with the College strategic planning process. Tables 4R2.L. and 4R2.M. provide comparative results.

**Table 4R2.L. 2011 and 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Planning**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution involves its employees in planning for the future	4.44	2.96	1.49	4.46	3.51	0.95
This institution plans carefully	4.56	3.10	1.46	4.49	3.58	0.91
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.54	3.09	1.45	4.69	4.02	0.67
This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives	4.40	3.05	1.36	4.45	3.73	0.72
This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives	4.32	3.05	1.28	4.39	3.50	0.90
The NICC Quality Council plays an important role in strategic planning and the AQIP process	4.11	3.39	0.72	NA	NA	NA

In every measure detailed above the gap between faculty and staff ranked importance and satisfaction shrunk significantly from 2011 to 2014. The survey analysis also indicates that the increases in importance and satisfaction are statistically significant, meaning that it is because of College efforts and not chance that the College's gap decreased in these areas. This has reinforced the College's commitment to engaging its internal stakeholders intentionally in planning processes of the College. Despite the gains and increases in satisfaction since 2011, the College hopes the current strategic planning cycle and improvements made to employee goal-setting processes will continue to shrink the gap in these areas.

**Table 4R2.M. Comparison of CESS Results Related to Planning**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	Northeast Iowa CC			Comparison group		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
This institution involves its employees in planning for the future	4.46	3.51	0.95	4.40	2.99	1.40
This institution plans carefully	4.49	3.58	0.91	4.51	3.12	1.39
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.69	4.02	0.67	4.58	3.25	1.33
This institution makes sufficient budgetary resources available to achieve important objectives	4.45	3.73	0.72	4.45	3.28	1.17
This institution makes sufficient staff resources available to achieve important objectives	4.39	3.50	0.90	4.39	3.12	1.27
The NICC Quality Council plays an important role in strategic planning and the AQIP process	4.11	3.39	0.72	4.03	3.62	0.41

Based on the comparison of the same elements in 2014, NICC achieved higher satisfaction than its peers in nearly every measure and a smaller gap between importance and satisfaction. Once again, these differences were determined to be statistically significant as a result of systems and processes in

place at NICC to promote a campus culture engaged in planning.

4I2. Based on 4R2, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College has matured greatly in developing aligned processes to execute its strategic plan and annual priorities and monitor its success for continued improvements. This monitoring occurs through the development of scorecards to measure each priority and determine action plans necessary to meet priority targets. This also includes processes for engaging internal stakeholders in annual goal-setting and measuring employee satisfaction with planning through the CESS survey. In addition, the College's commitment to an institutional effectiveness office that innovatively brings marketing and communication and institutional research departments together has helped grow the College's culture of data-informed decision-making and enhance communication surrounding planning processes and results.

Planned improvements from the next 1-3 years include the following:

- Participation in activity-based costing projects to better align budget with College priorities and activities
- Increased use of dashboards showing real time progress on strategic priorities. (The College launched its first enrollment dashboard in fall 2014)
- Continued improvements of the departmental goal-setting process, including deploying Quality Council teams to develop measurable goals with departments rather than providing reactionary feedback
- Further analysis of CESS results related to level of involvement of stakeholder groups (faculty, staff, deans, directors, students, trustees, advisory board, alumni, senior administrators, Quality Council, and College Senate) in College planning and decision-making

## LEADERSHIP

4P3. Leadership focuses on governance and leadership of the institution. Describe the processes for ensuring sound and effective leadership of the institution and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Board Relations

The board-institutional relationship at NICC is led by the President of the Trustees and the President of the College. It is the philosophy of the current board President that he has one employee, the President. The Board does not micromanage the day-to-day activities of the organization, but does set common goals for the College that the President implements through his leadership. This philosophy is also codified in the board policy manual: *A Board member will recognize the Board's delegation of authority to the President as chief executive officer and will work to confine Board actions to policy determination, planning, overall approval and evaluation, and maintaining the fiscal stability of the College (2C1, 2C4).*

The processes the board engages in to support leadership and governance include the following (2C1, 2C2, 5B2):

- Evaluating annual performance of president, including conducting self-evaluation, 360-evaluation with cabinet, and report out of results and mutually agreed upon goals
- Sharing expectations of the President with the President's cabinet so they can support the President in achievement of goals
- Determining the President's compensation package
- Participating on interest-based bargaining committee (three members)
- Participating on audit committee to review College audit annually (three members)
- Assigning a representative to Iowa Association of Community College Trustees
- Reviewing board policies
- Serving on committees, including dairy, enterprise zone, and workforce

Legal statute for the existence of the governing board is detailed in Chapter 260C of the Iowa Code. This sets election rules for board members and their four-year terms. Chapter 260C also gives the board authority of the following among other items (5B1, 5B2):

- Determine curriculum to be offered
- Set tuition rates

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- Enter into contracts to ensure efficient operation and management of the College
- Set the salary of the President

Each elected board member at NICC is provided with an orientation handbook to provide them with information not only from 260C, but also the NICC board policies, accreditation and AQIP reports, strategic plan documents, organizational documents, financial audits, employee handbook, and other pertinent institutional information. Oversight of board policies is led by the vice president of the board. The board is currently in the process of reviewing its policies. In addition to reviewing one section at a time each month and approving revisions at monthly board meetings, the policies were also reviewed by the Iowa Association of School Boards' attorney (2C3, 5B1, 5B2).

To maintain the board's oversight, while still delegating management and day-to-day responsibilities to faculty and staff, the board receives monthly reports from lead administrators, but board meetings are reserved primarily for items requiring board action and reports regarding the execution and evaluation of outcomes related to the strategic plan. This process changed in 2014 with the hiring of the executive director of institutional effectiveness to lead an assessment of the strategic plan and develop scorecards for each priority to share with the board, as well as internal faculty and staff. This new process reduced the number of routine operational report outs to the board and focuses discussion on College goals and progress (2C2, 2C4, 5B1).

### **Collaborative Culture**

Open communication at NICC is not only a priority only between the board and College administrators, but among all divisions and departments. This occurs through a number of processes:

- Three cabinet meetings per month of the President's lead administrators with agenda items focused on strategic initiatives, evaluation reports, and new opportunities and threats
- Two faculty convocation events per year with presentations by lead administrators
- Cross-departmental action committees relate to furthering strategic priorities, including retention,

onboarding, career and technical education planning, strategic enrollment management, quality council, etc.

- Twice annual presidential forums on both campuses
- Weekly internal newsletter, the Friday Takeout
- Dedicated employee resource located on the College's employee portal, which includes institutional research reports, dashboards, and scorecards
- Active College Senate with elected members from each division

In addition to a culture of open communication, the College encourages collaboration across units to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards. One way this collaboration occurs is through establishing common learning outcomes that students can master through experience not only in the classroom, but through other co-curricular experiences. In addition, the College's distance learning and learning center staff members attend faculty professional development and other departmental meetings to ensure common understanding of expectations and uniform standards related to student learning regardless of delivery mode. Finally, cross-departmental teams are the norm and expectation at the College when implementing new processes and practices that impact academic rigor; this includes discussions related to credit for prior learning, enrollment and retention, implementation of industry-recognized credentials and competencies into curriculum, and placement testing and developmental education processes. To further break down silos, the academic deans include provosts, institutional effectiveness, student services, high school partnerships and distance learning in their monthly meetings (5B3).

### **Providing and Development of Leadership**

The current organizational model provides a cabinet level administrator over all areas of the College, ensuring all faculty and staff units have a direct line of communication and access to institutional decision-making at the administrative level. Each unit is also represented by an elected staff member (non-cabinet level) to serve on the College Senate. This representative brings forward departmental

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agenda items and provides insights of their constituency in determining new or revising existing policy. The chair of the College Senate also sits on the President’s cabinet.

In addition to internal stakeholders, the College provides leadership to external stakeholders through participation in partner organizations. For example, the President serves on the local rotary, the boards of local economic development and chamber organizations, community committees related to inclusiveness and nutrition and health, and fundraising and development campaigns of local partners. Nationally, the NICC President also participates on The Commission on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity of the American Association of Community Colleges. Likewise, the President expects his senior leadership team to participate on boards, state-wide coalitions, and regional committees to provide College leadership to external stakeholders (1D3).

In fall 2013, the President and his cabinet participated in a six-session professional Leadership Institute. The institute provided training on communication, management techniques, conflict resolution, self-development and leadership best practices. Cabinet and other professional staff are also eligible for participation in Iowa State University Community College Leadership programs (Results are detailed in 4R3).

For faculty, the College sends two faculty annually to NISOD, pairs new faculty with mentor faculty, supports a faculty professional development committee with a healthy annual budget, and assigns faculty to lead and plan faculty professional development day. Faculty and staff are also encouraged and financially supported to participate in and present at local, state, and national conferences. This includes sending a cross-departmental team of 6-10 individuals to the Higher Learning Commission annual conference each year.

(See Category 3P and 3R for information on employee degree advancement incentives.)

**Acting in Accordance to Mission and Vision**

The College works to keep a systematic focus on mission and vision by aligning budget requests, employee evaluation and hiring processes, annual departmental goal-setting, and annual and long-term strategic planning to mission and vision.

This includes ensuring its governing body—the Board of Trustees—operates under policies that preserve its independence from donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties. The board policy manual includes a code of ethics section documenting this policy, with the following provisions (2C3):

- A Board member will accept the legal and moral commitment and responsibility for his/her college district and its staff in its role to provide students the finest education possible.
- A Board member will insure that any Board decisions which he/she helps make will not result in any conflict of interest on his/her part.

**4R3. What are the results for ensuring long-term effective leadership of the institution?**

NICC tracks the following related to long-term effective leadership:

- Presidential evaluation
- External leadership involvement among Cabinet
- CLIC and LINC participation
- Employees seeking advanced degrees
- CESS Results related to satisfaction with communication, reputation in community, and opportunities for leadership development

Table 4R3.A. provides a summary of the president’s most recent FY14 evaluation by the board of trustees, demonstrating strength of leadership.

**Table 4R3.A. President’s FY14 Evaluation by Board of Trustees**

Effective Board/CEO Relations	1 (high) - 5 (low)
Communicates effectively with the Board by keeping members informed of College issues, needs, and operations.	1.00
Involves Board members in College affairs in an appropriate manner.	1.00

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Assists in the professional development of the Board.	1.33
<b>Accomplishment of College's Strategic Plan</b>	<b>1 (high) - 5 (low)</b>
Provides leadership to the College community in the accomplishment of the goals identified in the Strategic Plan.	1.12
Provides data to demonstrate accountability and support effectiveness of measures.	1.12
Provides leadership to maintain currency and viability of the Strategic Plan.	1.25
<b>Administrative Leadership of the College</b>	<b>1 (high) - 5 (low)</b>
Provides effective leadership to faculty and staff.	1.11
Effectively manages financial and material resources and ensures fiscal solvency.	1.22
Provides effective leadership in establishing and maintaining standards of educational excellence.	1.00
Develops on-going programs to meet current and future community needs.	1.00
Establishes and maintains a quality student life through effective student support services.	1.22
Maximizes resources through institutional advancement and the NICC Foundation.	1.33
Fosters workforce development partnerships throughout the region.	1.00
Fosters effective communication and collaboration with faculty and support staff associations.	1.12
Is informed of national, State, and local trends, information, legislation, and other movements pertinent to the College's future.	1.00
<b>Community Relations</b>	<b>1 (high) - 5 (low)</b>
Develops and maintains effective strategies for building community partners.	1.00
Is seen as a key community leader and represents the College well in the community at the local as well as state level.	1.00
Effectively promotes the College throughout the community.	1.00

These results are compared to the President's self-evaluation and used in evaluation sessions with the Board of Trustees who are responsible for hiring the President. The President strives for high performance in each category, and as demonstrated in the table, the Board of Trustees evaluated the President extremely highly in each area. In fact the President's evaluation ranged from 1.00-1.33 in every indicator. This provides the President's cabinet and Board of Trustees with insight into the board's (and their constituents') satisfaction with the College's administration in leadership, board relations, performance, and community relations.

Results demonstrating external leadership participation are evidenced in Table 4R3.B.

**Table 4R3.B. Administrative Cabinet's External Leadership Activities**

Type of Activity	# of NICC Representations
Local	25
Regional	8
State	12
National	8

For a cabinet of 12 people, participation in 53 external boards, organizations, consortiums,

associations and councils represents very strong leadership. Most significant, perhaps, is that each of the 12 cabinet members participates in leadership activities, not relying on one or two leaders to represent the College.

In order to develop leaders within, the College supports faculty and staff in leadership training. Results from two of the foremost opportunities provided through Iowa State University, CLIC and LINC year-long leadership institutes through Iowa State University, Leadership Institute for a New Century (LINC) and Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium (CLIC), are provided in Table 4R3.C. Results show both attendance and the promotional rate of participants following the two programs.

**Table 4R3.C. Promotion Rate of CLIC and LINC Participants**

Program	# Attendees	# Promoted
CLIC	14	10 (71%)
LINC	15	11 (73%)

This strong correlation with leadership development and later promotion demonstrates to the NICC leadership team the importance of continuing to

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support such opportunities and the importance of deliberate succession planning and leadership development. This also suggests that when given opportunities to build leadership, employees rise the occasion and put the development toward continued growth and success.

Table 4R3.D. shows results for the number of faculty who take advantage of the College benefit supporting them to continue their education to attain the next degree and pay level.

**Table 4R3.D. Faculty Since 2005 Seeking Advanced Education Benefits**

BA/BS	BA/BS+15	BA/BS+30	BA/BS+45	MA/MS	MA/MS+15	MA/MS+30	Doctorate	TOTAL
12	10	4	1	19	5	14	2	67

The executive director of HR estimates that, in addition to the roughly 6-7 faculty who seek education advancement benefits per year, an additional 2-3 non-bargaining professional staff apply for the benefits as well. Approximately 2-3 non-bargaining staff also complete their degree and advance their pay at the College annually as well. The consistency with which faculty and staff seeking degree advancement benefits demonstrates that its program is well communicated and accommodating to faculty and staff wishing to advance their education.

Finally, Tables 4R3.E. and 4R3.F. provide an assessment of how highly faculty and staff rate important and satisfaction of key elements of effective leadership.

**Table 4R3.E. 2011 and 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Leadership**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>						
There are effective lines of communication between departments	4.44	2.81	1.63	4.43	3.16	1.27
Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff	4.47	3.05	1.42	4.45	3.43	1.03
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	4.47	3.03	1.43	4.40	3.47	0.93
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	4.44	3.02	1.42	4.41	3.49	0.92
<b>REPUTATION</b>						
The reputation of this institution continues to improve	4.59	3.51	1.08	4.62	4.15	0.47
This institution is well-respected in the community	4.69	3.70	0.99	4.71	4.21	0.51
<b>CULTURE OF OPEN COMMUNICATION</b>						
Faculty members are encouraged to approach administrators with questions and/or concerns	4.41	3.37	1.05	4.35	3.75	0.60
Staff members are encouraged to approach administrations with questions and/or concerns	4.39	3.22	1.16	4.37	3.66	0.71
The NICC College Senate provides employees with a voice in college policy	4.04	3.04	1.00	4.03	3.47	0.57
<b>LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES</b>						
I have adequate opportunities for advancement	3.91	3.15	0.75	4.07	3.31	0.76
I have adequate opportunities for professional development	4.25	3.14	1.10	4.28	3.68	0.60

In every measure detailed above, the gap between faculty- and staff- ranked importance and satisfaction shrunk significantly from 2011 to 2014 at a statistically significant level. This progress has reinforced the College's commitment to engaging its stakeholders in opportunities to communicate with administrators and the President in areas of decision-making, reporting, and planning. Despite the gains in satisfaction, the results demonstrate that the College still has work to do to reduce gaps in the perceived lack of communication between departments

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and between administrators and faculty and staff. The College is particularly proud in the strong growth shown in the reputation category in the past three years and believe this signifies faculty and staff support for the institution to continue to grow its strong community partnerships.

**Table 4R3.F. Comparison of CESS Results Related to Leadership**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	Northeast Iowa CC			Comparison group		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>						
There are effective lines of communication between departments	4.43	3.16	1.27	4.46	2.80	1.66
Administrators share information regularly with faculty and staff	4.45	3.43	1.03	4.45	3.04	1.40
There is good communication between the faculty and the administration at this institution	4.40	3.47	0.93	4.43	3.05	1.38
There is good communication between staff and the administration at this institution	4.41	3.49	0.92	4.42	3.02	1.40
<b>REPUTATION</b>						
The reputation of this institution continues to improve	4.62	4.15	0.47	4.59	3.39	1.20
This institution is well-respected in the community	4.71	4.21	0.51	4.62	3.61	1.00
<b>LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES</b>						
I have adequate opportunities for advancement	4.07	3.31	0.76	4.13	3.14	0.99
I have adequate opportunities for professional development	4.28	3.68	0.60	4.32	3.54	0.79

Based on the comparison of the same elements in 2014, NICC achieved higher satisfaction than its peers in every measure and a smaller gap between importance and satisfaction on every measure.

4I3. Based on 4R3, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Recent improvements that have facilitated the College's growth in leadership include the following:

- Implementation of 360-evaluation process for President and cabinet
- Cabinet's participation in leadership institute to enhance team collaboration and shared goal-setting
- Commitment to measure faculty and staff perceptions of leadership issues through the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) every three years.
- Hiring of President Wee in 2011 who lives leadership through engaging in community partnership, advancing a culture of communication and respect, and supporting faculty and staff to achieve their "best self."

The College plans the following improvements in the next 1-3 years to enhance leadership:

- Complete trustees review and update of board policies
- Merge developmental education and adult education and literacy departments to break down silos among departments who work to improve students' college readiness
- Engage in succession planning---currently 41% of all faculty and staff (81% of executive staff and 51% of faculty) are over the age off 55. It will be imperative that the College strategically consider how to handle this transition without losing the strong leadership it has established internally and externally.
- Continue to implement college-wide initiatives to improve employee satisfaction with communication and their ability to communicate with leadership and other departments effectively to advance the College.

**INTEGRITY**

4P4. Integrity focuses on how the institution ensures legal and ethical behavior and fulfills its societal responsibilities. Describe the processes for developing and communicating legal and ethical standards, monitoring behavior to ensure standards are met, and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Developing and Communicating Standards**

Legal and ethical standards are developed to align with Iowa Code 260C, which sets Iowa law for appropriations, property taxes certified, contracts, agreements, and other obligations of community colleges. Standards are further detailed in board policies, which include the following legal and ethical standards (2A):

- code of ethics for board of trustees
- applicable federal and state laws and regulations
- harassment policies
- standards regulating the use of nicotine, alcohol, and controlled substances
- campus sexual violence elimination (Campus SaVE Act)
- employee standards of ethics
- student code of conduct and discipline
- statement of guiding principles for business and operational procedure
- ethical contract and authorization procedures
- campus security
- copyright, patent, trademark and software compliance
- investment policy

In addition, the College maintains a technology acceptable use policy and an agreement regarding confidential and sensitive information as part of its Red Flag rules' compliance in accordance with the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003.

Table 4P4.A. provides information on the party responsible at the College for maintaining, updating, implementing, and enforcing ethical and legal standards.

**Table 4P4.A. Oversight Responsibility of Legal/Ethical Standards**

Type of Policy	Oversight
Board policies	Vice President of the Board of Trustees.
Compliance, employee conduct, and human resources policies	Executive Director of Human Resources
Student conduct	Vice President of Student Services
Investment, contracts, operational, technology use	Vice President of Finance and Administration
Security policies	Campus Provosts
FERPA policies	Registrar

Policies are communicated intentionally to faculty, staff, and board members in the following ways (2A):

- At time of hire, employees receive employee standards of ethics.
- At time of hire, employees sign receipt and acknowledgement of harassment policy, technology acceptable use policy, confidential information policy, sexual harassment policy, and drug and alcohol policy.
- Board policies are reviewed and updated in an ongoing manner according to board policy (*The President shall make proposals in writing for new written policies, changes or deletions as needed. If a policy is revised because of a legal change over which the Board has no control, the policy may be approved at one meeting at the discretion of the Trustees.*)
- Policy presentations, specifically policy changes, are made during annual campus convocation events.

**Training Employees for Legal/Ethical Behavior and Modeling at all Levels of Organization**

Employees are provided training primarily by their supervisor after hire. Supervisors are provided a new employee checklist, which includes a mandatory confidential and sensitive information training. The computer information systems department conducts information security training for all new hires. All faculty also receive specialized information on FERPA from the Registrar as it relates to their instruction of students. Employees at risk of exposure in the workplace receive an

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overview of Safety Data Sheets and OSHA regulations.

Parties with oversight responsibility attend training related to their area on a regular basis and are responsible for implementing and revising campus policies and conducting requisite training as needed; for example, in 2014 several staff attended Title IX reporting training and brought information back to enhance internal training. Business services staff participate in an annual conference through the State Professional Development Group, which provides education on contractual, security, and fraud issues to inform ethical and legal behavior. The Iowa Department of Education also hosts reviews of federal and state funding regulations, which the College attends. Nationally, the College is also a member of the National College and University Business Officers, a valuable asset for regulations monitoring information. By sending key staff to development and training activities, the College ensures that ethical and legal behavior is modelled at the highest level of the organization.

#### **Ensuring the Ethical Practice of all Employees**

Employee ethics in particular are ensured in the following ways (2A):

- Required pre-employment background checks for personnel in designated positions
- Employee handbook maintained and referenced in board policy
- Inclusion of ethics and professional behavior standards included in job descriptions
- Signed documents of ethical/legal behavior required upon hire (described previously)
- Ethics and professional behavior is part of required new employee orientation
- Hiring of compliance staff in 2012 and expanding this office in 2014

Operational functions (financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary) are ensured to be in compliance with fair and ethical policies through the following systems (2A):

- Annual financial audits of College and Foundation
- Readily available web-based College complaint process

- Board approved relationships with two law firms (one for non-personnel issues and one for personnel issues) to access on an as needed basis
- State of Iowa Equity Visit conducted at regular intervals by the Department of Education (includes audit of procedures and practices related to employee ethics, Title IX compliance, Americans with Disabilities Act, non-discrimination practices)
- State of Iowa Accreditation Visit conducted every 10 years by the Department of Education (includes audit of procedures and practices related to hiring, qualified faculty, strategic planning, facilities planning, etc.)

#### **Disclosing Information to Students and Public**

NICC makes information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships readily available to all constituents through multiple channels. All required consumer disclosures are available through the College Catalog and the [website](#). In addition, the College publishes accreditation relationships and statuses of programs and accreditation of the College with the HLC on its website in a dedicated [page](#). The College also include additional wage and employment outlook information for its constituents on its [program pages](#) (2B).

#### **4R4. What are the results for ensuring institutional integrity?**

The College tracks the following related to institutional integrity:

- Complaint log filings
- Financial audit results
- Formal legal proceedings or sanctions against the College
- Employee grievances, discrimination complaints, ethics complaints
- Qualitative examples of ethical standards

The complaint process and results are described in detail in Section 2R4; however, the College's low number (6) of complaints in the previous fiscal year demonstrates the College is doing a good job cultivating a culture of ethics and integrity.

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The College and the Foundation continue to receive unqualified audits, demonstrating fiscal integrity; the College has not experienced any accreditation sanctions (state or HLC), demonstrating ethical integrity; and the College has not been named in any legal suits, demonstrating a track record of legal integrity.

The College's HR department tracks formal employee grievances through the faculty and support service bargaining units and reports 0 grievances for over ten years. The department also tracks discrimination complaints for harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and discrimination of any protected class; in ten years, two complaints were investigated and the preponderance of evidence indicated that harassment did not take place in both incidents.

One of the College's values is integrity. Because the College mission, vision and values are well aligned with day to day operations, the College integrates a philosophy of "doing the right thing" in all activities. This message is led by President Wee who models integrity and expects this behavior of all employees. Doing the right thing doesn't necessarily mean just following the letter of the law, but also going above and beyond when opportunity arises. This culture leads to qualitative examples of integrity that aren't necessarily reflected in quantitative reports. For example, in 2014 the College refinanced bonds through the Iowa New Jobs Training Program (NJTP), saving the state of Iowa (not the College) \$1,069,000. Another example of integrity is evident in freezing the cost of NICC tuition for students. While many institutions do this as a political strategy, yet raise fees for students, NICC ensured its tuition freeze truly held costs the same for students by not raising other fees, for three years in a row now.

414. Based on 4R4, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

As compliance and training requirements grow for areas related to employee policies and standards, the College recognized the need to increase compliance responsibility across more staff. In 2012 the College brought on a compliance director to

assist with student-related compliance issues. In 2014, the college hired two additional FTE human resources staff members to further share this responsibility. The establishment of institutional effectiveness in 2013 also has assisted in formal monitoring and evaluation of ethical and legal standards and practices. This includes regular reports to the board of trustees related to strategic planning and mission, vision, and values of the College.

After a state equity visit and accreditation interim visit, the Quality Council also determined a need to form a compliance team to assist with communication, training, and compliance related to state and regional accreditation requirements. This will be a cross-departmental team with areas of expertise and responsibility in specific areas of ethical and legal standards.

Finally, HR is in the progress of developing a standard employee evaluation process, made possible through its implementation of PeopleAdmin performance management system, that will include evaluation of the core values of the College, including integrity. This will provide additional data points on how employees and their supervisors rank ethical behavior on a quantitative score.

**AQIP Category Five: Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship**

**INTRODUCTION**

In order to meet its mission, Northeast Iowa Community College relies on secure, user-friendly, and up-to-date fiscal, physical, technological, and information infrastructures. These resources provide the foundation on which teaching and learning can thrive in an environment of efficiency and security.

The College has improved considerably in this category since its last portfolio submission in 2010. This has been driven by clear identification of areas lacking resource efficiencies, commitment to integrated security and safety systems, considerable technological investments through a Title III *Strengthening Institutions* grant, and improved communication systems to share data and information.

Guided by the 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, high-impact Action Projects, and strategic resource investments, the College believes it is well positioned to meet internal and external stakeholder needs now and into the future.

The College’s responses in the *Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship* category will inform readers of processes, results and improvements related to:

- Knowledge Management,
- Resource Management, and
- Operational Effectiveness,

The following table provides a self-assessment of where the NICC rates the growth of maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Aligned 2014: Integrated
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Aligned 2014: Integrated
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of institutional effectiveness department to centralize data, reporting, and communication efforts</li> <li>• Integration of Information Security Team (ISO) to lead efforts to protect against identity theft</li> <li>• Implementation of Title III <i>Strengthening Institutions</i> grant, including upgrading technology systems for reporting, human resources, and document imaging</li> <li>• Improved communication vehicles through internal and external newsletters, data resource page through the Xpress portal, and development of internal data resource book</li> <li>• Collaboration with Higher One to offer student direct deposit services</li> <li>• Scan card, keyless building access and security camera installation to improve building security</li> <li>• Deployment of comprehensive safety and security plan</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed: Create Systematic Information Security Team</li> <li>• Closed: College-wide Assessment Plan</li> </ul>

The College’s efforts in the *Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship* category in the next one to three years will focus on development, alignment, and implementation of comprehensive facilities and technology plans now that the current plans are drawing to completion. Both plans will align with the College’s current strategic planning process. The facilities plan is already in progress and will focus both on maintenance of best use of existing facilities as well as planning for future facilities. The technology plan will identify gaps still unfilled from the previous technology plan and Title III grant and recognize student, faculty, and staff needs to provide the best, yet most fiscally responsible service..

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

5P1. Knowledge Management focuses on how data, information, and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution. Describe the processes for knowledge management and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Information Processes to Support Planning, Process Improvement, and Decision-making**

The process for selecting, organization, analyzing, and sharing data to support planning, improvement and decision-making is led by the executive director of institutional effectiveness (IE) but shared by the President’s cabinet, other College directors and the Quality Council in an effort to disseminate a culture of analytics college-wide.

Selection of data to be used for any external publication or official report is centralized with the IE department. This department includes institutional research, marketing and communications, grants, legislative affairs and accreditation functions to streamline data sharing and ensure accuracy and consistency of reporting across the board.

The executive director of IE chairs the Quality Council and also sits on the President’s cabinet to ensure top-level strategic discussions occur in the context of relevant data and information (including best practices and case studies). The executive director also reports to the board of trustees on a monthly basis regarding data and progress toward strategic priorities and annual priorities of the College. Typically, a representative from the IE

department is also assigned to cross-departmental teams and committees working to further College goals. This includes the strategic enrollment management team, retention team, and Quality Council among others (5C2, 5C4, 5D1, 5D2).

**Determining Data and Information Departments Need and Making Data Readily Available for Planning and Improvements**

While the IE department often supplies or summarizes the data relevant to a team, data analysis is conducted by all members of the team or committee to provide a shared understanding of what the data means and how to use it. The IE department also encourages ad-hoc requests for data from College personnel to aid in departmental initiatives (5C4, 5C5, 5D1, 5D2).

Key personnel and staff at the College also have access to data reporting tools through the College’s Ellucian ERP, Lumens, Salesforce, and other database systems. However, any reports shared publicly or externally are expected to first be approved by the IE department to ensure accuracy and tracking of data sharing. The process to move the College to this point was detailed through a now closed AQIP Action Project, titled College-wide Assessment Plan, meant to create formal process for evaluating and communicating the College’s implementation of goals related to its core mission and vision (5C4, 5C5).

In addition to selection and analysis of data, the IE office is tasked with communication of data and information. This occurs through a number of integrated processes detailed in Table 5P1A.

**Table 5P1.A. Communication of Data (2B, 5D1)**

<b>Internal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday Takeout internal newsletter</li> <li>Strategic Plan Scorecards</li> <li>Convocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website</li> <li>Blue Book Data Resource Guide</li> <li>Committee Requests</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Community College Benchmarking Project</li> <li>Iowa Management Information Systems (MIS)</li> <li>Legislative reports for funding sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPEDS</li> <li>Iowa Completion Metrics</li> <li>10<sup>th</sup> day Enrollment</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing/Promotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press releases</li> <li>Community Connection newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing publications</li> <li>The Educate newsletter</li> </ul>

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The process for determining data, information, and performance results that units need to plan and manage effectively is determined through a partnership of IE and the departmental unit, as well as external partners that have a stake in the results (5C4, 5C5, 5D1, 5D2).

For example, in fall of 2013 deans needed access to accurate retention and enrollment information about each program under their area of supervision to drive performance and fiscal year goals. This information was internally available through the Iowa Completion Metrics report, but not broken down by program. They partnered with IE to develop a metrics framework that would provide them timely information they needed on performance, and the College's external programming partner (CAST) assisted in automating the report for each program.

Another example occurred in 2013 when the State of Iowa began mandatory performance reporting for a number of workforce training funds. This included detailed information on participant acceptance, completion, job placement, wage data, and continuing education data. Using the state's report as a guide, IE worked with the Business and Community Solutions (BCS) division to develop a database model to collect required information and easily run reports and then BCS contracted with a developer to design the database.

These examples represent the increased culture of analytics at the College, which takes into account the data needs and reporting burden of initiatives, partnerships, and decisions.

### **Ensuring Timeliness, Accuracy, Reliability, and Security of College's Knowledge Management Systems and Processes**

Ensuring the security and reliability of the College's institutional management systems and is a top priority. The protection of confidential and sensitive information assets and the resources that support them are critical to the operation the College. The College recognizes that, as information assets are handled, they are placed at risk for potential threats of employee errors, malicious or criminal actions, theft, and fraud.

To minimize and respond to such events, the College established a cross-departmental information security team (ISO team) in 2010 led by the Calmar campus provost to develop policies and procedures related to information security. This implementation was also detailed through an AQIP Action Project titled Information Security, which was active from January 2011 to December 2012. The goal of the project was to create an integrated process of ongoing training and education of the College's information security program so that all employees will practice and model best practices for the protection of his/her identity as well as those they serve. Through the Action Project and ongoing work of the ISO team, the following policies and procedures were established:

- Implementation of an integrated, quarterly information security audit schedule.
- New employees sign confidentiality agreements which are retained in employee files
- Improved process for identifying and reporting privacy concerns as evidenced by communication to the security officer and filing of reports.
- Development of Information Security Program Policy and Procedure Manual
- Development of Breach Response Policy and log
- Implementation of Suspicious Activity Report
- Integration of information security policies for fax communication, record destruction, record storage, spoken word, and work area security.

The scope of the information security policies is broad; they apply to the Board of Trustees, employees, and service providers of NICC. This includes all parties that may come into contact with Confidential and Sensitive Information such as vendors, contractors, consultants, temporaries, and personnel of third party affiliates.

Overall security of the systems themselves is maintained by the computer information systems department (CIS). In order to accomplish as secure an environment as possible for constituents and to ensure a safe educational experience for students, CIS has implemented various systems, policies and procedures to prevent and mitigate the loss of confidential data, detailed in Table 5P1.B:

**Table 5P1.B. CIS Information Security Systems and Policies**

Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical security of College data systems</li> <li>Remote security through firewall protection</li> <li>System patches regularly applied to keep security services up-to-date</li> <li>Student access to network limited to where they can achieved educational value only to minimized security risk</li> <li>Employee access to Ellucian Colleague ERP system is defined by roles, i.e. student, business, Foundation functions</li> </ul>
Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CIS policies in place to maintain security of systems and users</li> <li>Strict Helpdesk policies to guide communication with students and staff to protect confidential information</li> <li>CIS representation on the ISO Team</li> <li>Information available to faculty, staff, and students on a need-to-know basis defined by roles</li> </ul>

The College also understands that reports from its data systems are only as accurate as the information put into them. The College works to ensure timeliness, accuracy, and reliability of its system through ongoing employee training and centralization of reports with key staff. For example, all employees who are responsible for entering student data into Ellucian Colleague are trained through the College’s investment in a full-time Ellucian support specialist. This ensures uniformity of data entry and cuts down on staff errors. The

specialist coordinates updates to the system, communicates with power users, organizes training events, and communicates with Ellucian Colleague consultants. This specialist also designates trainers for each module of Ellucian Colleague (Financial, HR, Student, and Advancement) who are responsible to train new employees on the Ellucian Colleague ERP system. To assist with ongoing training and needs, the specialist provides manuals to new hires and offers refresher trainings every few years.

In addition, key reports are assigned to trained staff and centralized whenever possible with the director of institutional research. External reports that originate elsewhere are housed with the director who has the training and system expertise to submit the reports. For example, mandated financial aid reports are submitted by the director of financial aid.

**5R1. What are the results for determining how data, information, and performance results are used in decision-making processes at all levels and in all parts of the institution?**

In addition to a developing a culture that brings data and information to the table for planning and resource allocation, the College has invested in the tools necessary to make data, information and performance results readily available to units and departments involved in planning and improvements. These are summarized in Table 5R1.A.

**Table 5R1.A. Data Tools Utilized to Track Results**

System	Function	Data Types
<b>Ellucian Colleague</b>	Integrated student, employee, vendor, and donor information system	Student, HR, Financial, Advancement
<b>Entrinsik Informer</b>	Web-based reporting tool which retrieves data from Ellucian Colleague	Dashboards, reports for export, charts/graphs, etc.
<b>Lumens</b>	Web-based Lifelong Learning Management System designed for managing registrations and open enrollment, corporate education and workforce development	Demographic information, class trends, payment information, dollars spent year over year, enrollment number, revenue, daily monthly. Real time analysis
<b>SalesForce</b>	Client relationship management system for contract businesses	Company sales
<b>BCS Access database</b>	Custom client management database	Student intake and performance information

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<b>AdAstra</b>	Facility and equipment scheduling software	Usage reports to analyze practices for scheduling to maximize use of college resources
<b>Xpress</b>	Online portal	IR report repository, access to shared data resources (i.e. dashboards), access to strategic plan and monitoring reports, enrollment data
<b>Xpress</b>	learning management system	Online campus, student learning assessment, attendance, grades
<b>Blue Book</b>	Internal data resource guide	College-wide frequently requested data
<b>Educational Advisory Board</b>	Subscription with online access	provider of research, technology, and consulting services to colleges and universities nationwide
<b>PeopleAdmin</b>	Human Resources talent management system	Employee applications, screening, interview matrices, evaluations
<b>SoftDocs</b>	Electronic form and document imaging system	Scanned forms, electronic form data
<b>Maxient,</b>	Student conduct software	Historical view of inputs, Title IX reporting, and program compliance reporting related to student conduct issues

The College monitors a number of outcomes related to proper utilization, training, effectiveness, and security of its information systems. These include, progress on Title III grant objectives, ISO team progress towards training and security targets, and CIS security results.

Through a 2010 Title III *Strengthening Institutions* grant, the College implemented the Informer reporting tool, PeopleAdmin talent management software, and computer information security upgrades among other improvements. The results of Title III objectives related to those improvements are detailed in Table 5R1.B.

**Table 5R1.B. Title III results for information security, systems, and training improvements**

Objective	Baseline	2010	2011	2012	2013	Target
% of employment applications electronically received and screened.	0	N/A	11%	98%	100%	75%
# of information security breaches	0	0	0	0	0	0
Proficiency level of managers trained to use Informer reporting tool	0	N/A	43%	96%	82%	70%
# of documents imaged electronically	0	10,400	133,052	297,437	321,101	100,000

The College has met or exceeded its targets in these areas by year four of the grant with one year remaining. The dip in proficiency of the Informer tool provided insight into the need for ongoing and new training for supervisors who use the tool. Evidence that Informer is regularly accessed by staff to inform decisions and processes can be inferred from the ever increasing growth of “live” reports run in each of the fiscal years, increasing from 1187 in FY12 to 17,838 in FY15.

The ISO Team began tracking results related to its visual security audits and training in fiscal year 2014 as part of Strategic Priority #9: Enhance Our College Environment. Results of this are detailed in Table 5R1.C.

**Table 5R1.C. Information Security Training Goals and Results**

Target	Baseline	Performance	Goal	Trend
In random observations, NICC faculty and staff will wear personal identification badges during the work day.	N/A	FY14 63%	75%	TBD
New staff starting October 2013 will participate in ISO awareness training within three months of hire.	0	Oct.-Dec. '14 67%	100%	

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100% of Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) will be tracked, monitored, and investigated with findings reported to the ISO team for potential recommendations for process changes.	0	FY14 100%	100%	
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These results demonstrate solid progress towards ISO team goals to ensure security of sensitive information and data systems, however, demonstrate the importance of sustaining early efforts and maintaining momentum in training and auditing efforts. The 100% response on SAR reports represents only 2 reports filed for minor infractions.

Additionally, the computer information systems staff maintains responsibility to monitor security updates and breaches of information security. Table 5R1.D. evidences their progress on measures related to implementation of the College’s technology master plan.

**Table 5R1.D. Computer Information Systems Security Results**

Target	Baseline	Performance	Goal	Trend
There will continue to be zero breaches of information security (hacking, malware, loss of personally identifiable data).	FY10 0	FY14 0	0%	
There will continue to be zero breaches of information security (hacking, malware, loss of personally identifiable data).	FY10 0	FY14 0	0%	

These results demonstrate exemplary security efforts by the College’s CIS team. However, security maintenance is an ongoing issue and the College is committed to evaluating and continuing to revise technology policies and procedures as they relate to security.

5I1. Based on 5R1, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College has made great strides in its knowledge management processes since the last AQIP portfolio, including the following key improvements:

- The establishment of an institutional effectiveness department to bring together marketing and communication, institutional research, and accreditation functions, which has led to a more centralized system for accessing and using data and information accurately and consistently.
- The integration of the ISO team to systematically, implement, monitor, and enhance information security processes.
- Implementation of Title III grant improvements to improve access to information and reporting through integration of the Informer tool with the Ellucian Colleague ERP, implementation of new security hardware and software, and

implementation of the PeopleAdmin human resources software and SoftDocs document imaging and electronic form system.

- Improved communication of data and reports through internal and external newsletters featuring infographics of key data
- Development of internal data resource tools through the Xpress portal, including dashboards and the annual “Blue Book” data resource guide
- Upgrade of AdAstra scheduling software in fall 2014 to include analytics capabilities to monitor room usage rates
- Migration of various Excel files to a BCS customized database to track intake, performance, and case management of students not enrolled in College academic programs but served by the College’s success model, including adult education and literacy and non-credit career pathway certificates. This system also allows the College to manage mandated state reports related to State of Iowa funding targeted to workforce programs that affect students who are not immediately enrolled in academic programs at the College, and thus, not entered into the Ellucian Colleague system
- Completion of AQIP projects related to Information Security and College-wide Assessment

Despite these improvements, the College believes there is still room for improvement in this area, specifically in regard to expanding its culture of analytics in all areas of the College. This goal is a central component of the College's next strategic plan, which will guide the College from fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2018.

Future improvements in this area will include:

- Subscription to EMSI economic modeling software in partnership with regional economic development agencies and state community colleges to provide more accurate and timely information on workforce data and skills gaps to the College to aid in curriculum and programming decisions
- Expanded partnership with the Iowa Department of Education to analyze and use graduate performance data (placement, wage, retention) for academic and non-academic programs at the College and to move away from reliance on alumni data, which is subject to errors and potentially low or biased response rates
- Expanded use of the Informer dashboard capability to provide real-time data to internal stakeholders
- Increased analytics using enterprise performance management principles to model what-if budget scenarios and integrate predictive analytics into budget presentations to faculty, staff, trustees, and other stakeholders
- An increased understanding of activity-based costing through participation in the Maximizing Resources benchmarking project
- Implementation of a college-wide client relationship management system that will allow for improved access to and updating of student information regardless of where they enter and how they engage with the College.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

5P2. Resource Management focuses on how the institution supports and improves its educational programs and operations. Describe the processes for managing resources and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Maintaining Fiscal, Physical, and Technological Infrastructures Sufficient to Support Operations

NICC is a good steward of public resources and strategically engages in partnerships and looks for areas of efficiency to maximize its resources. State and federal statutes and administrative rules govern the College's financial policies and processes. The College's accounting procedures also meet or exceed all requirements, which are confirmed annually by an audit conducted by a CPA firm and provides a professional opinion that the College's financial records are fairly presenting the College's financial condition (2A, 5A1).

Key processes for maintaining the fiscal, physical and technological infrastructures that support College operations fall under the responsibility of the two campus provosts and the vice president of finance and administration. These processes are guided by the College's facilities master plan and technology master plan, as well as Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), uniform accounting manual reviews regarding accounting and auditing regulations, and relevant federal and state statutes (5A1).

Fiscal processes include those for billing and collecting payment from students, for procuring goods and services, for payroll management and reimbursements to employees, for managing cash flow, for monitoring transactions, and for administering employee benefits. These processes are maintained through integration of appropriate systems and contracts to allow for secure and efficient transactions. Some of these processes include the following (5A1):

- Ellucian Colleague ERP system allows for the secure creation of payment requisitions, approvals, and payment all online
- The College's contract with Higher One provides the ability to direct deposit refunds to student accounts
- The College authorizes College credit cards (p-cards) to eligible staff for online purchases and travel, which are audited by receipt monthly
- Paychecks are distributed every other week with most employees opting to receive direct deposit and all employees since 2010 required to receive direct deposit

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- Business services department manages cash flow so that sufficient balances are maintained to cover weekly accounts payable disbursements, health insurance claims, and payroll, with any cash in excess of immediate needs invested
- Budget officers have quick access to their account activity through the Xpress portal
- Creation of new requisitions for payment must have approval by supervisor and director or accounting and are blocked if insufficient funds available in account
- Policies and procedures in place for submitting and administering grant-funded programs
- Policies and procedures in place for accepting and processing gifts to the NICC Foundation.
- Targets set and shared College-wide in relation to diversification of resources through Foundation fundraising, grants, and Business and Community Solutions revenue

Processes related to long-range planning for physical infrastructure are guided by the College's master facilities plan. This plan was developed in 2008 after the College achieved a \$35 million bond passage by district voters to improve facilities and upgrade technology. This plan was developed with Invision Architects in 2008 and completed in three phases by 2013. The College is currently in the process of developing the next facilities master plan in conjunction with the College's fiscal year 2016-2018 strategic plan. Short-range planning and day-to-day resource allocation, including both building and land maintenance, falls under the responsibility of the campus provosts (5A1).

Technological infrastructure is guided by the College's master technology plan and implemented and monitored by the director of computer information systems. The College's current plan was developed through RSM McGladrey's consulting services and spanned fiscal year 2010-2013. This plan was the impetus for the College's current Title III grant, which ends Sept. 2015. When the College hired a new director of computer information systems in 2013, he determined additional strategic technology goals for the College, which effectively extended the 2010-2013 plan through fiscal year 2015 (5A1).

**Setting Goals Aligned with Mission, Resources, Opportunities, and Emerging Needs and Allocating Resources in Accordance**

NICC sets goals and allocates resources in alignment with the College's mission and emerging needs through the annual V7 budgeting process. Through this process, faculty and staff submit departmental requests for resources, including infrastructure, contractual, service and technological needs. As described in 4P1, this process is aligned with mission and strategic plan of the College by requiring requestors to clearly explain how the request will further the College's strategic plan and, thus, mission. The College's next strategic plan further to link resources and goals by including financial implications for goals and action steps. This will require the College to prioritize elements of its plan based on available resources (5A3, 1D2).

The College accounts for emerging needs and emergency, needs through maintenance of a healthy reserve fund. This money is available to take care of requests that come up during the year outside of the V7 process (5A3, 1D2).

Preservation of allocations for educational purposes is achieved through the built-in checks and balances of the V7 process. Approval of new resource allocation includes a review by four cross-departmental quality council teams, which provides a mechanism to protect educational interests. Similarly, any new staff and faculty position requests must be brought forward by the member of the President's cabinet overseeing that area and then reviewed and prioritized as a group by the cabinet. This process ensures that no single cabinet member nor department can push through initiatives or positions for funding without consideration of unforeseen consequences or outside the context of other requests (5A2, 5A3, 1D2).

**5R2. What are the results for resource management?**

Resource management is monitored by the extent to which faculty and staff feel their workplace, budget, and technological infrastructure meet their needs, the extent to which the facilities and technology plans have been implemented, the utilization of

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Higher One fiscal management services by students, and the approval of V7 requests demonstrating strategic needs .

and 2014 show how the College's faculty and staff perceive and importance of and their satisfaction with budget, facilities, and technology. Table 5R2.A. details these results.

Results from the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) administered in 2011

**Table 5R2.A. CESS Results for Facilities, Budgeting and Technology Satisfaction, 2011 & 2014**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
I have the technology I need to do my job well	4.43	3.65	0.78	4.47	3.89	0.58
My workspace promotes productivity	4.32	3.64	0.68	4.38	3.77	0.61
My department has the budget needed to do its job well	4.48	2.97	1.51	4.41	3.57	0.84

In each measure, the gap between faculty and staff ranked importance and satisfaction shrunk to a statistically significant level from 2011 to 2014. This shows the College it is moving in the right direction in aligning technology, budgeting, and facilities planning with the needs of faculty and staff. Because these are questions the College chooses to ask and not standard CESS questions, they are not benchmarked with peers.

To track technology infrastructure management, the College monitors the implementation of the technology master plan. Results of the plan are detailed in Table 5R2.B.

**Table 5R2.B. FY10-15 Technology Master Plan Implementation**

Objective	Status
Update Local and Wide Area Network Equipment	Complete
Transition to Exchange/Outlook email and calendar	Recommendation not implemented
Upgrade telecommunications system	Complete
Upgrade Servers	Complete
Upgrade technology security	Complete
Upgrade desktop computer and application management system	Complete
Move to helpdesk automation	Recommendation not implemented
Implement Lumens software solution for continuing education	Complete
Enterprise Print Management	Not complete; future priority project
Update website and hire webmaster	Complete
Reorganize filing system	Complete
Implement cafeteria and bookstore point of sale systems	Complete
Upgrade room scheduling software	Complete

Through its work with RSM McGladery for its previous plan, the College learned the critical importance of a knowledgeable director to validate the plan and account for unforeseen implementation and costs. Technology planning is subject to quickly advancing technologies. As a result, the College often finds itself trying to determine the most cost-effective solution that will also ensure longevity. Under new leadership, the computer information systems department has closed out the McGladery plan, and with the completion of the Title III grant in 2015, will move into its next technology master planning phase in conjunction with the College's facilities master planning and new strategic plan for fiscal year 2016.

Facilities resource management results are monitored based on the extent to which the College is carrying out its facilities master plan. Results of this plan are detailed in Table 5R2.C.

**Table 5R2.C. FY10-15 Facilities Master Plan**

Objective	Cost Estimate (in millions)	Status
Calmar Student Union HVAC system	\$0.2m	Complete, 2007
Renovation of Town Clock Business Center	\$0.5m.	Complete, 2008
Renovation of Calmar Industrial Technology Building	\$3.0m.	Complete, 2008
Construction of Peosta Industrial Technologies Building	\$7.0m.	Complete, 2009
Construction of Calmar Student Center	\$6.0m.	Complete, 2010
Renovation of Max Clark Hall in Calmar	\$2.0m.	Complete, 2010
Renovation of Wilder Business Center	\$1.0m.	Complete, 2011
Renovation of Peosta Public Library	\$3.0m.	Complete, 2011
Renovation of Peosta Health Sciences	\$8.0m.	Complete, 2012
Renovation of Calmar Student Union	\$1.5m.	Complete, 2013
Renovation of Calmar Administrative Building	\$0.7m.	Complete, 2013

The completion of this plan demonstrates sound fiscal practices and timely implementation of the College’s 2008 bond passage, including new construction or renovation of 12 facilities. This plan also leveraged federal and state grant funds to the extent possible, including a \$750,000 Iowa I-Jobs grant for the Peosta Campus library construction and a \$1.1 million Economic Development Administration grant for the Wilder Business Center on the Calmar Campus, further demonstrating effective resource management.

In Summer 2014 the College sought board approval to move forward on its next strategic plan, and again selected Invision Architects to lead the facilities planning after a competitive RFP process. This plan will be completed during fiscal year 2016 to align with the College’s next strategic plan start date.

With the implementation of Higher One in 2014, the College began tracking utilization by students to measure effectiveness of the tool. In its first year of implementation, 35% of students opted for a refund to the Higher One checking account; This number remained relatively steady at 31% in the current fiscal year. These results suggest strong efficiency and benefit to students who are opting to deposit their refund into an account rather than via paper check. An additional 40-50% of students both years choose direct deposit into another existing account, leaving only 22-25% of students selecting paper check disbursements.

As described in 5P2, the V7 budgeting process represents the grassroots means for faculty and staff to request new resources to carry out targeted strategic initiatives. This is meant to go beyond operational budgets and fund or connect departments with new resources. The Calmar Campus provost tracks the College’s ability to fund these requests. By way of example, Table 4R2.K details how FY14 requests aligned with strategic priorities.

5I2. Based on 5R2, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

The College has made recent progress to improve resource management processes at the College in the areas of fiscal, physical and technological infrastructure. These include the following:

- Contracting with Higher One to offer student direct deposit capabilities
- Upgrade of AdAstra room scheduling software to provide better tracking of building traffic and room fill rates at various times of the day
- Completion of 3-year scan card key project
- Transition to green cleaning products at the College
- Restructured technology HelpDesk services
- Near completed Title III grant, resulting in implementation of document imaging software, talent management software, improved and upgraded security, wireless and storage infrastructure, and new reporting software

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- implementation (Informer)
- Implementation of point of sale systems for the cafeterias and bookstores
- Moving the V7 budget request process to an automated doc-e-fill form to reduce possibility of lost forms and increase efficiencies in sharing and approving forms
- Web time entry implementation began in 2015 to replace timecard process
- Remodel of disability services and learning center at Peosta campus to increase accessibility and expand services.

The College is currently working on its fiscal year 2016-2018 strategic plan, which includes a section dedicated to facilities and technology. It is the intention of the College that this plan will align the technology master plan and facilities master plan with the goals and objectives of the overall College plan. While these plans are still in progress, the College expects it will lead to improvements in the following areas:

- Smarter facilities use to reduce overcrowding and meet student needs
- More sustainable facilities features, i.e. solar, energy efficient features
- Increased accessibility for people with disabilities
- Implementation of a print management product to measure print output and control costs
- CIS staff reorganization
- Integration of a responsive College website and mobile applications

## OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

5P3. Operational Effectiveness focuses on how an institution ensures effective management of its operations in the present and plans for continuity of operations into the future. Describe the processes for operational effectiveness and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

### Building Budgets to Accomplish College Goals

To accomplish institutional goals, budgeting at NICC includes both top-down and bottom-up processes. On the revenue side of the budget, it is a top-down

process as the sources of revenue are determined. These might be determined externally (for state aid and property taxes) or determined internally (enrollment estimates for tuition revenue). As a result, when the College budgets for expenditures, it has already determined the available revenue in each of the major budget categories (general operations, plant fund, and equipment replacement) (5A5).

On the expense side of the budget, the process is more bottom-up in that each department is invited to submit requests during the annual V7 budgeting process to further the College's strategic priorities. Even with this annual process, the College budget is still typically completed on an incremental basis, with the majority of the budget staying the same as the previous year. This is certainly true with regards to compensation as salaries are set through negotiations with the two bargaining associations outside of the budgeting process. It is only the vacant positions and new position requests through V7 that are considered in the budget process (5A5, 5C1, 5C2).

Through the V7 review process, equipment requests are reviewed and prioritized by the vice presidents and provosts, personnel requests by the President's cabinet, and other strategic initiative by the four Quality Council teams. This provides ample opportunity for discussion about how College resources should be allocated consistent with strategic priorities and needs (5C1, 5C2)

### Monitoring Financial Position

Monitoring College budgets and financial position throughout the year is done at both the department level by the budget officers, and at the College level by the vice president of finance and administration and the executive director of finance. Through the Xpress portal, departmental budget officers have easy access to their accounts to monitor how their budget lines are progressing through the fiscal year and make adjustments. If a particular budget line is proving to be insufficient for that year, the budget officer can request a transfer of funds from one of their budget lines to another. A budget officer may also work with her or his supervisor to ask if there is available budget somewhere within the supervisor's

area of responsibility. This request for a mid-year budget supplement can continue up the organizational chart to the vice president or provost, where reasonable requests may be honored (5A5).

At the College level, the vice president of finance and administration checks the pace of the College's revenue and expenditures compared to the previous fiscal year weekly. This is used to determine if there are areas where revenues are coming in slower than last year or expenditures being incurred faster. The executive director of finance also maintains a year-end projection so the College knows if there is a need to make any mid-year adjustment to the budget (5A5).

Restricted funds account for significant components of the College budget and these are leveraged or sometimes relied upon to further initiatives that are not accommodated by the operational budget. This includes restricted funds such as donations and gifts to the College Foundation, grants, and auxiliary funds such as bookstores, cafeterias and child care centers earmarked to a dedicated purpose. It is critical that the College continues to diversify resources to accommodate budget requests and new initiatives that, while consistent with the College mission, fall outside general operations budgeting practices (5A5).

#### **Maintaining a Technological Infrastructure that is Reliable, Secure, and User-friendly**

It is the responsibility of the director of CIS to maintain a secure, user-friendly, and reliable technological infrastructure at the College given the availability of resources allocated to this purpose. This includes processes for keeping software and hardware functioning, secured, up-to-date, and properly sized to respond to the changing technology needs of students, faculty, and staff. This team also responds to end user issues through a Helpdesk service. The Helpdesk acts as a monitoring mechanism that alerts the director to key issues, emerging problems, and clientele satisfaction with CIS systems and infrastructure. Another tool used at NICC to ensure systems are meeting an acceptable standard of reliability is the Network Monitoring System. This server is dedicated to watching items on the NICC network for

certain "red flag" conditions around the clock. If programmed conditions are met, it sends the CIS department a text message alert. Outside of this system, CIS also routinely monitors many of its bandwidth levels and wireless service (5A1).

#### **Maintaining a Physical Infrastructure that is Reliable, Secure, and User-friendly**

To maintain a reliable, secure and user-friendly physical infrastructure, the campus provosts oversee maintenance departments on both campuses. These departments are responsible for day-to-day operations, maintenance, and repairs. This includes contracting and hiring of custodial services, campus entry scan card technology, use of Doc-e-fill online reporting system to track and schedule immediate repairs and services, training of staff, snow removal and grounds maintenance, and implementation of sustainable practices (5A1).

This process involves leveraging partnerships and contracts where appropriate to provide the best services. For example, the Peosta Campus partners with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide some custodial services. Both campuses also partner with regional organizations to learn about and implement best practices in sustainability. This included transition to use of green cleaning products in 2012 and partnership with the local Petal Project sustainability certification program (5A1).

Building security is maintained through a recent upgrade of all door locks to a scan key system, allowing the College to determine who can access which buildings during off hours and to limit levels of access. This included an upgraded external keying system with more limited external key access. Security cameras have also been installed in specific areas of campuses and centers (5A1).

Other processes that contribute to user-friendly facilities include ensuring appropriate signage and monitoring accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Accessibility is monitored routinely to comply with state equity and accreditation compliance regulations. Signage is updated as needed, with more extensive updates completed through facilities planning processes and implementation (5A1).

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**Managing Risks to Ensure Operational Stability, Including Emergency Preparedness**

Operating a public facility will always carry a level of risk, financial and physical. The College is committed, however, to limiting this risk as much as

possible through integrated security and safety measures and emergency preparedness training and planning. These systems are detailed in Table 5P3.A.

**Table 5P3.A. Processes for Minimizing Operational Risk**

Emergency Plans	Training & Resources	Incident Command	Facilities
Identifies procedures in events of internal/external situations: fire, weather, intruder, bomb threat, illness. Contains emergency contact information and reporting forms.	Fire drills conducted each semester. Severe weather drills each spring.	Incident command structure at each campus with 3-deep coverage of incident command roles.	Campus safety information accessible to all staff via Xpress portal
Electronically available on X-press portal and hard copies with building designees for each campus and incident command team.	Monthly radio and intercom testing. 4-Channel radios provided to building designees.	Public Information Officer (PIO) trained staffed. Incident command training and table tops drills scheduled as needed.	Camera system at some Center and Campus locations
Center plans developed in conjunction with associated high school and/or business.	ALICE (alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate) training and resources for staff.	Annual procedure and safety update with building designees.	Scan card system for off hour access; Service doors locked during day hours of operation.
Creation of Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) to provide guidance and support of those exhibiting signs of distress on campus. Maxient software to provide access to information for those who provide services.	First responders on staff. First Aid/CPR training offered. AEDs in each building. Emergency kits in each building and education program area.	Participate with local and country emergency drills/training, including hazard mitigation plans	Peosta campus buildings connected via intercom system.
Development of "Alert Gallery" to provide college-wide notice of individuals who are not allowed on College property	Xpress portal provides access to: Intruder video, ALICE training recording, Safety Data Sheets, text alert system and Cleary Campus Safety and Crime Report.		
Redesign of reports: Incident of Concern for behavior/misconduct; Emergency non-medical for campus event tracking; Emergency medical for injury/illness.	Security services contracted for evenings and weekends and as needed during day hours.		

5R3. What are the results for ensuring effective management of operations on an ongoing basis and for the future?

The College routinely tracks a number of results related to operational effectiveness. These include progress on targets related to fiscal and technological performance, as well as targets related to the College's strategic plan. Additionally, the College monitors its complaint log, alert gallery

of removed people, and training of faculty and staff to respond to emergencies.

While, the College tracks a number of results related to its financial position and fiscal stewardship, some of the most significant are detailed in College scorecards for Strategic Priority #2: Expand and Diversify College Resources. See Table 4R2.A. for a summary of these results.

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These indicators demonstrate the strong financial health of the College in terms of improving or maintaining a satisfactory result in every area. This provides the College with insight into the importance of revenue diversification through the success of its grants program and the Foundation's recent Campaign for Excellence. Success is also demonstrated in Business and Community Solution's ability to raise revenues through its continuing education, industry certification, and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, while the College has developed training programs with businesses through the state 260E and F training programs for years, the College's recent goal to increase funds used at the College by businesses instead of with third-party trainers is paying off quickly, resulting in increased revenue to the College. An additional confirmation of these indicators is that the College received approval from voters for the continuation of its equipment and plant fund levies through 2019 and 2026 respectively.

The College scorecard for Strategic Priority #1: Develop and Implement an Instructional/Institutional Technology Master Plan provides results of the College's ability to maintain an effective technological operations. See Table 4R2.A. for a summary of these results.

While the CIS department is monitoring the system around the clock for problems as they arise, the demonstrated improvement in these long range targets provides the College community with the sense that the technological operations of the College are moving in the right direction. It also demonstrates exceptional growth in the confidence of staff and administrators at the College and points to the success of the Title III project and the new director of CIS in creating operational improvements that are felt by all.

Additional results related to operational effectiveness are outlined in the College scorecard for Strategic Priority #9: Enhance Our College Environment. See Table 4R2.A. for a summary of these results.

These results again demonstrate that the College is

improving its position related to security, sustainability, efficiency, and technology. In comparison to peers, a number of local entities are 100% Petal Project compliant in the College district, including a local College. This represents an opportunity for continued growth at the College.

Finally, related to emergency preparedness, the College has trained 225 employees in ALICE procedures. This is phenomenal for a College with approximately 300 full-time employees. Furthermore, all cabinet members, center staff, and those designated as public information officers in the College emergency plan (three per campus) are required to attend Public Information Officer training to learn how to respond to media, public inquiries, and law enforcement in an emergency situation. The College is 100% compliant in this requirement at this time.

Additionally, 2,130 faculty, staff and students have opted in to receive text alerts from the College in the event of an emergency. While the College would like all students and employees to opt in, it believes this is a strong subscription rate for the relatively new system. An opportunity also exists to continue promoting and providing instructions for students and employees to opt in via onboarding processes, hiring processes and ongoing promotion.

The College also monitors its alert gallery of students removed from campus temporarily or permanently as a way of evaluating trends in security. At this time, only two students exist in the gallery. This extremely sporadic activity, coupled with the minimal complaints filed against the College (See Table 2R4.A), demonstrates the security and safety of the NICC environment.

5I3. Based on 5R3, what improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

High administrative turnover often accompanies a period of transition in operational effectiveness. This is no different at NICC. Since the previous AQIP portfolio was submitted in 2010, NICC gained a new President, two new provosts, two new vice presidents, a new executive director of institutional

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effectiveness, and a new director of CIS. These are key operational positions of the College, and while NICC did experience a period of transition while previous processes and results were evaluated, the College feels it is now as strong as it has ever been operationally. It is worth noting that most these hires were internal, promoting stability among this time of change. These new leaders, all experienced in the AQIP philosophy in their former roles, spent considerable effort moving the College from ad-hoc processes to integrated processes that include built-in accountability, alignment with strategic goals, and tracking and reporting mechanisms.

Such improvements include:

- Business efficiency improvements including document imaging software, talent management software, online form submission capability, and student direct deposit through Higher One
- Technology improvements through migration to virtual desktop providing network access from any wireless location, expanded wireless capability on campuses, increased security measures, and revamped Helpdesk processes
- Sustainability and physical infrastructure improvements through sustainable land improvements, transition to safer cleaning products, scan card entry system, and online maintenance report filing and tracking
- Security and emergency preparedness improvements through ALICE training, an active ISO team, mandated public information officer training, text alert capability, security camera installation, and integrated processes related to emergency plans, training, communication, and incident command

While improvements in each of these areas will be ongoing, the College is pleased the transition in staff has resulted in stronger infrastructure to support facility processes.

One area for planned improvement is in the budgeting process. While the V7 process works well in many ways, one aspect the College continues to struggle with is how to separate requests for maintaining current operations from requests for making strategic improvements, the latter of which are the appropriate requests for V7. An ongoing

challenge is determining how much of available new funding should be budgeted for current operations that have increased costs and how much should go towards new endeavors.

Another area of financial operations the College is working to improve is developing a budget model that can be shared with the College community to educate them on the value of enrolling and retaining a student, the impact of state aid and auxiliary services, and the fixed expenditures that make up the bulk of the budget. The Quality Council Fiscal Stewardship team is leading this effort, which is one of the College's current strategic priorities for fiscal year 2015.

**AQIP Category Six: Quality Overview**

**INTRODUCTION**

A commitment to quality is the core of the Northeast Iowa Community College mission. This is supported by a value of innovation. With this combination of innovation and quality guiding its actions, the College is equipped to carry out the Continuous Quality Improvement culture and infrastructure that is the cornerstone of the AQIP philosophy.

The College began its relationship with AQIP in 2002. Since that time, passionate faculty and staff leaders have worked to institutionalize the spirit of AQIP into the planning, actions, and decision-making of the College. From ad-hoc working groups to a functioning Quality Council to a streamlined Quality Council, the culture of quality improvement driven by AQIP has grown and evolved with the College. From a reactive processes and minimal results, the College is pleased to find itself at an integrated state of maturity related to AQIP. While

the work is ongoing (AQIP is never done), the College is confident it has entered an era where AQIP, strategic planning, and data analysis are simply part of doing business at NICC.

The College has improved considerably since its last portfolio submission in 2010 in this category. Guided by the 2011 Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and subsequent Strategy Forum, high-impact Action Projects, and internal reorganization, the College is well underway to continued improvements in its quality culture and processes.

The College’s responses in the *Quality Overview* category will inform readers of processes, results and improvements related to quality improvement initiatives and a culture of quality

The following table provides a self-assessment of where the NICC rates the growth of maturity in its process and results since 2010, as well as key initiatives and changes that have driven improvement in this category and related AQIP Action Projects where applicable.

<b>Maturity of Process</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Integrated
<b>Maturity of Results</b>	2010: Systematic 2014: Aligned
<b>Significant Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring of executive director of institutional effectiveness to chair Quality Council</li> <li>• Restructure of Quality Council from nine to four work teams with a chair reporting to Quality Council, which are aligned with the College’s strategic plan</li> <li>• Alignment of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiative submission process with departmental goal-setting process college-wide, aligned with strategic priorities of the College</li> <li>• Refinement of CQI process over three years to align with College’s academic and fiscal years and provide an online submission and reporting framework</li> </ul>
<b>Related AQIP Action Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed: College-wide Assessment Plan</li> </ul>

The College’s efforts in the *Quality* category in the next one to three years will focus on ongoing professional development for faculty and staff as they develop, deploy, and assess CQIs. The Quality Council teams will also work to develop AQIP Action Projects that both further the College’s next strategic plan (in progress) and fill gaps addressed in the next Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. It is the goal of the College to move towards AQIP processes that are fully integrated from the College’s strategic planning and annual goal-setting processes.

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES**

6P1. Quality Improvement Initiatives focus on the Continuous Quality Improvement initiatives the institution is engaged in and how they work together within the institution. Describe the processes for determining, and integrating CQI initiatives, and who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for

**Selecting, Deploying and Evaluating Quality Improvement Initiatives**

Today, continuous quality improvement initiatives are something NICC lives and breathes, as opposed to an activity only the AQIP Quality Council teams select and carry out. The College believes that the AQIP philosophy is a best practice mechanism for assessing, planning and implementation of improvements college-wide.

As described at length in 4P2, NICC operates under a strategic planning process closely aligned with mission and vision of the College, as well as annual goal-setting to engage the College community at a grassroots level in achieving common goals. Under the strategic plan, the College develops strategic priorities each year, which form the targets from which the quality improvements of the College are developed (5D1, 5D2).

While some of these improvement initiatives are undertaken by AQIP Quality Council teams, they are more often than not owned by active committees and teams developed intentionally to meet a strategic goal of the College. These include the retention committee, success model committee, strategic enrollment management committee, student learning outcomes committee, etc. Many of these improvement initiatives become formal AQIP Action Projects. Those selected for AQIP Action Projects tend to be those improvement initiatives with a scope that goes beyond a single department. However, all improvement initiatives, whether formalized into an

Action Project or not are expected to follow a continuous improvement model, which includes a rationale grounded in evidence, formation of appropriate project team, development of project timeline, evaluation design (including baseline and targets, and assessment processes). Improvement initiatives not reported to HLC are reported internally through the College’s annual goal-setting and reporting process and through institutional scorecards maintained by the institutional effectiveness office.

**Aligning the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Quality Check-up, and Strategy Forums**

Under the direction of the executive director of institutional effectiveness, processes related to the Systems Portfolio, Action Projects, Quality Check-Up and Strategy Forum have become aligned and centralized. For example, AQIP Action Projects provide results and improvement examples for the Systems Portfolio. Similarly, areas identified as opportunities in the Systems Appraisal become topics for the College to delve into through Strategy Forums. The College intends for the Quality Check-Up to provide an evaluation mechanism for the College’s AQIP growth over the new 8-year cycle.

6R1. What are the results for continuous quality improvement initiatives?

As described in 4P1, all departments are invited annually to submit quality improvement initiatives (called goals) during a college-wide goal-setting process, implemented in 2011. This process has been enhanced over three years and finally moved to an online form system allowing for easier aggregate reporting of results. The College’s Quality Council strategy team oversees the mechanics of this process and all quality teams evaluate the goals and outcomes submitted. Table 6R1.A details results on these submissions for fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2014 to date

**Table 6R1.A. Results of Departmental CQIs (fiscal year 2013 and 2014)**

Indicator	FY14	FY15
CQIs Submitted	104	64
CQIs related to Retention/Completion priority	51	44
CQIs related to Enrollment priority	44	17

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CQIs related to Graduate Placement priority	N/A	5
CQIs related to Tuition Freeze priority	23	N/A
CQIs related to Educating College Community on Budget Model	N/A	4
CQIs reported as successful/closed	24	*
CQIs reported as ongoing	55	*
CQIs waiting for data to report	19	*
CQIs reported as unsuccessful	2	*
CQIs not reported on/abandoned	2	*
% of departments who submitted goals	77%	85%

\*CQIs will be reported on in September of 2015.

A couple of key insights emerge from these early results. One is that, while the Quality Council is pleased with the strong participation by departments, it would like to see 100% participation. This has been improved since FY13 by requiring supervisors to approve and forward the goals submitted. Another insight is that a number of CQIs (55 in FY14) could not be completed in the timeframe submitted by the department and, thus, couldn't be closed or reported on at close of the cycle. While this is understandable, it also points to an opportunity to improve education and training around setting realistic and attainable goals.

A second result that College monitors is faculty and staff perception of the role that Quality Council plays in strategic planning and the AQIP process. NICC asked Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) to customize its survey to include this item. Results are detailed in Table 6R1.B.

**Table 6R1.B. 2011 and 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Quality Council**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
The NICC Quality Council plays an important role in strategic planning and the AQIP process	4.11	3.39	0.72	4.03	3.62	0.41

Results show that the gap between faculty and staff ranked importance and satisfaction with the Quality Council shrank significantly from 2011 to 2014 at a statistically significant level, meaning that it is because of College efforts and not chance. This has reinforced the College's commitment to engaging its internal stakeholders intentionally in planning processes of the College. Another insight is that the ranked importance of Quality Council itself shrank slightly. One possible explanation is that the College has been working intentionally to move AQIP

processes out of isolation within AQIP teams to be part of the broader College discussion about quality. Because this item was customized for NICC, there is no peer comparison.

Finally, the College tracks completion and the results of AQIP Action Projects as they relate to quality improvements at the College. Table 6R1.C. details these projects submitted (and completed) since 2010.

**Table 6R1.C. Recent AQIP Action Project and Improvements to College Quality**

Project	Years Active	Results
Improving a College-wide assessment plan	2011-2014	1) creation of college scorecards to measure strategic priorities 2) development of program metrics to engage deans in retention and enrollment discussions
Create systematic information security program	2011-2012	1) information security team established 2) systematic process of ongoing information security training and education in place 3) new security best practices implemented

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Monitoring and improving employee satisfaction	2011-2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) improved communication across College through presidential forums</li> <li>2) cabinet participation in leadership training, which included emphasis on importance of communication</li> <li>3) transition to interest based bargaining model instead of traditional model</li> <li>4) improved hiring process with integration of talent management software</li> <li>5) institutionalized CESS (employee satisfaction) survey every three years</li> </ol>
Assess Written Communication	2011-2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) collected 3 semesters of pre- and post-data by close of project</li> <li>2) established use of common rubric for assessment of writing</li> <li>3) development of faculty toolbox of assessment tools and best practices for incorporating writing into curriculum</li> </ol>

These results provide the College with an overarching picture of its progress related to quality improvements since its last portfolio was submitted in 2010. Insights indicate clear progression of NICC from reactive processes to aligned, intentional processes, specifically in areas related to assessment, security, and employee relations. Current Action Projects (Evaluate Student Onboarding, Improve Placement Processes, and Measure Student Learning Outcomes) continue this focus on integrated process implementation.

6I1. Based on 6R1, what quality improvement initiatives have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

NICC has been successful in a number of quality improvement initiatives, both through AQIP Action Projects (detailed in 6R1) and through internal CQIs. As referenced in 6R1.A., 24 CQIs submitted in FY14 were deemed successful by departments. A sampling of these successful improvements and results are detailed in Table 6I1.A.

**Table 6I1.A. Recent Quality Improvements through CQI Process**

Goal	Department	Result	Next Steps
Development and implementation of new student advising survey for new students after their initial face-to-face advising appointment	Advising	Comprehensive Student Services Satisfaction Survey created, including advising, and administered spring 2014	Continue tracking student satisfaction with Advising from a baseline of 69% satisfied on spring 2014 survey
Keep FY14 College subsidy to the Center within 3% of FY 13 to contribute to College ability to freeze tuition	Child Development Center	Goal met; utilized work studies to manage staff costs and increased sales 9% to cover salary and benefit increases	Maintain goal for FY15
Increase community awareness of College's enology and viticulture programs by completing 4 informational visits in FY14 and attending 3 recruitment events	Arts and Sciences: Enology and Viticulture	The enology coordinator exceeded goal and participated in 6 recruitment events and visited 4 vineyards in FY14	The enology coordinator is exploring more efficient means of reaching out to the high school population in 2015
Reduce reported data inaccuracies by publication of a data book	Institutional Effectiveness	The Blue Book was created and made available to faculty and staff in January 2014	Update annually and develop survey to track usage; monitor data inaccuracies found internally or externally
Within one year, PAVE staff will enroll students who display career/vocational readiness in college or vocational level courses	PAVE (alternative high school at NICC)	Of 25 PAVE students in FY14, 8% graduated from high school and NICC concurrently and 20% plan to return to NICC in fall 2014	Continue to increase College participation of PAVE students.
Offer 150 new courses annually	Business and Community Solutions	247 new courses offered (5% of total) in FY14	Continue goal of 150 new courses annually

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The breadth of CQIs in Table 611.A shows that engagement in the AQIP model is not isolated to only academic departments. Instead, the whole College is engaged in working towards common goals set forth in its strategic plan and focused on specific priorities set by the President's cabinet annually.

The CQI process has improved greatly since implemented in 2011. This includes moving the submission and reporting timeline of the goals to September through September. This has increased the number of goals with measurable data to report. The College also changed the reporting form so departments have to indicate specific fiscal year priorities they are working towards, rather than more general strategic plan priorities. This helped departments submit more targeted, measurable initiatives. Finally, Quality Council assigned a supervisor approval step to the process, which increased the number of goals submitted from 40 in FY13 to more than 100 in FY14. Nonetheless, the College still hopes to move closer to its internal target of 100% departmental participation with continued education and process enhancements. Improvements will include:

- Additional training with supervisors by Quality Council teams regarding the CQI model, specifically in setting attainable, measurable goals
- Ongoing communication of goals and progress via the Friday Takeout internal newsletters and other means

Other future quality improvements, some of which will likely become Action Projects, include the following:

- Educate the College community on financial impact of enrolling and retaining students in various programs
- Analyze cost of College activities and benchmark with other institutions through the Maximizing Resources project
- Complete and evaluate environment scan (last one completed in 2007)
- Consider how to manage student onboarding from inquiry to enrollment through comprehensive customer relationship management system

- Implement international education opportunities with NICC
- Increase partnerships with K-12 districts in career planning, developmental education, and faculty development

While these initiatives have already been discussed, the College's fiscal year 2016-2018 strategic plan (in development) will lead future improvement initiatives through the development of annual priorities to fulfill the plan.

**CULTURE OF QUALITY**

6P2. Culture of Quality focuses on how the institution integrates continuous quality improvement into its culture. Describe how a culture of quality is ensured within the institution. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for:

**Developing an Infrastructure and Providing Resources to Support a Culture of Quality**

The NICC commitment to a culture of quality is clear in its organizational infrastructure. In 2013, it reorganized a dean's position to create the institutional effectiveness department. Rather than simply expanding data reporting capabilities, this office is tasked with communicating the elements of a culture of quality both internally and externally to enhance the culture of quality overall. These elements include data, quantitative and qualitative results, best practices, strategic planning, and mission and vision. For this reason, the department includes marketing and communication and grants, as well as institutional research. This department also leads the AQIP processes, although these also occur at a grassroots levels through the College (5D1, 5D2).

In addition to talent infrastructure, the College also invests in benchmarking projects, surveys, and other analytic tools (detailed in 5R1.A.) to ensure data is widely available and usable for consumers.

**Ensuring CQI is Making an Evident and Widely Understood Impact on Culture and Operations**

Since 2010, and its last portfolio submission, NICC has made great strides in communicating its quality

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improvement philosophy and communication results widely. This includes the following (5D1, 5D2):

- Showcasing successful CQIs at the College's All College Day event
- Widely distributing College scorecards on strategic priorities (See Table 4R2.A.)
- Communicating College annual priorities via college-wide goal-setting, convocation, Presidential forums, and faculty workshop days

**Ensuring the College Learns from its Experiences with CQI Initiatives to Review, Reaffirm, and Understand the Role and Vitality of the AQIP Pathway within the Institution**

While the College certainly affirms the value of the AQIP pathway, NICC has learned from experience with CQI processes that the AQIP philosophy should be seamless within the College's mission and values. For this reason, the College strategically works to make continuous improvement simply a part of its culture, and in doing so, the AQIP Pathway is not something separate the College does for accreditation. Instead, if the College is living continuous improvement in daily operation, accreditation will provide a positive, valuable evaluation that the College is meeting this goal.

In this integrated approach, AQIP Action Projects should assist the College in carrying out its strategic plan, the portfolio will detail progress and evidence

to date in the cycle, the strategy forums will provide technical assistance for particularly challenging areas, and the quality check-up should provide an opportunity to affirm the College's success at meeting its intentions for planning and improvement.

**6R2. What are the results for continuous quality improvement to evidence a culture of quality?**

Evidence of a culture of quality at the College, can be inferred by strong participation in department submission of annual goals (CQIs). Results from the past two years of this process are detailed in 6R1.A.

Additionally, the College now maintains, updates and shares internally scorecards on each of its strategic priorities. While these show both areas of strengths and weakness at the College, their transparency and communication evidence the culture of quality the College is promoting. Scorecard results are shared in Table 4R2.A.

While reports and participation do evidence a culture of quality, the College believes it is most critical to look at what employees themselves think regarding elements of a culture of quality at NICC. Based on the Noel-Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) results from 2011 and 2014, this culture is evident to faculty and staff at NICC. Tables 6R2.A and B. detail survey results.

**Table 6R2.A. 2011 to 2014 Comparison of CESS Results Related to Culture of Quality**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	2011			2014		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.54	3.09	1.45	4.69	4.02	0.67
This institution plans carefully	4.56	3.10	1.46	4.49	3.58	0.91
Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution	4.43	3.33	1.11	4.51	3.94	0.57

In each measure that points to a culture of quality detailed above the gap between faculty and staff ranked importance and satisfaction shrunk by a statistically significant level from 2011 to 2014.

**Table 6R2.B. Comparison of NICC to peers for CESS Results Related to Culture of Quality**

RATE IMPORTANCE (1 = "Not important at all" / 5 = "Very important") AND SATISFACTION (1 = "Not satisfied at all" / 5 = "Very satisfied")	Northeast Iowa CC			Comparison group		
	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP
The leadership of this institution has a clear sense of purpose	4.69	4.02	0.67	4.58	3.25	1.33
This institution plans carefully	4.49	3.58	0.91	4.51	3.12	1.39
Efforts to improve quality are paying off at this institution	4.51	3.94	0.57	4.47	3.34	1.13

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Another value of using the CESS survey to ascertain this data is the availability to include a comparison group of like colleges. Based on the comparison of the same elements in 2014, NICC achieved higher satisfaction than its peers in every measure and a much smaller gap between importance and satisfaction. Once again, these differences were determined to be statistically significant as a result of systems and processes in place at NICC to promote a campus culture of quality improvement.

6I2. Based on 6R2, what improvements to the quality culture have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years?

Since 2010, the College has worked diligently to bring evidence of quality improvements into the open through integrated processes, including:

- the beginning of a system to measure student learning outcomes led by a pilot to assess written communication (now closed Action Project)
- development of scorecards to measure each of the College's strategic priorities (now closed Action Project)
- a comprehensive annual goal-setting process to engage all faculty and staff in continuous quality improvement (result of Strategy Forum feedback)
- development on an institutional effectiveness department
- ongoing internal communication regarding quality improvements and processes

Despite the strong results demonstrated from the CESS survey, the College believes there is room for improvement. It would particularly like to improve faculty and staff satisfaction and engagement with the College's planning processes. One way it is currently addressing this is through its new strategic planning process. Through this process, the College has intentionally incorporated employee feedback from spring 2014's All College Day, presented the plan framework in open forums and dedicated the 2015 All College Day to engaging faculty and staff in developing strategies and improvement plans for the new strategic plan, resulting in substantive contributions.

Another area for improvement is the process for submitting and tracking departmental continuous quality improvement initiatives, known as the annual goal-setting process. The College is still challenged to truly integrate this process into the fabric of department's work so it is not seen as "busy work" or an add on. NICC knows its departments are engaged in continuous improvement, so the question remains how best to capture and communicate these initiatives to evidence a culture of quality.

Finally, the College is well aware of continued weaknesses or gaps in core processes related to assessment. The primary focus of the Quality Council Student Learning Year since 2014 has been developing a comprehensive system of assessing common learning outcomes. While the College has made great improvements in this area since the 2010 portfolio, piloting a College-wide writing assessment and revising its institutional learning outcomes (CLOs), its work is not complete. The team looks forward to integrating these processes in more depth.