



Riverland Community College Portfolio Institutional Overview

01. Distinctive institutional features

Riverland Community College (RCC) is a public-supported, non-profit, two-year, comprehensive community college. It is a member college of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU), governed by a state Board of Trustees, and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. RCC offers programs including three-month certificates, two-year associate degrees and transfer curriculum, and customized non-credit courses.

In 1996, RCC resulted from merging Austin Community College, Minnesota Riverland Technical College-Austin, and South Central Technical College-Albert Lea. Austin Community College began in 1951 as Austin Junior College; Austin Technical College began in 1940 as Austin Area Vocational Technical Institute and moved to a location near Austin Junior College in 1972. South Central Technical College-Albert Lea originated as a Manpower Development and Training Center in 1965. In 1968, the Center became designated a Vocational-Technical School, and the following year, the Albert Lea Vocational-Technical Institute was constructed.

The original Owatonna Higher Education Center, established in 1986, provided customized training services to businesses and industries. In 2001, collaboration between RCC, the Owatonna Economic Development Authority and the city, local business and industry, and other partnering colleges resulted in the Owatonna College & University Center (OCUC). The Center, managed by RCC, accommodates the higher education needs of residents and employees of the Owatonna and Steele County area.

The college serves about 10,000 students in a rural population base of 150,000 people in southeastern Minnesota. The one campus in Austin (population 24,000) and one campus in Albert Lea (population 18,000), along with the Center in Owatonna (population 23,000) provide higher education services and within 45 mile radius of Austin and Albert Lea. The economic base is farming and manufacturing dominated by food processing.

RCC recently completed the strategic planning process (June 05). The following was adopted by Administration, Faculty and Staff:

Mission: Riverland is a regional comprehensive community college improving learning for living through a personalized educational environment.

Vision: Riverland will be the regional leader in higher education and an essential link to economic and social vitality. Riverland will be recognized for excellence in learning through innovation, responsiveness, resourcefulness and collaboration.

Values (Institution Goals):

- Above all else, we value people.
- We value learning.
- We value personalized services, affordability, and access.
- We value honesty, mutual respect, integrity, and personal responsibility.
- We value diversity and inclusiveness.
- We value a culture of inquiry, assessment, and collaboration.
- We value the provision of technology and equipment that enhances learning and the delivery of services.
- We value fiscal responsibility and the development of new financial resources.
- We value community, workforce, and economic development.

02. Scope of educational offerings

RCC offers more than 50 career programs and 32 transfer programs. In 2003-2004, 10,700 credit and noncredit students accessed both educational cultural programs. Three degrees -- Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Sciences – are awarded. RCC also offers certifications that range from three to nine months in length. Developmental education, English Language Learning, lifelong learning, and training for business development also serve the needs of the three communities.

The following are the current educational opportunities available to RCC students: Transfer Degrees (first two years of a four-year degree): Associate in Arts degree (AA), Associate in Fine Arts degree (AFA) in music and theater, Associate in Science degree (AS) in business, corrections, human services, law enforcement, and nursing. Sixteen credits of programs transfer to MnSCU Colleges. The average placement rate of 90-92% is an indication that RCC program offerings meet the regional workforce needs.

<u>Career Degrees (Associate in Applied Science) AAS</u>	
Accounting	Legal Administrative Assistant
Administrative Assistant	Medical Administrative Assistant
Applied Technology	Radiography
Automotive Service Technology	Surgical Technology
Computer Technology	Supervisory Management
E-Commerce	Diesel Technology
Electronics Manufacturing Technology	

<u>Diplomas</u>	
Accounting	Criminal Justice (Corrections)
Accounting Clerk	Diesel Technology-Agriculture
Administrative Assistant	Diesel Technology-Commercial
Automotive Service Technology	Electronics Manufacturing Technology
Carpentry Technology	Farm Business Management
Collision Repair Technology	Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance
Computer Networking (Electronic)	Information Processing Secretary
Computer Numerical Control Operator	Legal Administrative Assistant
Computer Numerical Control Specialist	Legal Secretary
Computerized Small Business Management	Medical Administrative Assistant

Construction Electrician	Medical Secretary
Cosmetology	Practical Nursing
	Small Business Management

<u>Certificates</u>	
Advanced Farm Business Management	Medical Receptionist
Advanced Medical Transcription Specialist	Microsoft Database Administrator
Basic Supervision	Microsoft Office Specialist
Computer Applications	Microsoft Office Expert
CISCO Network Associate	Microsoft Office Master
CNC Programming Specialist	Microsoft Systems Administrator
Commodity Marketing	Microsoft System Engineer
Desktop Publishing	Multimedia
Fundamentals of Network Security	Network Cabling Specialist
Fundamentals of Wireless LANS	Receptionist/Clerk
Health Unit Coordinator	Supervisory Leadership
Human Resource Development	Truck Driving
Legal Receptionist	Web Page Design
Medical Insurance and Coding	Welding

Other options include developmental education (reading, English, and mathematics), training for business and industry, English Language Learning, Elderhostel, and continuing education.

The Support Services include counseling/career centers, financial aid, Student Success Centers, onsite childcare, student housing, and bookstore.

Other opportunities available to students include athletics, fine arts, Phi Theta Kappa, Student Ambassadors, and Student Senate.

03. Student Base

Most RCC students (67 percent) originate from the food-processing communities of Albert Lea and Austin in counties where the average per capita and household incomes are 25 to 30 percent lower than state averages, and rates are rising. New residents and political refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Mexico, Central America, and Bosnia have been attracted to Freeborn, Mower, and Steele counties. Many are now pursuing education at RCC. From 1997 to 2003, underrepresented minority students increased from .05 to nine percent of the student body.

With a Fall 2004 enrollment of 2,332 full-time equivalent (FTE), 956 (41%) attended full-time and 1,376 (59%) attended part-time. Female students make up 52% of the student body while male students make up 48%.

Age of Freshman Students

<u>Younger than 21</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>26 – 30</u>	<u>9%</u>
<u>21 – 25</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>Over 30</u>	<u>33%</u>

Enrollment by Campus

(Approximately 60% attend part-time and 40% full-time at each site)

<u>Austin –</u>	<u>2617</u>
<u>Albert Lea –</u>	<u>1136</u>
<u>Owatonna –</u>	<u>603</u>

To determine new programs and courses, the college utilizes information from the students, faculty members, advisory committees, local businesses and industry, local high schools, transfer institutions including state universities, and community needs.

Credits sold from 2001 to 2004

<u>Year</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Non-credits</u>
<u>FY-2001</u>	<u>60,030</u>	<u>20,921</u>
<u>FY-2002</u>	<u>68,280</u>	<u>34,380</u>
<u>FY-2003</u>	<u>75,510</u>	<u>29,899</u>
<u>FY-2004</u>	<u>80,790</u>	<u>33,800</u>

Riverland has increased access to students is available through online activity. OCUC has also added increased access. Expanded institutional research will also help to address student needs.

04. Collaborations

RCC has many collaborative relationships. Area high schools provide the majority of the College's traditional students. RCC also offers concurrent classes in five area high schools: Albert Lea; Austin; Alden-Conger; Glenville-Emmons; and New Richland, Hartland, Ellendale and Geneva (NRHEG). This opportunity allows the students to take college-level courses without leaving their high school building. High school students can also take college courses at RCC in their junior and senior year through the Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program through the State of Minnesota. For Fall Semester 2004, there were 439 students in the concurrent classes and another 224 students in the PSEO program.

RCC has worked, along with the other MnSCU colleges, to develop the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Included courses transfer to the four-year state universities. When new courses become part of the curriculum, thorough research ensures that they will transfer to the state universities. These courses provide a seamless transfer to a four-year state university. Articulation agreements exist between RCC and several MnSCU and other colleges.

Local employers are involved in the collaborative efforts. Viracon (an international glass fabricator) non-MnSCU University offers two RCC classes each semester at their manufacturing plant in Owatonna. The company provides tuition, books, and release time for employees. Wegner Corporation (a portable stage and sound system manufacturer in Owatonna) has worked with RCC to expand product options to their

customers. Bridon Cordage (Albert Lea, MN) worked with the college to provide accounting training for their lead operators and supervisors.

Riverland Center for Training and Development (RTD) works closely with local businesses and industry to assess needs and train employees. The Business Management Education Program work on-site at farms and small businesses to help students learn business and financial management.

The RCC Foundation is the fund-raising branch of the institution. It was established as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization in 1976. The Foundation Board of Directors, comprised of 17 community leaders, donate their time and work with staff to support the College's mission and vision. The mission of the RCC Foundation is to raise, manage, and distribute resources to support, enhance, and promote the educational opportunities RCC offers the people of the region. In the past five years, the Foundation and its supporters have given \$296,700 in student scholarships and program support grants.

05. Faculty and staff base (2005)

RCC currently employs 97 full-time and 105 part-time faculty members, 93 full and 18 part-time support staff, and 10 administrators. In addition, 149 students work for the College. Of the full-time teaching faculty, seven hold a doctorate degree, 46 hold a master's degree, 14 hold a bachelor's degree, five hold an associate's degree, three hold certificates, and 17 hold diplomas.

The Minnesota State College Faculty Association represents the full and part-time faculty members. Six other units represent the staff members at RCC. They include Middle Management Association (MMA), Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Excluded Administrator, Managerial, and Confidential.

06. Facilities and technology

The College's Austin campus consists of the East and West buildings. In 1993, a major renovation to the East building updated technology and library facilities. Another renovation in 2000 to the West building updated this facility, including a walkway between the two buildings. The Owatonna College and University Center, built in 2001, was a combined effort of RCC, local businesses, the community, and other higher education partners. Austin East is approximately 169,000 square feet, Austin West is 181,000 square feet, Albert Lea is 142,000 square feet, and the Owatonna Center is approximately 24,000 square feet.

The College has a (FY 05) \$27.6 million operating budget, which includes \$3.7 million in financial aid and scholarships. Revenue comes from tuition and state apportionment. The state is experiencing financial difficulties, which is influencing RCC's funding.

As the use of personal computers has grown, the number of computers has also grown at RCC. Approximately 165 full-time and part-time faculty members have a personal

computer connected to a local area network available in their work area. Student computer labs with an average capacity of 24 have expanded to 10 labs with three in Austin East, two in Austin West, two in Albert Lea, and three in Owatonna. RCC offers courses via distance learning. Interactive Television (ITV) and the Internet (online) are the main systems used. In 2002-2003, 324 students participated in eight online classes. During Fall Semester 2004, Desire2Learn (D2L), a software program that MnSCU adopted for the next five years, was the platform used for 25 online classes.

Individual college programs collaborate and receive accreditation from the following organizations:

- RCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of College and Schools.
- The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program is accredited by the National League for Nursing and is approved by the Minnesota State Board of Nursing. (In March 2005, ADN was recommended for eight years accreditation by NLN.)
- The Automotive Services program is certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifies the instructors.
- The Construction Electrician program is accredited by the Minnesota State Board of Electricity.
- The Cosmetology program is mandated and licensed by the Minnesota Department of Commerce.
- The Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program is approved by the Minnesota State Board of Nursing.
- The Radiography program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology.

RCC's commitment to public health and safety include providing a safe and healthy campus environment, ensuring the rights of students to learn, providing data to students to help them become informed consumers, and helping students meet the college's expectation of appropriate behavior and conduct.

07. Competitive environment

RCC's competitors include some of the 32 other state community colleges, technical colleges, and regional state universities, along with the University of Minnesota. Competition also comes from private institutions located in southern Minnesota and in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and from online institutions such as the University of Phoenix.

08. Key opportunities and vulnerabilities

RCC face many challenges, and these led to three AQIP Action Plans. These included:

- Decision Making.
- Helping Students Learn.
- External Communications.

Key vulnerabilities for RCC:

- Decreased state funding and increased legislative mandates.
- Increased number of students unprepared for college courses in English and math.
- Developing services for new residents and political refugees coming to this area.
- Developing new programs that will meet the needs of students and employers.

Key strengths that allow RCC to translate these vulnerabilities into opportunities:

- Implementation of the Master Facilities Plan to review and evaluate the buildings needs now and in the future.
- Development of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.
- Development and updating the faculty and staff website.
- Development of a Writing Center on the Austin campus to help students who lack the needed skills.
- Development of the Master Academic Plan.
- Development of the Strategic Plan.

Summary Statement

The data collection, analysis, writing and re-writing of the portfolio has been a collaborative experience involving many individuals at RCC. Individuals from all areas of the College have contributed to make the study representative of the institution's strengths and weaknesses. This discovery will allow the college to continuously work to improve RCC in the future.

Criterion #1 Helping Students Learn

1C1 Common student learning objectives

Common learning objectives, based on the Mission, Vision, and Value Statements, developed with input from the entire college become the basis for learning. (1P1). See Institutional Overview 01.

Program plans for all occupational and career programs and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) for liberal arts students ensure that all students receive an education matching the Mission, Vision and Value Statements. The MnTC commits all public colleges and universities in MN to a broad educational foundation that integrates a body of knowledge and skills with a study of contemporary concerns. To complete the MnTC, students must meet credit requirements in each of the five discipline areas

- Communications.
- Humanities and Fine Arts.
- Social Sciences.
- Natural Sciences.
- Mathematical/Logical Reasoning.

and must also include at least one course in each of the five thematic areas

- Critical Thinking.
- Ethical and Civic Responsibility.
- Human Diversity.
- Global Perspective.
- People and the Environment.

As a result of taking the MnTC courses, the students are expected to demonstrate compliance in all of the above common student learning objectives.

Course outlines are available on the common I-drive to insure those full-time and adjunct faculty are aware of the objectives of the course. Transfer courses must fit into the appropriate program or discipline areas of the MnTC. As of June 2005, course goals and objectives are available for faculty to ensure necessary material will be part of a given class.

1C2 Aligning learning with mission

RCC has several methods of ensuring that student learning aligns with the college's mission. The most important is the Academic Affairs and Standards Council. The department or program must present all additions or changes for approval from the AASC before a degree, program, or class becomes part of the curriculum. (Section 1P2.)

This council's members are responsible for preserving the academic integrity of the college.

Program Review is another way RCC works to keep student learning aligned with the mission of the college. On a three-year-rotation, which includes all programs, faculty present a thorough examination of their program to a panel of administrators and faculty (Section 1P6). Currently RCC is in its second round of program reviews.

Each career program at RCC has an Advisory Board. These boards, composed of community members currently involved in the career, meet on a semi-annual schedule and review the current curriculum. They also provide input on career trends, and many board members employ RCC graduates.

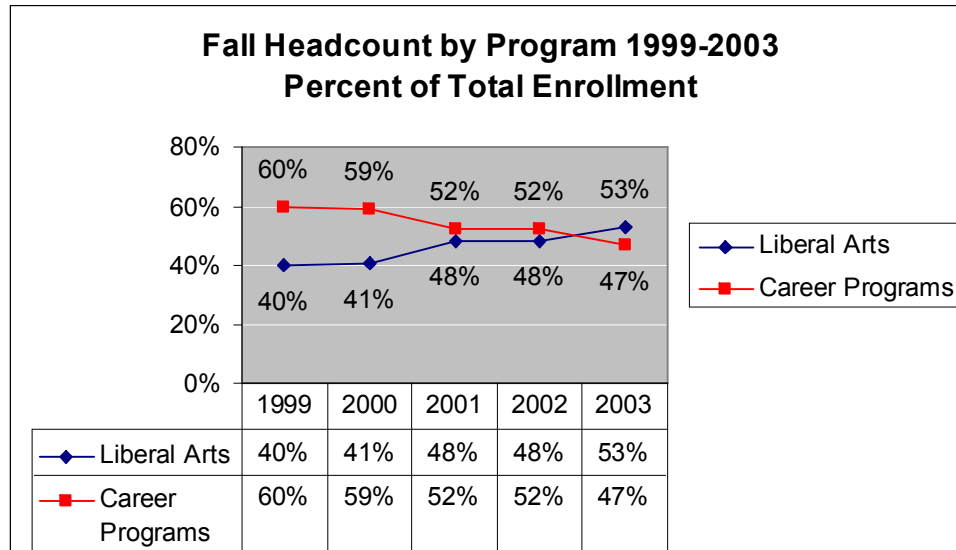
Faculty Conference Days, guaranteed by the contract, give faculty members an opportunity to discuss curriculum and teaching practices every semester. Faculty and guest speakers lead most sessions. The focus of Conference Days is not only for administrators to communicate with faculty, but also for faculty to communicate with each other. Faculty Development funds are available for current members in their fields enabling them to align the curriculum with the mission of the college.

1C3 Key instructional programs and methods

RCC grants associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to verify the successful completion of programs of study. Associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates include

- Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) in music and theatre, Associate in Arts (AA), and 72 transfer and pre-professional programs. Students who successfully complete a liberal arts and sciences curriculum designed to constitute the first two years of a four-year degree program receive either AFA or AA Degrees.
- Associate in Science (AS) in five programs. Students who successfully complete a program, which transfers to a major in a scientific or technical field, receive an AS Degree.
- Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in 13 programs. Students who successfully complete a program primarily intended to prepare for employment receive an AAS Degree.
- Twenty-five programs award diplomas. Students who successfully complete programs intended to provide entry-level employment skills or upgraded employment skills receive a diploma.
- Thirty-one programs award certificates. Students who successfully complete a specialized academic or occupational program of study receive a certificate.

Key instructional programs include transfer programs and career programs. According to the Enrollment Management Report of July 2004, a past trend shows a growth of liberal arts enrollment and a decline in career program enrollment.



The following chart lists the top eight career programs for the past four years:

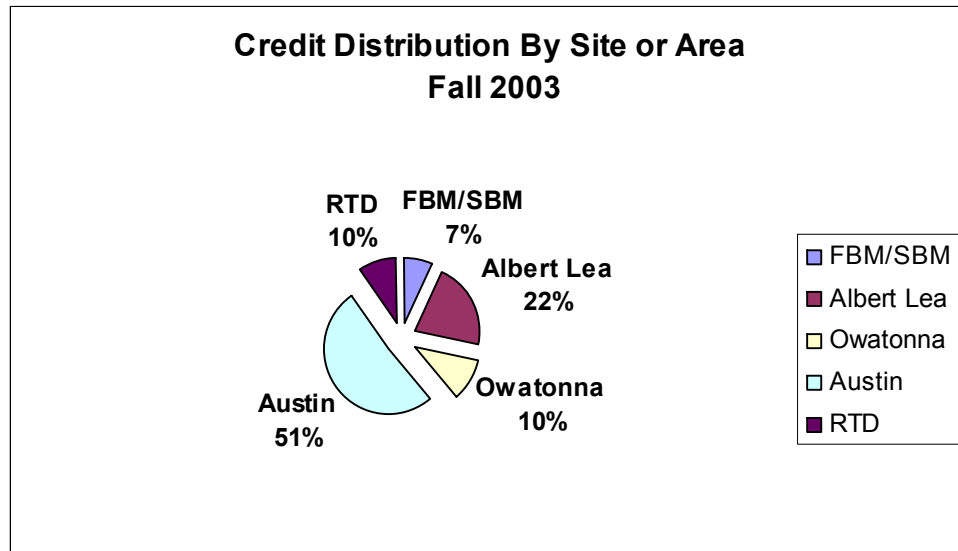
Headcount				
Career	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Farm Business Management	524	545	565	525
Construction Electrician	126	145	156	151
A.D. Nursing	92	128	144	144
Computer Technology	68	61	70	95
Supervisory Management	65	75	103	114
LPN	50	58	77	81
Cosmetology	48	57	56	55
Law Enforcement	44	69	57	53

Of the transfer programs offered, the following are the highest five FY 2004 profile enrollments.

Department	Credit Hours	FYE
English	6746	225
Biology	4143	138
Psychology	3763	125
Math	3662	122
History	1950	65

Riverland Training and Development (RTD) is also a key instructional program. RTD provides professional development in a variety of areas and with a variety of methods. From computers and technology to health and wellness to leadership and management, RTD offers training to fit the needs of the college service area. Small groups, individuals, or entire businesses may set up their training with CEUs, hourly training, and

credit-based training with either on-site or online delivery. RTD makes up approximately 10% of the total credit distribution. Over the past five years, RTD has doubled in numbers of credits sold as shown by the following chart.



Delivery of these key instructional programs varies as much as the programs. From a more traditional lecture type of classroom to a total online class, RCC strives to provide a variety of learning experiences to fit the students served. (Section 1P7)

From the fall of 2000 to the fall of 2004, online class delivery has increased from one class to 31 classes and from 24 students to 483 students.

Session	Number of Classes	Total Headcount
Fall 2000	1	24
Fall 2001	8	149
Fall 2002	10	168
Fall 2003	19	403
Fall 2004	31	483

Smart classrooms and web enhanced classes help combine traditional and contemporary technologies to provide students a wide range of learning opportunities. The Riverland Technology Plan supports the RCC Value Statements:

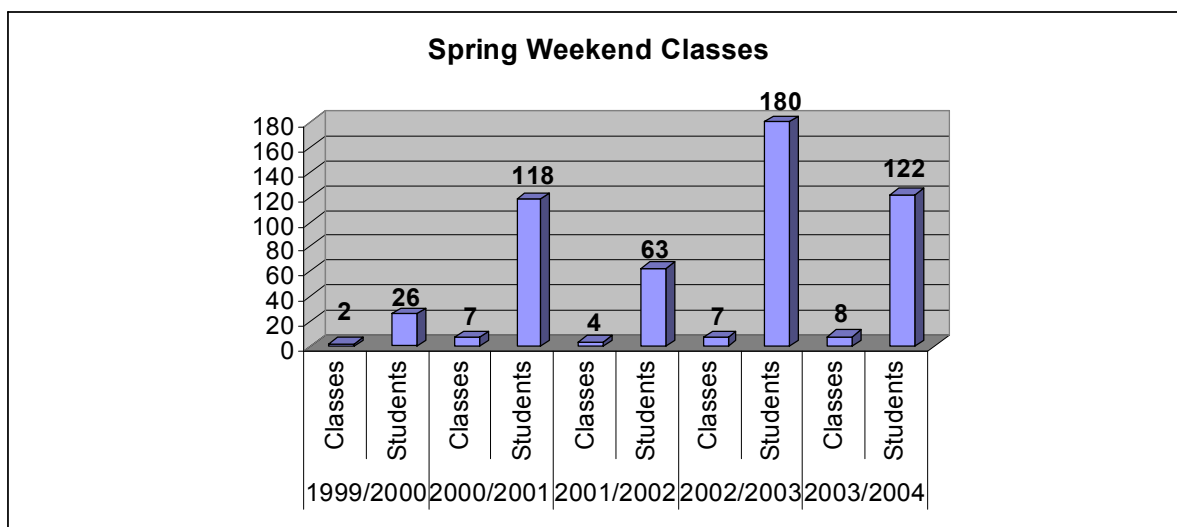
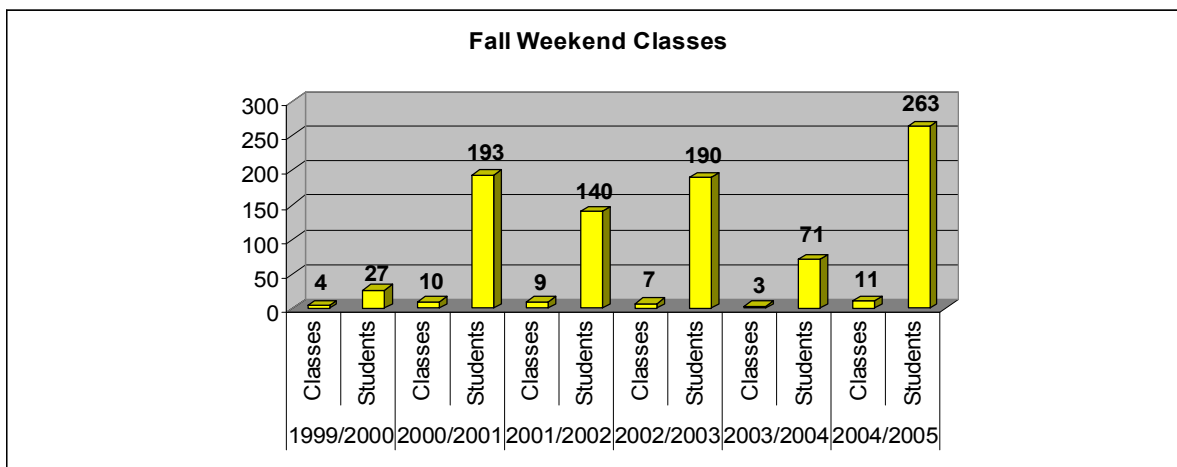
- *We value the provision of technology and equipment that enhances delivery of instruction and services.*

A library for quiet study, combined with computer labs, provides students with facilities to keep pace with classroom assignments and research.

Computer availability for students	
Austin campus	128
Albert Lea campus	100
Owatonna	70

Anecdotal evidence from MIS staff shows that demand for technology in the labs rises every year, and computer labs are full most weekdays.

To help serve both traditional and nontraditional students and their busy schedules, in addition to online classes, RCC initiated a Friday night/Saturday schedule to allow students to complete an AA Degree in two years. This program, formally initiated in the fall of 2004, has shown more success in the fall than the spring. ITV classes help coordinate a busy schedule and go out to an ever-expanding area.



Many career programs and transfer programs provide educational experiences outside of the classroom. A variety of internships, clinicals and field experiences, some required and some elective, give students the opportunity to experience first hand the career of their choosing. Many local hospitals and business collaborate with RCC for the benefit of the students.

1C4 Preparing students to live in a diverse society and world

RCC has become more diverse. Over the past decade, many practices have prepared students to live in a diverse world both in and out of the classroom. From a RCC Affirmative Action Human Rights Campaign poster that states, “Expect Respect” to the college value statements, diversity is clearly a priority at RCC.

RCC’s Value Statements clearly state a commitment to diversity:

- *Above all we value people.*
- *We value honesty, mutual respect, integrity and personal responsibility.*
- *We value diversity and inclusiveness.*

In the classroom, the MnTC ensures that all liberal arts students take classes in both Human Diversity and Global Perspective (Section 1C1). Not only do classes such as SPCH 1200 (Interpersonal Communication) and SOCI 2125 (Cultural Diversity) have a diversity component, but also at least 15 other classes including diversity components such as THTR 2100 (Beginning Acting) and HIST 1001 (United States History). Classes in Global Perspective include the Spanish sequence as well as classes in History, Social and Behavioral Science, and Music. Other classes such as HUMA 2297 (London Dash) and HUMA 2287 (French Frolic) provide students with the opportunity to studying the world and experience the world first hand. These study-tours have more than a 10-year history of success. AASC recently approved a Diversity Certificate for students who have focused their program of study with an International Emphasis.

Outside of the classroom, RCC has many organizations to prepare students to live in a diverse world. The International Club has grown steadily over the past ten years. From two international students in 1999 to more than 75 during the 2003-04 academic year, RCC students are learning the value of diversity. The top five home countries of international students include Togo, West Africa, Russia, Ukraine, Zambia, and Malawi.

As the International Club helps international students with cultural and social changes, the international students help RCC students learn about the world through International Day, international food displays, and a variety of activities to learn about countries of which many had never heard. English Language Learning classes help the international students overcome language difficulties. SEED (Seeking Educational Equality and Diversity), RCSGA (Riverland Community Straight Gay Alliance), RIOT (Righteous Invasion of Truth) are all organizations that prepare students for the diverse world. (Section 1P10) To increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and administration, Human Resources actively searches for candidates of diverse background whenever filling a position.

1C5 Maintaining a healthy student climate

RCC's Value Statements concisely state the importance of learning, which in turn maintains a healthy student climate.

- *We value learning.*
- *We value honesty, mutual respect, integrity and personal responsibility.*

All faculty, staff, and administrators value academic freedom as defined in Article 23, Section 3, in the faculty contract. Article 17, Section 4 of the faculty contract provides the opportunity for faculty to receive a sabbatical every six years. A percentage of the entire unduplicated head count of unlimited full-time faculty determines the number of sabbaticals. The position of Intellectual Property Coordinator works with faculty and administration to provide a clear understanding of the faculty members' scholarly work. Article 23, section 4 of the faculty contract explains intellectual property.

Faculty and administration meet on a monthly basis to review provisions of the contract and to guide RCC on its mission and vision. The President of the RCC Chapter of the Minnesota Faculty Association (MSCF) chairs the Faculty Shared Governance Council.

For the student climate to be healthy, the previously stated values must reiterate RCC's value of diversity. Faculty and staff receive diversity training at a variety of levels. A recently hired Regional Diversity Investigator and Trainer, shared by RCC and three other MnSCU institutions, helps with diversity training. Faculty Conference Days include a diversity component. To follow federal and state guidelines, the Affirmative Action Office and ADA Coordinator update faculty, staff, and administration in the variety of services available.

Students also share the responsibility to ensure a healthy climate. The Student Senate, elected by the students, is active on a local and state level in a variety of ways from lobbying the legislature concerning tuition costs to helping students who may have had a tragedy interfere with their ability to pay for college. Students also have an opportunity to evaluate their experience with a Satisfaction Survey (Section 1P9).

Planning is an important part of a healthy campus climate. RCC took a large step in improving the planning processes over the past ten years. Current plans include a Technology Plan, a Master Academic Plan, a Master Facility Plan and a new Strategic Plan. One objective of the plans is to ensure the mission, vision, and value statements are incorporated in present and future decision-making.

1P1 – Determining Common Student Learning Objectives

The external process that helps determine common student learning for specific learning objectives at RCC is the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. State program reviews and state curriculum discipline groups dictate state standards and consistency for common student learning. The internal process adds detail to the classroom level and determines methods of assessment, evaluating whether learning has been achieved.

The establishment of program-specific student-learning objectives begins with faculty. Faculty within each program area identify learning objectives and outcomes for each program when first developing a program proposal, as well as existing outlines for courses within each program. Discipline peers, the academic dean, MnTC guidelines (section 1C1), program advisory boards, industry leaders, and discipline licensing boards provide additional information. After initial development, the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) (section 1P2) reviews and approves all student-learning objectives. These student-learning objectives come up for revision every three years during the Program Review process (section 1P6).

1P2 Design of New Courses and Programs

A variety of individuals, including administrators, faculty, students, and industry program advisory boards may recommend new programs or course offerings. Formal proposals follow the procedures set down by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC). Membership of the AASC consists of 2/3 faculty and 1/3 administrative representation. The faculty contract guarantees the existence of the council. The purpose of the council, also contractually set, is to provide direction to the college in all matters pertaining to academics. With that purpose in mind, this council must review and approve all course outlines, student outcomes, award requirements, academic standards, course and program components, and course and program offerings. Faculty or administrators proposing new courses, new programs, or major changes to existing courses or programs must submit to the AASC a program plan and course outline(s) as well as program and course outcomes. Letters of support (or nonsupport) from an Academic Dean, program advisory board (if appropriate), and other faculty members within the discipline area, as well as documentation showing that the new proposal does not duplicate an existing curriculum within the college, must accompany this proposal.

Designation of each new course proposal must be one of the following: a MnTC course (section 1C1), a program course, or a transfer elective. Any courses designated as MnTC must be essential for understanding a discipline or field of knowledge and focus on the central ideas and core doctrines of the discipline or field of knowledge at a basic level of instruction. The presence of college level work, the ability to meet accreditation or licensure requirements, and the evidence that similar programs include similar type courses are evaluation requirements for program courses. Transferability to other state universities and appropriateness of content and level of instruction are evaluation requirements for transfer elective courses. The MnSCU Office of the Chancellor approves new programs of study. In order to receive MnSCU approval, the college demonstrates a student and occupational need for the program as well as an appropriate location, resource sufficiency, and mission relevance. This process ensures that new courses and programs are consistent with the college's Mission, Vision and Value Statements.

To balance educational market issues with student needs, RCC relies on information from a variety of sources, including students (sections 1P3, 1P5 and 1P12), industry leaders, advisory boards, and the College and University Program Planning System (CUPPS). CUPPS is an information resource for academic program planners. It provides

information from education and labor sources. CUPPS highlights the career areas that have a high projected demand for workers and currently not offered in the college's region. Information is also available from CUPPS related to program areas that should consider expansion as well as program areas that should consider reduction, closure, or relocation to another more appropriate region.

In addition, Riverland Training and Development (RTD) offers both credit and non-credit courses, as well as specific skills training requested by industry. RTD conducts research which may lead to new program development. RTD offers some traditional scheduling of hourly training geared to specific skill sets, such as real estate licensure, continuing education training for nurses, and fire-fighting skills. However, the majority of credits currently offered are one-time course responses to RTD's assessment of their clients' training needs. RTD schedules weekly meetings to review all course activity and in Fall 2005, initiated an Accounts Management system designed to increase contact and communication with key company clients within their service region. In addition, planning and developing RTD courses takes into consideration the responses received from student and industry satisfaction surveys completed annually. RTD staff members also help facilitate new course and program offerings suggested by industry clients. Within the last year (FY 2005) RTD delivered 3145 credits and served 419 business/industry clients.

1P3 Required Student Preparation

RCC students who enroll in a credit-based course must take the Accuplacer/Course Placement Test (CPT), which determines if placement into college-level English, reading, and mathematics courses is appropriate. Students scoring below a minimum level in these areas must take a developmental course in the appropriate area. Students can retake once during the academic year. Students can receive a waiver excusing them from taking the Accuplacer/CPT if they have taken the test at another college in the last two years, have successfully completed college-level English or math at another accredited institution, have recently taken and submitted scores from the ACT, or are enrolling only in English Language Training Center courses, RTD courses, or Farm/Small Business Management courses. Students can also receive a waiver excusing them from taking a developmental course if there is sufficient reason for a waiver. Academic counselors evaluate waiver requests on an individual basis.

Applicants seeking admission to the college and financial aid, who do not have a high school diploma or GED, must pass an "Ability to Benefit" test approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. At RCC, the Accuplacer/CPT is the approved "Ability to Benefit" test. Students enrolled in English Language Learning courses may take the CELSA test rather than the Accuplacer/CPT to ensure proper academic course placement. The CELSA measures proficiency in speaking/listening, reading, and writing English.

Career-technical program and liberal arts faculty establish program and course-specific preparation requirements during the development phase in conjunction with the appropriate advisory boards, licensing agencies, industry advisors, and discipline peers.

These preparation requirements may include specific placement tests for specific programs of study such as the Nurse Entrance Test required by the Associate Degree Nursing program or successful completion of a specific program or general education courses. The AASC (section 1P2) reviews and approves these pre-requisites, then does likewise following the Program Review process (section 1P6).

Students taking an online course receive additional preparation in several forms. First, online students receive a postal mailing containing basic information about online courses and the Desire2Learn (D2L) site used as a delivery method for all online courses at RCC and throughout the MnSCU system. In addition, the online Student D2L Help Desk, which contains information on all the functions in D2L, is available to all online students. The course, monitored by the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT), provides help as requested. Students can also opt to take a two-hour live orientation that covers aspects of online courses or a one-credit course designed to help students become familiar with computers, software, and the online environment. OIT also monitors a daily D2L help email system, individual orientations with students upon request, and classroom orientations to classes upon request. MnSCU provides a help desk that students may access during the hours when the OIT is not open.

1P4 Communicating expectations to students

The current college catalog is available in a printed version. In addition, catalog information is available on the RCC website (www.riverland.edu). The catalog and website describe the academic policies and procedures for new, transferring, and continuing students.

Area of Catalog	Types of Information Available
Student Services	Admissions policies and procedures; assessment policies; registration and college record policies and procedures; college costs; and financial aid information.
Student Life	Types and availability of student services; student activities; student organizations; information pertaining to degree and program requirements and completion; information pertaining to transfer.
Career-Technical Programs	Descriptions of course requirements and graduation requirements for degrees and certificate programs.
Riverland Training and Development	Description of services offered by Riverland Training and Development.
Course Descriptions	Descriptions of the course content, credit hours, lab requirements, and prerequisites for all program and liberal arts courses.

In addition to the college catalog and RCC website, Program Sheets, available from the counselors and the communicating department, include program expectations. Course outlines provide information on student preparation and learning objectives for individual courses.

The Student Handbook, available both in printed form and online, includes an academic calendar and repeats the student services and student life information from the college catalog, as well as information concerning college policies, state and federal policies, and students' rights and responsibilities.

A variety of mailings and college postings routinely communicate expectations regarding student preparation and learning objectives. Many college activities include descriptions of these expectations such as 1) New Student Orientations; 2) “Potty Posts”; 3) Big Night on Campus; 4) Big Day on Campus; 5) open houses, 6) weekly emails, and 7) advising sessions with academic and international advisors.

1P5 Advising and Placement

RCC addresses advising in several ways:

- Academic counselors help students with decisions covering a broad range of concerns. The counselors teach career-planning courses and provide assistance with career interest assessments, career decisions, academic planning, transfer planning, planning for at-risk students, personal or crisis counseling services and off-campus referrals when appropriate.
- Faculty members and program coordinators are advisers in their respective teaching or program fields and can help students with information concerning courses and program requirements.
- Specialized advisers for minority and English Language Learning students include a minority student adviser and international student adviser.
- Online advising tools available at www.riverland.edu include links to catalog information, class schedules, degree requirements, transfer information, and links to the academic counselors.
- Community Service or Internships offered as part of specific courses and programs allow students to gain on-the-job experience related to their course of study or academic program. Program or course descriptions and semesterly syllabus provide information for internships and community service opportunities.

The college addresses gaps between the necessary and actual preparation of students with the pre-course testing process (section 1P3). To assist students who show a deficit in preparation as well as students who struggle or ask for help, the Student Success Center provides testing/assessment services, professional and peer tutoring, study groups, tutoring software, and study-skills coaching. Initial placement testing, professional/peer tutoring, study groups, use of tutoring software and study-skills coaching are free to students. There is a fee for subsequent placement re-testing as well as specific assessment tests such as the Nursing Entrance Test provided through the Student Success Center.

The Writing Center is a new initiative staffed by one English instructor whose involvement is included as a part of the teaching assignment. Several additional English instructors volunteer their time. The Writing Center is open to all students and faculty who need assistance with writing projects.

1P6 Documenting teaching and learning effectiveness

RCC uses a “three-tiered” approach to document teaching and learning effectiveness. First, the college developed and implemented a Program Review process five years ago.

Program Review is a process by which faculty and staff assesses the effectiveness of their efforts in meeting college goals and achieving student success. Its purpose is to facilitate continuous improvement. Every three years, programs and disciplines of study within the college participate in the Program Review process. The Program Review committee consists of a cross-section of faculty, administrators and support staff.

Program Review Process

Criteria for Program Analysis	Data Responses
Background	Brief program history; type of program completion award; program credit requirements; accrediting agencies; and types of courses (MnTC, accreditation requirement, or elective).
Goals	Program goals; are goals consistent with institution goals (values)?
Uniqueness	Strength of interest or demand; uniqueness of or value of program to service area; how competitive program is nationally, statewide, regionally, and locally.
Assessment	Program outcomes; course outcomes and consistency of course outcomes with program outcomes; retention rates, enrollment data; completion rate; certification passage rate; and job placement rate.
Curriculum	Program schedule of offerings; process for assuring delivery of current information; collaboration with other programs, schools and community; presence of alternate-learning opportunities.
Human Resources	Academic and professional qualifications/credentials of faculty; evidence of faculty professional development; adequacy of other resources (for example, library resources) necessary to achieve student learning outcomes.
Physical Resources	Presence of adequate classroom space, labs, clinical settings, offices, equipment.
Financial Resources	Presence of sufficient program funding to support program goals.
Marketing and Recruitment	Current marketing plan, community information efforts and student recruitment efforts.
Community Interaction	Cooperative efforts with advisory committees, industry representatives, employers, and other relevant community groups.
Summary	List of program strengths, areas in need of improvement and a five-year program plan for improvement.

Second, faculty participate in a Faculty Evaluation Process every four years. The faculty evaluation process involves meetings with an Academic Dean, classroom visits by administration and peers to observe specific teaching practices, and student assessments of the faculty's teaching practices. Faculty may also submit a "portfolio" highlighting their best teaching practices. Each faculty evaluation, including an evaluation meeting between the faculty member and an Academic Dean, reflects on discussions and recommendations concerning the teaching practices.

Third, faculty measure student learning effectiveness in a variety of ways. At the classroom level, faculty members use a variety of assessment techniques to measure effective student learning. The types of assessment measures used are at the discretion of the individual faculty member. Such assessment measures may include Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), performance demonstrations, and course-specific tests. Management Education faculty do a student survey every two years asking what is

important to students and how well we are meeting that educational need. Faculty also measure effective learning by analyzing information from passage rates on licensing tests and information from the Graduate Follow-up Survey (section 1P12). There is currently no formal process or discussion concerning the standardization of student learning measurements within or across disciplines.

1P7 Instructional delivery process

In developing an effective and efficient course delivery system, RCC takes into consideration the needs of several student populations: traditional new students, students seeking alternate delivery methods, students for whom English is a second language, and non-traditional new and continuing students.

In order to build and maintain an efficient course delivery system, the academic deans rely on information concerning program requirements, faculty course requests, information gathered from students using a Student Engagement Survey and Graduation and Placement Surveys (sections 1P12 and 1P13), advisory board recommendations, and information from MnSCU concerning future educational budgets. An effective course delivery system is also the result of studying enrollment trends from previous years and semesters. The need to make a sufficient variety of courses available at each college site as well as at different times of the day are considerations along with the numbers of students who registered the previous semester. The option to add courses and sections is available even once the schedule is in print or is available online. There is no formal class cancellation policy. On an individual class basis, course enrollment typically determines cancellation. Information used to make cancellation decisions include whether the course is a new curriculum offering, whether there are a sufficient number of other sections of the course to accommodate the students who are currently enrolled in the section, whether the course is the second of a two-semester sequence, and whether the course is essential in order for students to meet the graduation of a particular program.

Most RCC courses use a traditional classroom/lab model for teaching. Additional methods include ITV, online courses, internships, community service projects and one-on-one instruction. Management Education programs conduct the majority of their delivery at the student's place of business (farm home or small business location), one-on-one with the student. A combination of online and traditional courses offered on Friday evenings and Saturdays allows "weekend" students to complete 40 general education credits towards an AA degree or to transfer to other institutions. Additionally, RCC offers general education credits that would allow completion of an AA degree to workers on site at a regional manufacturing company. Similarly, RTD offers credit and non-credit courses at businesses and industry sites throughout the region. Through Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment Options program, several local high schools teach college courses on their campuses. (Institutional Overview 04)

1P8 Curricular currency and effectiveness

RCC is continually monitoring curricular currency and effectiveness. Review is primarily responsibility of RCC faculty. Such monitoring is done through the work of the AASC

(section 1P2), regular meetings between faculty and program advisory boards as well as industry representatives, discussions within academic departments and with similar departments in other institutions, and through the Program Review process. (Section 1P6)

In addition, three years ago the college implemented a Vital Signs process. Each year, programs that fall below minimum enrollment levels or that fail on key indicators come up for review to determine the viability of the program. Key triggers for review include program costs that exceed program revenues, program costs that exceed 115% of the average cost for other similar MnSCU programs, a FYE enrollment drop of greater than 25%, sudden external changes such as the loss of accreditation/certification changes in job market outlooks, significant increases in class/program attrition rate, and/or an insufficient capacity to get to a point of financial viability. A committee that includes the academic vice president, the program faculty, the program’s academic dean, and a dean who represents the students’ interests study the programs that trigger one of these key indicators. The committee then reviews information that shows either the viability of the program despite the trigger of one or more key indicators or the need to change, suspend, or eliminate the program. Vital Signs process considers the following:

A strong advisory committee.	Significant degree or program completion rates.
A comprehensive and clear marketing strategy.	Manageable costs related to operation and modernization of facilities and equipment.
Significant collateral enrollments in prerequisite courses or related areas of study.	A well-trained, appropriately certified faculty available to provide instruction.
Strong employment projections.	The ability to provide instruction using a non-traditional delivery method.
Lack of competition for comparable educational offerings.	A low to moderate student-to-faculty ratio.
Strong job placement data.	A significant number of students with full-time credit loads.
Positive faculty involvement in non-teaching aspects of the program of study.	A good alignment with the college’s goals and values.
Clear/complete transfer and/or articulation agreements with high schools or other secondary institutions.	A low faculty turnover rate.
A solid pattern of enrollment.	A curriculum that is current.

1P9 Determining student and faculty support needs

The Program Review process (section 1P6), the Vital Signs process (section 1P8), and analysis of data from student and faculty surveys determine the student and faculty needs relative to learning. The ACT Student Satisfaction survey, given every two years, asks students their reasons for attending college, impressions of RCC’s educational quality, rate of usage and satisfaction concerning 20 separate college services, and satisfaction with environmental factors. Post Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) students complete a similar survey. Additional information gathered from specific student populations include:

- The Withdrawn Student Exit Survey asks students the reason for withdrawing and their satisfaction with five key areas of student services.
- The Student Athlete Focus Group asks athletes their satisfaction with coaching techniques and with the equipment/facilities.
- The Student Housing Focus Group asks students living in student housing to describe their satisfaction with housing managers and facilities and to explain their reason for renting student housing or for not returning to student housing as appropriate.

Academic and Student Affairs leadership review the data collected from these surveys to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of student programming and services.

The Library, involved in supporting student learning and development, acquires, organizes, and maintains collections of books, videos, audiobooks and periodicals; issues library cards; provides library skills instruction; provides photocopying; reserves materials; provides interlibrary loan assistance; provides library materials through intercampus mail to any campus site and federal mail to long-distance students; answers reference questions; provides online databases with full-text magazine and newspaper articles; provides study rooms for student use; and maintains a library website which provides information concerning and access to library services. Student needs in relation to the library evaluate the data concerning circulation statistics, database use counts, interlibrary loan counts, gate counts, and the ACT-Student Satisfaction Survey. The library hours are currently under review by V-PASS with the purpose of trying to identify how library hours could better accommodate evening and weekend student access. Online library information and databases are available through web access.

The Student Success Center and Office of Instructional Technology measure student and faculty needs by the nature and number of inquires. In addition to the services designed to support student needs outlined above (Sections 1P3 and 1P5), services from the Student Success Center, OIT, and library are available to support faculty needs. The Student Success Center offers “make-up” testing and testing to accommodate disabled students for whom classroom testing is inappropriate and offers suggestions on adapting classroom materials and environment to ensure accessibility. The OIT offers faculty classes and one-to-one tutoring concerning the use of computers and other technology in the classroom and for online courses. The library regularly surveys faculty concerning their periodical, book, and other library resource needs.

The administrative process evaluates faculty support needs through faculty surveys completed during each faculty conference day. Planners use the information from the surveys for future faculty conference days. In addition, all faculty have access to Faculty Development Funds. These funds are contractually set aside for faculty to use for professional development. Faculty also have access to courses and workshops from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL is a MnSCU-wide resource for faculty development that provides faculty with instructional development grants and assists in the sharing of best practices across disciplinary, institutional, and geographic boundaries. CTL recently launched its “ITeach Professional Development Online Center,” a virtual guide to teaching for faculty and staff.

1P10 Alignment of curricular and co-curricular goals

A variety of student organizations are available to RCC students. Advised by faculty and staff members, these organizations offer programs and activities of interest that align with curricular and co-curricular goals of the college. Many of these organizations directly relate to a career or discipline area within the college. The Student Senate and RCC President review and approve proposed student groups to insure the group's goals align with RCC's mission, vision, and value statements. An activities fair held at the beginning of each semester on each campus highlights all RCC co-curricular activities. Approved activities include:

"Accent"	The Criminal Justice Society
The Human Services Club	The International Club
The National Homebuilders Association	Student Athletics
Righteous Invasion of Truth (R.I.O.T.)	Riverland Community Gay-Straight Alliance
Phi Theta Kappa	Post-Secondary Agriculture Students
Student Senate	SkillsUSA-VICA
Student Ambassadors	Choir
Theater	

1P11 Student assessment process

The college has two processes for assessing student learning. One process concerns required state guidelines and the other is internal, focusing on institutional guidelines for student assessment. The assessment process used is determined by programs and courses in which the student participates.

1P12 Student preparation for further study or employment

The college regularly examines preparation for further education or employment for students who complete programs, degrees, and certificates. Six months after program completion, the Placement and Graduate Service Department surveys graduates regarding student satisfaction with a variety of student services, student satisfaction with the academic environment, and student attitudes about expected educational outcomes and skill development. The survey specifically asks students whether they felt adequately prepared for entry-level positions within their career field or prepared for transfer to upper-division college courses. Appropriate constituent groups share data within the institution in a variety of reports.

1P13 Measures of student performance

RCC collects and analyzes a wide variety of student performance data including the Graduate Follow-Up Survey (section 1P12), student-retention and degree-completion rates, licensure-passage rates, and post-graduation transfer and employment rates. Another important student assessment measure used is the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Given to a random, representative cross-section of current students every other year, the CCSSE asks questions about institutional practices and student behaviors highly correlated with student learning and retention. CCSSE

organizes the information from these questions into five areas or “benchmarks.” Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related items that address key areas of student engagement. The CCSSE’s five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important in quality educational practice: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. Information obtained from the CCSSE compares to similar institutions and to national averages.

In addition, the Registrar’s Office monitors the academic progress of all students each semester. Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 and complete at least 67% of registered credits. If students do not meet these requirements after a semester of enrollment, they receive a probationary status for one semester. During this time, students work closely with an academic counselor, teaching and advising faculty, and the student success center, to improve their performance. As part of probation, students must develop and sign a learning contract with the assistance of a college counselor. In addition, students on probation are limited on the number of credits for which they can register. Failure to meet minimum academic standards after one semester of probation results in suspension. Students may appeal probation and/or suspension as provided in the student handbook.

1R1 Student Learning Achievement

The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum offers students high-quality education and insures seamless progress toward a baccalaureate degree. Below are results of common student learning objectives integrated in the transfer curriculum:

Communication - Use the English language effectively and read, write, speak, and listen critically.	Among 2004 graduates, 50% strongly agree their oral and written communication skills improved.
Critical Thinking - Develop thinkers able to unify factual, creative, rational, and value-sensitive modes of thought.	Among 2004 graduates, 30% strongly agree their critical thinking skills improved.
Natural Sciences – Improve students’ understanding of natural science principles and of the methods of scientific inquiry.	Among 2004 graduates, 26% strongly agree their problem-solving skills improved.
Mathematical & Logical Reasoning – Increase students’ knowledge about mathematical and logical modes of thinking.	Among 2004 graduates, 26% strongly agree their problem-solving skills improved.
Humanities & Fine Arts – To expand the students’ knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, in relation to behavior, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought.	Among 2004 graduates, 29% strongly agree they expanded their tolerance for diversity in people and ideas.
Human Diversity – Increase students’ understanding of individual and group differences	Among 2004 graduates, 29% strongly agree they expanded their tolerance for diversity in people and ideas.

Global Perspective – Increase students’ understanding of the growing interdependence of nations and peoples and develop their ability to apply a comparative perspective to cross-cultural social, economic and political experiences.	Among 2004 graduates, 29% strongly agree they expanded their tolerance for diversity in people and ideas. Among 2004 graduates, 33% strongly agree they improved their interpersonal skills
Ethical and Civic Responsibility – Develop students’ capacity to identify, discuss, and reflect upon the ethical dimensions of political, social and personal life and to understand the ways in which they can exercise responsible and productive citizenship.	Among 2004 graduates, 33% strongly agree they improved their interpersonal skills. Among 2004 graduates, 21% strongly agree they are adequately prepared to transfer to upper division. Among 2004 graduates, 38% strongly agree they are adequately prepared for an entry-level career field. Among 2004 graduates, 23% strongly agree they improved their goal-setting skills.
People and the Environment – Improve students understanding of today’s complex environmental challenges.	Among 2004 graduates, 30% strongly agree their critical thinking skills improved.

1R2 Students competence evaluation

Evidence showing RCC students acquired knowledge and skills necessary for degrees or credentials include state and national certification or licensing tests. Below are data outlining pass rates for graduates of health science programs between 2001 and 2004.

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) – for the Radiology program.	2001 – 100% pass rate. 2002 – 100% pass rate. 2003 – 100% pass rate. 2004 – 100% pass rate.
The Minnesota Board of Nursing Grants Licensure for Minnesota – for the Associate Degree Registered Nursing program. The test taken is the NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Exam). The Minnesota Board of Nursing belongs to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. The state boards of nursing develop the test nationally.	2001 - 94% pass rate. 2002 - 85% pass rate. 2003 - two graduating classes, the second start students didn't do as well, the regular graduating class was 84% and overall we had a 79% pass rate that year. 2004 - 86% pass rate. National averages for those years were 2001 - 85%; 2002 - 87%; 2003 - 87%, no stats for 2004.

Licensed Practical Nursing program.	2000 - 20 students passed boards/90% pass rate.
The Minnesota Board of Nursing website has the statistics.	2001 - 13 students passed boards/85% pass rate.
	2002 - 22 student passed boards/73% pass rate.
	2003 - 27 students passed boards/93% pass rate.
	2004 – 28 students passed boards/93% pass rate (not official yet).

The following is data representing placement scores for students in reading, writing, and math:

Academic year 2003 - 2004

- 41% incoming students placed into Developmental Reading.
- 42% incoming students placed into Developmental Writing.
- 94% incoming students placed into Developmental math.
- 127 students took the CELSA exam.

Academic year 2004-2005

- 40% incoming students placed into Developmental Reading.
- 35% incoming students placed into Developmental Writing.
- 95% incoming students placed into Developmental math.
- 114 students took the CELSA exam.

For a comparison of graduation/transfer rates see IR4.

1R3 Teaching and learning process results

All incoming students must take the ACCUPLACER (1P3). The following data are based on a three-year validation study (2000-2003). Students who scored 89 to 120 on the ACCUPLACER Sentence Skills test placed into ENGL 1101. Those who scored 73 to 88 enrolled in ENGL 1101 with counselors' approval.

Sentence Skills Test	Recommendations
0 – 59	See counselor
60 – 72	ENGL 0091 – Dev. Writing
73 – 88	With counselor approval register for ENGL 1101
89 – 120	ENGL 1101

The data below for ENGL 1101 included 322 grades. Shown below is a summary of grades followed by the descriptive statistics for grades and scores:

Grade	Frequency	Percent
A	83	26%
B	99	31%
C	65	20%
D	12	4%
F	36	11%
I	2	1%
W	25	8%
Total	322	

Scores used for student placement into math courses are shown in the tables below:

Arithmetic only	
0 – 65	MATH 0550
66 – 93	MATH 0560 with counselor approval
94 – 120	MATH 0560

Elementary Algebra only	
0 – 38	MATH 0550
39 – 50	MATH 0560 with counselor approval
51 – 70	MATH 0560
71 – 81	MATH 0570 with counselor approval
82 – 120	MATH 0570

College Level Math only	
0 – 40	See counselor
41 – 62	MATH 1050 or MATH 1110 with counselor approval
63 – 86	MATH 1050 or 1110
87 – 120	Calculus MATH 1120 or Trig 1400

The current study does not validate the math scores above. Further research is needed. RCC offers a variety of math classes at appropriate skill levels ranging from developmental coursework to multi-variable calculus.

The C.E.L.S.A (Combined English Language Skills Assessment) assesses and places students into appropriate classes taught through the English Language and Training Center. The federal government prescribes these standards.

As discussed in 1P6, RCC’s Program Review process and Vital Signs Process serves to identify strengths and weaknesses in all program areas. Program Review identifies the areas of improvement for each program and offers summary analysis for improvement

strategies. RCC's formal assessment processes (1I2) will reflect data and information from Program Review, which requires an examination of updated, relevant curriculum along with the production of course outlines, course outcomes and eventually program outcomes. AASC (1P2) serves as the quality control vehicle to monitor appropriate content and formats for all course outlines and outcomes.

The Vital Signs process demands the scrutiny of programs and disciplines of study regarding viability. Vital Signs processes are constructive and focused on ways to improve the program or discipline of study. At present, these programs are redesigning curriculum because of a complete Vital Signs examination (1I2). Both Program Review and the Vital Signs committees include representative faculty and administration. The table below identifies some programs examined through the Vital Signs process and explains the extensive examination of the programs.

Program	Trigger	Explanation	Follow up
Computer Business Systems	FYE cost above 112% MnSCU average.	First-time review due to high cost and enrollment drop.	Meet with faculty.
Ag Mechanic	FYE cost above 112% MnSCU average.	Second review due to high cost and enrollment drop.	Meet with faculty; plan to revitalize; merge with diesel tech.
Diesel	FYE cost above 112% MnSCU average.	Second review due to high cost and enrollment drop.	Meet with faculty; plan to revitalize; merge with ag diesel.
Physics	High direct cost compared to MnSCU average.	Deans study to examine lab sizes and enrollment averages.	Dean will report back.
Accounting	High direct cost compared to MnSCU average.	Deans study to examine financial data, enrollment.	Dean will report back.

1R4 Comparative results

Riverland shows above-average graduation and transfer rates for first year full-time students on a statewide basis.

Graduation: 25% of first year Liberal Arts students leave and transfer after one year.

- Fall 2000 - 39.2% (state average: 30.7%)
- Fall 2001 - 45.7% (state average: 31.8%)

Transfer rate:

- Fall 2000 - 55.1% (state average: 55.6%)
- Fall 2001 - 62.5% (state average: 55.6%)

Source - IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - Graduation and Transfer Data).

1I1 Improving current processes

Many methods used to improve processes and procedures help students learn (1P13). Within academic affairs as well as at the program level, a number of processes evaluate and assess the program review process for continuous improvement. Data collected from faculty observations and student opinion surveys provide reports of effective teaching and learning. College committees, such as V-PASS, Vital Signs, and Academic Affairs and Standards Council, support continuous teaching and learning improvement through effective communication links.

1I2 Setting improvement targets

RCC is committed to a formal assessment process. RCC has recently updated and approved vision, mission, and value statements. These are now aligned with assessment measures. RCC will now institute more formal assessment processes at the Unit (Deans), Program, and course level. It has begun assessment formalization, identified through the Program Review process, including the creation of course outlines and course outcomes. Setting program outcomes will be the next step in the formalization process.

Riverland's Graduate Survey needs better alignment with the objectives and goals of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Including all goals of MnTC in the graduate survey, will provide the data necessary to measure the effectiveness of RCC's transfer curriculum.

A comparison between baseline data and data collected on indicators set for the new vision, mission, and values, will further identify areas to target for measurable improvements. The college will form a committee of faculty and deans to study success rates at program and course levels. Sharing and examining testing methods will determine students' preparedness and best practices in assessment techniques.

This committee will also recommend processes that capture how faculty are improving student learning. Best Practices and examples will be shared and demonstrated among the faculty at faculty development days. A specialist will be identified to assist faculty in capturing improvement in student learning.

In 2006, through the Program Review process, plans to ladder the LPN and AD Nursing programs together will be implemented. Research indicates that improvement in student success and retention will result.

Faculty Conference Days will focus more on improved methods for teaching and learning. Faculty will have the opportunity to be involved in offering sessions on best practices in their classrooms.

The results of math scores per ACCUPLACER warrant a further validation study. RCC will offer more courses for developmental math and English. The college has approved the hiring of a full-time faculty member in Developmental Reading.

RCC will establish an institution assessment process and implement an annual evaluation of the formal assessment processes. Through this evaluation, RCC will continuously improve institutional effectiveness.

RCC recognizes the access needs of its students. Continued growth of online courses has led the College to target Spring '06 for an MnSCU Institutional Change visit focusing on expanding online program offerings. This impetus for increased learning and access has been identified as a new AQIP Action Project. Likewise, expanding institutional research has also been identified as a new AQIP Action Project.

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Criterion #2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

2C1 Others Institutional Objectives

RCC strives to provide more than just training and education. The college’s mission and vision statements exemplify a strong commitment to provide an environment of “learning for living” to the students, as well as social and economic growth to the surrounding communities. Although the college’s dedication to these ideals encompasses many objectives, the college’s emphasis includes four distinctive objectives: regional work force and economic development, cultural diversity or awareness, community vitality and involvement, and individual personal growth. Each objective provides opportunities for empowerment and growth.

The definition of each objective and quantitative indicators are detailed in figure 2.1.

Objectives	Definition	Measures
Economic Development and Regional Workforce Education	Provide programs and classes to meet the education and training needs of business and industry within the region.	Number of businesses served New jobs created Number of people served Collaborative agreements
Cultural Diversity and Awareness	Social and learning opportunities to inform, communicate, and share. Develop understanding in students and community.	Student satisfaction rates Number of minority students served Inclusive environment
Community Vitality and Involvement	Events, resources, and partnerships to support the economy and social development of the student and the community.	Number of individuals impacted Collaborative efforts Social events Community involvement Monetary support
Individual Personal Growth	A variety of activities including music, art theatre, clubs, and other personal enrichment events.	Number of attendees Number of participants Increased interaction Improved academic performance

2C2 Alignment with mission and vision

Each objective is a work in progress with changes and updates occurring in a continuous cycle to ensure alignment with RCC’s Mission and Vision. Employees and community members provide insight and feedback on issues that impact the college, students, and community. Focus is on a comprehensive environment with a personalized infrastructure. In order to become a link in economic and social vitality, RCC places major emphasis on developing collaborative relationships with communities and organizations. Examples in this area include Riverland Training and Development (RTD). RTD actively seeks training opportunities with local businesses to develop

employee skills. The employees of the college are active both professionally and personally in their communities. RCC provided employees as moderators in community projects such as the Owatonna strategic development team.

RCC pledges to be open, accessible, and central to the region. The college provides its facilities for use in a wide range of events. RCC has agreements with several regional companies/organizations to provide education/training in remote facilities. The college has several events each year where the community learns more about the school and its programs. (See 2R1)

RCC's mission and vision statements place significant focus on the personal and social development of the individual person. Student clubs, activities, athletic programs, and education in health and life issues, all assist in providing individualized growth, along with the traditional curriculum. Personal and cultural enrichment, provided through the theatre, music department, and RCC Art Gallery, is open to students and the community. In response to an increasing minority population in the region, RCC implemented programs to understand and to address cultural barriers and to increase acceptance. RCC works closely with regional organizations to welcome and assist new minority members to the community. All four objectives exemplify the RCC mission and vision. Each provides a learning experience with emphasis on both the economic and social elements.

2C3 Supports in Helping Students Learn

RCC believes that learning is a life experience. Student activities, clubs, and athletics provide a complete, well-rounded learning experience. The theatre, art gallery, and music productions provide a college experience and support the learning experience for both students and community. Counselors on all three campuses offer academic as well as personal direction to the students. Providing cultural diversity and awareness enhances learning experience for students, staff, and the community. A minority advisor and international student advisor serve as mentors to minority and international students in issues impacting learning, understanding, and interacting.

RTD provides alternative options to students who are in need of specialized training and education. RTD responds to community and business needs for learning as they become employers. At Viracon, (a large Owatonna employer), employees can achieve all transfer course requirements for an AA degree on site. The Farm Business Management (FBM) and Small Business Management (SBM) programs provide on-site training to over 550 businesses.

2P1 Determining other objectives

RCC determines objectives by first identifying areas of need and then developing a plan to meet that need. Individual departments or committees are responsible for developing their objectives. Examples of committees are the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team (V-PASS), Administrative Council, Leadership Council and focus groups formed to fulfill specific needs identified through improvement processes such as AQIP. Objectives are set in weekly, monthly, and yearly meetings with the departmental dean and vice president. These administrators become involved as participants and facilitators in the objective-setting process.

The following sources and processes identify the needs and the resulting objectives: Strategic Plan, Master Academic Plan, Master Facilities Plan, Foundation's Strategic

Plan, Technology Plan, and the Student Services Plan. All have elements of direction and expectations for the college. The program instructors and deans consult the advisory boards. Weekly, monthly, and yearly department, program, or committee meetings prioritize and determine which directives to follow.

2P2 Communicating expectations

Multiple methods of communicating information have proven effective in meeting expectations. Detailed written information, shared with those involved with the project, or along with the president's annual report, highlights the college's efforts and successes. External communications are handled by the RCC marketing department. (A detailed list of the RCC communication Matrix is given in Criterion 5P5) Comprehensive reports provide updates on the status of objectives and outcomes. One example of this type of communication is a newsletter called True North. The Strategic Planning committee sends this brief, one-page newsletter out monthly to keep faculty and staff informed of developments dealing with the college's strategic planning.

The RCC web site (www.riverland.edu) provides detailed information on the college, its programs, community connections, and training and development information. This is easily accessible by students, staff and community. A RCC employee web site provides listings of committees, names of committee members, grant listings and support, as well as information and forms for all RCC employees. Minutes of committee meetings are posted on the college common drive. Computer labs and libraries provide internet access to those who do not have computer access at home. Students and staff have email access.

2P3 Determining needs

Surveys, personal contacts, and written communication are often the beginning steps to creating a process. Discussions, on how the change will impact students, staff, and community, become the next step. Anyone with experience or training in an area can share information based on expertise. If necessary, an outside consultant may conduct a needs assessment. Specific departments or individuals, impacted by the objective, have an opportunity to share thoughts on possible outcomes. Scholarship, grant, and other alternative funding sources may be necessary. (See Criterion 5 Chart 5.1)

2P4 Assessing and reviewing objectives

Each objective has a component to evaluate the process and to review the completed goal. (See Criterion 2 Chart 2.1) A formative and thorough process reviews each objective. Several events, training, or processes may be included as part of each objective. Each department or committee involved in the objective is responsible for assessing the effectiveness. The respective vice-president reviews goals and results with departments or committees at pre-determined intervals. Each committee completes a self-assessment sheet as part of their biannual renewal.

2P5 Measures

Measures correlate with each particular objective. (See Criterion 2 Chart 2.1 depicts examples of measures associated with each objective.) The following paragraphs give specific examples:

RTD, FBM, and SBM all use satisfaction surveys to evaluate courses offered. Whenever contract training is provided, the client receives an evaluation survey in the mail. The survey analyses course content and effectiveness. Each survey also evaluates the instructor and effectiveness of the delivery system. The number of companies and people served are tracked and analyzed.

SALT uses surveys (See 3R1 and 3R2) for feedback from student organizations, numbers of students involved, and attendance at student events to measure the effectiveness of activities and organizations. Each division within Student Affairs develops measures for an internal goal-setting process.

Numbers of programs, student and community involvement, and numbers of minority students enrolled are all considerations for measurement of cultural diversity or awareness. Surveys, focus groups, and personal contacts are measures of cultural diversity or awareness. Numbers of community events, collaborative agreements, and people affected are measures of social vitality and involvement of community.

Funding is the key to success of all objectives. Levels of monetary funding from the community through the foundation and grant opportunities can also be indicators.

2R1 Results for accomplishing other distinctive objectives

RCC influences economic and workforce development throughout the region. RTD annually serves more than 400 companies and 4500 employees with company-sponsored training. Graduate placement rates are consistently more than 90%. RTD targets 16 different types of partnerships for collaboration with other colleges, workforce development organizations, and government entities.

Figure 2.2A

RTD results	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Wk Force/Economic # of Companies	400	434	436
# of contracts delivered	232	241	180
Satisfaction percentage (companies)	100%	100%	98.44
Wk Force/Economic total registrations	10,002	11,097	11,913
Satisfaction percentage (participants)	99.3%	97.8%	97.74

Figure 2.2B

Management Education programs are meeting the needs of Economic Development in the region in a variety of ways. RCC has 16 instructors that work with over 550 farm and small businesses.

Average size of farms (yearly gross sales) that RCC works with	\$542,747
Number of farms RCC works with that have over \$100,000 of gross sales (considered commercial farms)	345
Percent of available farms RCC works with that have over \$100,000 of gross sales	14%
Number of farms RCC works with that have over \$500,000 of gross sales (produces majority of food and fiber)	123
Percent of available farms RCC works with that have over \$500,000 of gross sales	27%
Average size (yearly gross revenue) of small business RCC works with	\$727,306
Number of jobs added per year by the average small business RCC works with	1.6

The Owatonna College and University Center (OCUC) shows strong community involvement and collaboration due to a multi-level agreement. The city of Owatonna owns the building and leases it to RCC. RCC provides educational opportunities and maintains the facilities. RCC sub-leases space at OCUC to several higher educational institutions to provide training opportunities.

In 2004, RCC took a leadership role in forming a new non-profit corporation, which owns the television station, KSMQ. RCC is one of nine charter members, along with the cities of Austin and Albert Lea, the Austin Welcome Center, Austin public schools, Rochester Community and Technical College, and private business representation. RCC holds a seat on the Board of Directors. President Terry Leas represents RCC on the Board. The Board provides direction, governance, and sets policy. KSMQ, housed on the RCC Austin campus, broadcasts 365 days a year to a viewing area of approximately 80 miles in each direction and serves 650,000 people in southern MN and northern IA. The station's mission is to provide quality educational programming to the region. At KSMQ, students serve as interns and work-study employees gaining valuable work experience. The station also downlinks teleconferences and training programs. These programs, whether taped or routed through the ITV system, provide on-site training. Each Wednesday evening, RCC sponsors the KSMQ programming as part of its in-kind support to the station. RCC faculty members serve as hosts and expert commentators on KSMQ programs.

Another result of the social vitality objective is the community facility use. Many businesses, along with private and public organizations, use RCC facilities. (See Figure 2-3) The Austin, Albert Lea, and Owatonna Chambers' Business after Hours, Albert Lea Listens forums, community education, and political forms are examples. RCC also has agreements with regional businesses to provide education or training at remote facilities. Big Night on Campus serves as an open campus twice a year for community members of all ages. The last event at the Austin campus had 400 attendees ranging in age from young children to retired community members. Career Day brings many of the region's high school students to the campus to explore career opportunities.

Figure 2.3

Facility use	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
# of organizations using RCC facilities	103	62	*
# of meetings held by outside organ.	264	104	*
Career Day	800	900	830
Big Night On Campus	113	421	592

* results not yet available at time of writing

Students and community members explore the creative arts at RCC. Over the last three years, RCC Theatre productions involved more than 135 students per year as cast and crew. Beyond its four college productions each year, the Riverland theatre produces collaborative productions with community and local high schools. Summerset Community Theatre (three events per year) and the annual Alumni Show are two examples. Cast, crew, and orchestra members come from the surrounding area to perform in the productions along with students. With Summerset and the Alumni events included, the Theatre averages more than 7800 in attendance each year. With support from a grant,

RCC Theatre Day brings high school students to the campus to take part in workshops with theatre professionals.

The RCC choir performs as part of many of the theatre events as well as two to five special concerts and five to ten appearances at local nursing homes each year. The concert choir ranges from 22 to 42 students per semester. The performance choir generally has 16 to 22 students. Guest artists from the region give workshops and perform throughout the school year.

The Art gallery began in 2003 as a result of advisory members, faculty, and student planning and collaboration. With a foundation grant, many local artists and students display their work. Student participation has been integral to running the gallery. An estimated 5000 people have visited the gallery since its opening.

RCC students have the opportunity to take part in ten student clubs and numerous student events such as dances, intramural sports, and Fall and Spring festivals. Some clubs, such as student senate, Phi Theta Kappa, and Skills USA, have chapters on multiple campuses. A list of all student clubs and explanation of each is found in 1P10. RCC has eight athletic teams. Athletics provide an enhanced educational experience for both men and women student athletes and enjoyment for community spectators. An estimated 1500 spectators attend RCC athletic events each year.

Figure 2.4

Event	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Theatre Participants (student)	119	154	141
Theatre Attendance	4440	4085	2111*
Community theatre event attendance	4522	2988	3939
Choir concert attendance	300	585	810*
# of student clubs	11	11	10
# of students involved in clubs (approx.)	218	238	262
# of athletic programs	9	9	8
Students involved in athletics	73	70	*

***Additional Events/Performances Scheduled**

To increase minority and diversity awareness, RCC wanted to understand the needs in this region. As a result, RCC in collaboration with Hormel Foundation, Austin Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and Workforce Development Inc. commissioned the Wilder Research Center to gather information on immigrants’ experiences and needs related to education and training. The study was completed and published in early 2003. This report entitled, “New Immigrant Educational Experiences and Needs,” deals with the Hispanic, Sudanese, and Bosnian immigrants. The results have formed new procedures to address these concerns.

The “*Changes/Cambios Project*,” made possible through a grant, targeted an audience of adult women with special focus on Latina women and families. Components of the project include information on career and technical programs, assessment of needs or skills, visit to labs and other learning areas for hands on experience, setting goals, stereotypes and gender expectations, and values or decision-making. This exemplifies the RCC mission’s “learning for living and personalized educational environment.”

The “*Building Community, An Equity and Diversity Initiative*”, funded through a grant, focused on the creation and maintenance of safe, comfortable campus environment. Project results were to create a collaborative regional team, to provide access to information and education on issues of equity and diversity, to cause changes in cultural understanding and attitude on the part of professionals and other community members, to develop an analysis of racism within RCC that promotes institutional transformation, and to plan for future activities to eradicate racism and value diversity.

RCC students and the community are part of an environment to encourage exploration, risk, and individuality within a climate of understanding, tolerance, and empowerment. The Riverland Gay-Straight Alliance and the International Students Club work together to promote an understanding and safe environment. (See 1C4 for club descriptions) The work of the international and minority advisors, along with the Austin Welcome Center, has improved educational access, provided smooth transitions, and reduced tensions.

2R2 Results comparisons

Riverland Training and Development consistently ranks among the top MnSCU institutions for participation and collaboration. RTD received a national award for its Hispanic nursing assistant program and has been the recipient of awards from Workforce Development Inc. and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation for workforce development. RTD’s graduation placement rates rank among the best in MnSCU colleges.

RCC’s Theatre, Music, and Art departments distinguish it from other two-year institutions. With Fine Arts degrees in Theatre and Music, RCC is one of three 2-year colleges in Minnesota to offer these programs. The theatre stages four student productions and four community productions each year. The concert choir has participated twice in the National Community College Choral Festival in New York City. In 2000, the group sang in Carnegie Hall and in 2003 at Lincoln Center. Nationally and internationally recognized performers have given concerts and taught master classes.

The ethnic minority student enrollment has more than doubled over the last five years. This is an indicator of the positive public view the college has generated.

2R3 Strengthening the institution

Involvement is the key to any successful objective. Working together to provide needed services and opportunities for students, staff, and community members enhances the environment and the feeling of inclusion that is crucial to success. Working collaboratively with regional organizations strengthens the communities financially and socially. Being open to the public, the college provides a place to build unity among community members. A leader in cultural and diversity awareness, the college supports a climate of pride and individualism.

RTD and Management Education programs have a significant economic impact on the communities and the region. Efficiency and productivity problems and solutions generate the specific training designed for each company. Programs and training provided ensures a steady flow of graduates to fill any shortages of skilled workers.

2I1 Improving systems

Using the same processes outlined in 2P1, the respective committee or department: analyzes the results, identifies concerns or un-met results, measures effectiveness of current processes, forms new ideas and processes, determines needed and available resources, and changes or enhances current processes. The Strategic Plan has been recently revised (Spring 2005) and the college will begin to assess stakeholder and community needs as outlined in the plan. The Strategic Plan is a set of functions that will guide work plans, resources and processes.

2I2 Targets and improvement priorities

Anticipating the future needs of the college, community, and individuals is consistent with RCC's Mission and Vision (See Institutional Overview 01.). By keeping informed of trends, affordability, and inclusiveness, there is a target for improvement. The processes for target setting and communication of improvements are the same as those followed in 2P1, 2P2, and 2P3. One area that the college needs to address is grant writing. The college has one grant writer and needs to develop ways to receive larger grants.

The college will expand the cultural diversity objective. Some possibilities include starting a forum for immigrants to talk about their concerns. RCC is in the process of starting some sporting events, which will reach out to the minority youth in the area. RCC would like to develop and play a stronger role in the Austin Ethnic Festival. The college is presently exploring offering an Associate of Arts degree for Spanish and bilingual people. RCC works closely with the Austin Welcome Center. (See Fig. 2.5)

Figure 2.5

	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
African	1%	1%	2%	3%	3%
Hispanic	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Pacific Asian Islander	1%	1%	1%	0.50%	.50%
Unknown/Uncoded	5%	3%	5%	2%	1%
Caucasian	90%	92%	89%	89%	90%
Mixed Race	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%	.50%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

RTD has set a goal of delivering company-sponsored training to 75% of the top 50 companies in the regional market area. Furthermore, the department is working to shorten the time for development of new courses or programs designed to meet the needs identified by business and industry clients. RTD will find ways to increase the number and quality of the pre and post-training assessments for contracted training projects.

RCC'S recently formed partnership with KSMQ can provide the college with a powerful outreach tool. The station plans to acquire more regional partners and ensure the resources needed to be successful. KSMQ's recent change from an analog to a digital broadcast allows for growth and improvement. Possibilities include KSMQ agreements with RCC to tape and broadcast faculty lectures and lab demonstrations for future use, to

provide telecourses for college credit, or to provide delivery of RTD courses for credit training opportunities. (The Master Academic Plan addresses the college's future options with KSMQ.)

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Criterion #3 Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

3C1: Students and other major stakeholders

Athletes, post-secondary, career track, international, Farm Business Management, Small Business Management, transfer, traditional, non-traditional, disabled, RTD, and scholars define a portion of the RCC student body. Stakeholders include parents, alumni, advisory board members, area agencies, employers who work with the college, and the students. Both the students and stakeholders reap the rewards of a better-educated population. As a two-year college we provide access to full-time and part-time students through transfer and vocational offerings as well as courses that correspond to community needs.

3C2: Students' and other major stakeholders' requirements and expectations

Major Stakeholders	Requirements	Expectations
Prospective Students	Excellent Education Affordability for Students.	Certificate, Diploma, AAS, AS, AA, Graduation, Updated Job Skills.
Current Students	Excellent Education Affordability for Students.	Certificate, AAS, AS, AA, Graduation, Updated Job Skills.
Advisory Board Members	Excellent Education.	Trained Workforce.
Community Residents & Employers	Excellent Education.	Trained Workforce.
Parents	Affordable Education.	Educated Children.
Legislators	Affordable Education. Accessible Education.	Trained Workforce.
Business & Industry		Trained Workforce.

Students must meet specific admissions requirements, identify areas of study, maintain a grade point average of 2.0, maintain good attendance and achieve academic progress through study and proper conduct, pay tuition bills, demonstrate respect and tolerance, and pursue personal development and leadership opportunities. Graduation is the expected outcome. Other outcomes include CEU's upgrade in skills, but not earning a degree.

Major requirements of stakeholders include maintaining lines of communication, providing feedback, and supporting the programs in appropriate ways.

3P1: Identifying, analyzing, and addressing changing student needs

RCC strives to accurately identify the students' changing needs by consulting the following sources:

- Frontline staff: feedback drawn from direct interaction with students.
- Student Senate and Student Ambassadors: meeting minutes reflect student input.
- New student orientations: attendees evaluate each session's effectiveness.
- Student focus groups.
- Surveys: Student Satisfaction, Student Engagement, Faculty Assessment, Graduate Follow-up.
- Accuplacer/CPT: course placement test measures and reports student proficiency levels in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Periodic academic and administrative program reviews.

College academic and administrative leadership teams analyze the data collected via these methods to devise relevant action plans. The placement test collects data regarding the skill levels of incoming students in reading, writing, and math. Students must earn minimum cut scores to be eligible for some RCC programs or courses. Collected and analyzed test data identifies knowledge gaps in the student population. To address this need, Academic Affairs may increase the number of developmental course offerings, evaluate placement test scores, design new courses, or revise existing curriculum.

During meetings of the college divisions, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team (V-PASS), Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT), AQIP action teams, problem-solving task forces, and departmental and program reviews, data review and analysis measures the current practices. RCC's strategic planning process integrates this information with "best practices" to first create and then initiate action plans to address identified student needs.

3P2: Building and maintaining student relationships

RCC continually seeks to build and maintain quality relationships with area students. Through community outreach, even the youngest students enjoy positive exposure to the college and its programs. RCC hosts Kids College, elementary, middle, and high school science fairs, fine arts and theater productions, Boss (Bikers of Student Success) Rides, Career and College Fairs, FBM/SBM activities, athletic events, Big Days and Big Nights on Campus, and trips abroad.

RCC maintains relationships with students by the following means:

- Interactive communication with student clubs and organizations.
- Student representation on AQIP teams and focus groups.
- Feedback collected from surveys, complaints, and instructor evaluations.
- Targeted communication campaigns: potty post, policy posters, electronic newsletter, email links on website, informational mailings, admissions mailings.
- Special events for students: recruiting tours; new student orientations; college sponsored activities; concerts; theater productions; athletics; scholarship banquets; college, career, and job fairs; and get acquainted picnics.

- Students take part in services such as tutoring, Writing Center, counseling, advising, and mentoring.
- Student involvement in work-study, internships, clinical, fieldwork, and service learning programs.
- Open-door access to staff, faculty, and administration.
- Student Affairs mission statement: “In all things ...we put students first.”
- College Foundation and Alumni Association sponsored events.
- Community service projects – students work as volunteer tutors.

3P3 Identifying, analyzing, and addressing changing stakeholder needs

To identify the changing needs of major stakeholder groups, RCC relies on information from the following sources:

- Consultations with program advisory boards and internship providers.
- Communication with the College Foundation, OCUC Board, and regional marketing partnerships.
- MnSCU conferences and publications.
- Employer surveys to assess satisfaction with employee performance and recruitment results.
- Riverland Training and Development (RTD) reports regarding services to local business and industry.
- RCC’s relationship with city, county, and state governmental agencies.
- RCC’s involvement with SE Minnesota Training Consortium and SSE MN MnSCU Dean’s committee.
- College involvement with chambers of commerce, economic development, and social service agencies, and local and state legislators.
- College representation in community service clubs and organizations.
- CCSSE.

As part of the strategic planning process, RCC’s academic and administrative leadership teams process this information with the goal of selecting action plans to prioritize and address key stakeholders’ needs. This process of analyzing information and planning appropriate actions is the same followed by student stakeholders.

3P4 Building and maintaining stakeholder relationships

Building and maintaining quality relationships requires effective communication. College and newspaper publications, targeted mailings, live meetings and conferences, radio and television broadcasts, and the website establish and coordinate communication with key stakeholders.

Similarly, the process RCC uses to learn about the needs of current and prospective stakeholders serves to build and maintain these relationships. RCC solicits input and feedback through surveys, focus groups, and instructor and program evaluations. In an ongoing effort to improve academic offerings and services, personnel consult regularly

with advisory boards, Foundation members, employers, and fieldwork and internship providers. Meetings with local school, business, industry, and government leaders discuss possible partnerships. In addition, college employees support key stakeholders' interests by contributing to service organizations and participating in community events. RCC maintains a dialogue with stakeholders to ensure listening and responding to their needs, as well as those of the communities served.

3P5 Determining new student and stakeholder groups

RCC's academic leadership team uses the data and feedback collected from surveys and focus groups, CPT and ISRS demographic information, and labor trends and statistics to identify new student and stakeholder groups who may require educational services. The Administrative Council has articulated an institutional planning process that will continually evaluate how effectively these programs serve students, community, and employer needs. Program modification is the result of this process.

Supported by the college president, managed by the academic leadership team, and submitted to internal and external stakeholders for improvement, the college's master academic plan is continually changing. As a result, new programs, including Massage Therapy, Welding, Computer Technology Professions, and Surgical Technology, became part of the curriculum. This plan aligns program review with other strategic plans, MnSCU goals, and community needs.

3P6 Collecting complaint information, analyzing the feedback, and communicating actions

RCC has a complaint process chiefly for students. Located in the student handbook and on the college web site are the policies concerning student conduct and the student complaint process. Students should follow the chain of responsibility when filing a complaint by speaking with an immediate supervisor of a particular department or with a faculty member directly. If direct communication does not produce the results a student is anticipating, a formal complaint on the form in the student handbook would be the next step. The Human Resources Department reviews a student's initial complaint to determine if it is an issue associated with harassment, discrimination, or violence. If the matter is not one of these issues, the vice president of student affairs will start a data collection file and refer the matter to a trained counselor for investigation. The vice president of student affairs reviews the investigative report, holds a hearing with the student, and renders a decision. The vice president informs the student of the decision, and the appropriate sanction applies to the offending party.

Other stakeholders may also use the college grievance or complaint process to lodge a complaint against the college, a student, or a staff member. If a staff member collects a complaint informally, the appropriate staff member, faculty member, and Department head meet to resolve the complaint in a timely manner.

3P7 Determining student and other major stakeholder satisfaction, measuring and analyzing results

Many sources collect satisfaction data. A variety of survey instruments are used by the college and are addressed below.

When possible, RCC compares local data with national and state data. This is especially true of the ACT Student Satisfaction Survey, the National Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Noel-Levitz designed survey of employer satisfaction. By performing the ACT assessment every other year, student satisfaction survey results are current. RCC anticipates using the same schedule with the National Community College Survey of Students Engagement and the Noel-Levitz designed survey of employer satisfaction. Institution-designed surveys of satisfaction of students who have withdrawn from the college, graduates, and students in the Post Secondary Enrollment Options Program collect this information annually.

3R1 Student satisfaction results

College satisfaction measures show positive trends consistency with national data. The Student Affairs Leadership team, the Academic Affairs Leadership team, and the Leadership Council review the results of all survey instruments. Results, shared with faculty leadership through the Faculty Shared Governance Council, help to establish goals for improvement primarily through annual operational planning. This is especially true in student affairs. The vice president of student affairs shares the data with student focus groups and the student senates.

American College Testing Student Satisfaction Data

Every other year, RCC administers to approximately 350 Spring Semester students the American College Testing (ACT) survey instrument developed exclusively for two-year colleges. The sample represents approximately 9% of spring enrollees. Faculty members in daytime and evening general studies classes, career program classes on both the Albert Lea and Austin Campuses and at the Owatonna College and University Center assist in administering the surveys.

The ACT results show a student satisfaction rate that closely mirrors national results. The following is a summary of the most recent survey results from the 2002 assessment. As a note of clarification, the NCCSSE was administered in 2004 instead of the ACT survey. All of the results are report based on a Likert scale of 1-5 with the range of 5 being “very satisfied” to 1 being “very dissatisfied.”

General Aspects of RCC – 3.1

	RCC	National
College in general	4.02	4.05
Racial harmony	3.88	3.86
Attitude of non-teaching staff toward students	3.79	3.74
Opportunities for student employment	3.75	3.58
Opportunities for involvement in student activities	3.73	3.67

Student Service Areas – 3.2

	RCC	National
Registration procedures	3.89	3.94
Personal counseling services	4.07	4.04
Career planning services	3.92	4.00
Catalog and other college publications	3.88	3.98
Admission Procedures	3.87	3.90
Assistance provides by admission staff	3.84	3.93
Accuracy of admissions information	3.79	3.90
Availability of financial aid information	3.79	3.77

College Facilities – 3.3

	RCC	National
General conditions	4.12	4.06
Classroom facilities	4.00	3.97
Study areas	3.95	3.91
Lab facilities	3.82	3.04
Shop facilities*	3.77	3.58
*denotes a statistically significant difference at a .01 level		

Academic Assistance – 3.4

	RCC	National
Information provided by advisors	3.92	3.86
Availability of my advisor	3.87	3.85
Availability of class faculty	3.86	3.91
General Satisfaction		
Overall rating of satisfaction	3.83	3.94

When comparing the results on key items between the last two times RCC administered the survey, improvement in overall student satisfaction with the college and little change in academic satisfaction indicators were two outcomes. Even though the key academic satisfaction indicators were down between the 2000 and 2002 surveys, they were not statistically significant differences.

Satisfaction Survey Results-Historical Summary (ACT Survey) – 3.5

	1999/2000 Student Satisfaction Survey	2001/2002 Student Satisfaction Survey
Overall Student Satisfaction	Very satisfied to satisfied—75%	Very satisfied to satisfied—85%
Would you attend RCC again?	Yes—64%	Yes—65%
Academic Satisfaction*	1. Class size—4.17 2. Challenge offered by the program—4.10 3. Quality of instruction—4.09	1. Class size-4.14 2. Challenge offered by the program—3.99 3. Quality—3.99
Service Satisfaction *	1. Registration services—3.94 2. Admissions services—3.92 3. Assistance provided by student service staff—3.85	1. Recreation and Intramural activities—4.18 2. Library—4.10 3. Counseling services—4.07

*(Top three areas of student satisfaction.) Based on a Likert scale of 1-5 with 5 being very satisfied.

3R2 Student relationship building results

Students Who Withdraw – 3.6

RCC surveys students who withdraw from the college every other year. The principle reason for withdrawing remains consistent since 2002 and matches U.S. Department of Education research on the subject. The satisfaction level of withdrawn students with the college improved between 2002 to 2004.

	2002	2004	National Data (2003 USED Report)
Principle reason for leaving	Employment conflicts/needed to work	Personal and financial	Employment/ needed to work
Satisfaction with your college experience*	3.42	4.1	

*(On a scale of 1-5 with 5 “very satisfied” to 1 “very dissatisfied”)

Students in the PSEO Program

Each year RCC surveys students enrolled in the Post-Secondary Education Enrollment Options program. This dual enrollment program allows high school students to earn high

school and college credit by taking RCC college-level courses taught either at the high school or at an RCC campus.

Results show student satisfaction with their participation in the program and with student and college services generally improved from 2003 to 2004 except in the area of library and computer services.

Would You Recommend the PSEO Program to a Friend?

(Percentage of respondents with a “yes” response) - 3.7

2003	2004
96%	100%

Percentage of the Students Surveyed who Found the PSEO or New Student Orientation Valuable to Somewhat Valuable – 3.8

2003	2004
87%	95%

Service Satisfaction

(Percentage of students who indicated that they received excellent to good services from the various areas or departments listed below) - 3.9

Department	2003	2004
Admissions	73%	80%
Counseling	71%	80%
Student Service Centers	76%	80%
Library	63%	35%
Computer Services	74%	65%
Bookstore	59%	60%
College Staff	84%	85%

Overall Satisfaction with the Program -3.10

(satisfied to very satisfied)

2003	2004
100%	100%

Graduate Exit Survey of Satisfaction – 3.11, 3.12

Every other year RCC administers an institutional-developed survey of graduate satisfaction. The results for 2002 are below:

2002	Satisfied or Very Satisfied		Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Student Service Areas		Academic Areas	
Assistance with Financial Aid process	56	Variety of classes offered	76
Assistance with Registration process	80	Quality of teaching in general	82
Assistance with Cashier services	64	Availability of faculty outside of class	61
Availability of Counseling staff	68	Attitude of faculty toward students	82
Assistance with Career Counseling	46	Quality of equipment in lab facilities	65
Adequately informed about Placement services	39	Class sizes	86
Experience in Student Housing	12	Class scheduling	72
Availability of tutoring assistance	20	Assistance from library staff	59
Opportunities for involvement in Student Activities	41	Overall experience in your program/degree	89

The results for 2004 are listed below.

2004	Satisfied or Very Satisfied		Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Student Service Areas		Academic Areas	
Assistance with Financial Aid process	61	Variety of classes offered	78
Assistance with Registration process	84	Quality of teaching in general	83
Assistance with Cashier services	64	Availability of faculty outside of class	71
Availability of Counseling staff	59	Attitude of faculty toward students	78
Assistance with Career Counseling	39	Quality of equipment in lab facilities	73
Adequately informed about Placement services	37	Class sizes	87
Experience in Student Housing	10	Class scheduling	85
Availability of tutoring assistance	20	Assistance from library staff	60
Opportunities for involvement in Student Activities	37	Overall experience in your program/degree	88

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

RCC participated in the CCSSE survey for the first time in 2004. The CCSSE reports survey results using national benchmarks, areas that educational research has shown to be important in quality educational practice. The five benchmarks are Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction and Support for Learners. The benchmarks are below:

Active and Collaborative Learning - Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings.

Student Effort - Students' behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will attain their educational goals.

Academic Challenge - Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality.

Student-Faculty Interaction - In general, the more interaction students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and persist toward achievement of their educational goals.

Support for Learners - Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus.

The results reported below show first institutional strengths and then growth areas.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Institutional Strength: Worked with other students on projects during class
(Scale of 1-4, 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very Often)

RCC: 2.71 National: 2.48

Academic Challenge

Institutional Strength: Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings
(Scale of 1-5: 1 = none, 2 = Between 1 and 4, 3 = Between 5 and 10, 4 = between 11 and 20, and 5 = More than 20)

RCC: 3.31 National: 2.95

Academic Challenge

Institutional Strength: Number of written papers or reports of any length
(Scale of 1-5: 1 = None, 2 = Between 1 and 4, 3 = Between 5 and 10, 4 = Between 11 and 20, 5 = More than 20)

RCC: 3.15 National: 2.97

Student Effort

Growth Area: Use of peer or other tutoring
(Scale of 0-3: 0 =Don't Know/NA, 1 = Rarely/Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often)

RCC: 1.34 National: 1.48

Academic Challenge

Growth Area: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways
(Scale 1-4: 1 = Very little, 2 = Some 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very much)

RCC: 2.53 National: 2.70

Student-Faculty Interaction

Growth Area
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance
(Scale 1-4: 1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very much)

RCC: 2.47 National: 2.64

Support for Learners

Growth Areas

Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college

(Scale 1-4: 1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very much)

RCC: 2.76 National: 2.92

Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds

(Scale 1-4: 1=Very little 2=Some 3=Quite a bit 4=Very much)

RCC: 2.29 National: 2.46

3R3 Stakeholder satisfaction results

The stakeholder satisfaction surveys show multifaceted results. The College gathers survey information from current students, as well as business and industry input to measure how RCC is doing and what RCC needs to do for future programming.

One example is Viracon “U.” RCC in Viracon at Owatonna increased the course offerings, so students can complete an Associate of Arts degree at night within eleven semesters.

Discontinuing programs that the community advises is another way that acknowledges information from the public. Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Radio/Broadcasting are three programs closed due to job outlook.

Financial Aid Department actions affect student attendance and retention and impact RCC’s performance. Retention statistics matter. Assistance provided by the Student Success Center helps students to succeed and to complete their education followed by employment.

Noel-Levitz Employer Satisfaction Survey

RCC participated as a pilot college to assist Noel-Levitz develop an employer satisfaction survey. In the spring of 2004, RCC administered the draft survey to 62 area employers. The compiled results included graduates from 24 of 55 career and technical majors and represented 57 graduates or approximately 10% of the 2004 graduating class.

The results reported below show as items of importance to employers, how their ratings of importance compare to national data collected for the pilot, and how satisfied they as employers were with the RCC graduates they hired. The results, reported with a Likert scale of 1-5 (with 5 being extremely important or satisfied and 1 being not at all of importance or satisfied), include the categories of Knowledge and Understanding, Qualities Expected with New Hires, General Skills, Specialized Skills, and Overall Satisfaction. National data is in parenthesis after the data for the local results. It is important to note that the difference in the results on each item does not reflect a statistically significant difference at a .05 level of significance.

RCC plans to administer the Noel-Levitz employer satisfaction survey every other year starting in 2006.

Knowledge and Understanding

Importance

- 4.24 (4.18)...Knowledge in the field
- 4.16 (4.13)...Understanding of job-related info
- 4.05 (3.78)...Specific technical knowledge required for the job

Satisfaction

- 3.75(3.99)...Knowledge in the field
- 3.71 (3.97)...Understanding of job-related info
- 3.60 (3.81)...Specific technical knowledge required for the job

Qualities Expected with New Hires

Importance

- 4.54 (4.64)...Reliability
- 4.46 (4.57)...Willingness to learn
- 4.43 (4.49)...Understands and takes direction
- 4.39 (4.46)...Accepts responsibility for actions
- 4.33 (4.49)...Integrity

Satisfaction

- 4.12 (4.30)...Reliability
- 4.13 (4.39)...Willingness to learn
- 4.00 (4.25)...Understands and takes direction
- 3.85 (4.14)...Accepts responsibility for actions
- 4.02 (4.23)...Integrity

General Skills

Importance

- 4.40 (4.46)...Teamwork
- 4.37 (4.40)...Communication (listening and verbal)
- 4.31 (4.30)...Customer Service
- 4.27 (4.25)...Critical Thinking
- 3.90 (4.04)...Reading

Satisfaction

- 3.80 (4.08)...Teamwork
- 3.92 (4.04)...Communication (listening and verbal)
- 3.90 (4.08)...Customer Service
- 3.64 (3.88)...Critical Thinking
- 3.90 (4.07)...Reading

Specialized Skills

Importance

- 3.68 (3.89)...Ability to set goals and allocate time to achieve them
- 3.44 (3.58)...Ability to translate theory into practice
- 2.90 (2.98)...Mentor and coach colleagues

Satisfaction

- 3.33 (3.75)...Ability to set goals and allocate time to achieve them
- 3.33 (3.64)...Ability to translate theory into practice
- 3.11 (3.32)...Mentor and coach colleagues

Overall Satisfaction

- 3.85 (4.09)...Employee's Knowledge and Understanding of Their Major Field of Study
- 3.67 (3.91)...Employee's General Knowledge (outside of their field of study)
- 3.81 (4.18)...Demonstrates Qualities You Expect from a Recent College Graduate
- 3.85 (4.12)...Employee's General Skills as They Relate to Their Job
- 3.53 (3.86)...Employee's Specialized Skill
- 3.85 (4.13)...Likelihood of Hiring Other Grads

3R4 Stakeholder relationship building results

The results from building relationships with the stakeholders are excellent. The stakeholders conduct periodic surveys in the community. One example is the Graduation Exit Survey. During this time, stakeholders and the college administration work closely together which promotes understanding and mutual respect. The Administrative Leadership Team's improvements drive the process for changes and improvements.

3R5 Results comparisons

Recent national surveys (American College Testing and Noel-Levitz) of student satisfaction with community college students showed the following results.

The ACT study found:

- 60% of the students were attending institutions to meet the requirements for their chosen occupation.
- 83% were satisfied (satisfied to very satisfied) with their community college.
- Specifically, students were most satisfied with faculty respect of gender/race, campus security, and instruction.
- Less highly rated areas were the quality of advising and assistance from the financial aid office.

The Noel-Levitz research most significant findings were:

- Two-year colleges better meet students' expectations than four-year institutions.
- Satisfaction levels were favorable concerning safety/security, admission/financial aid services, and responsiveness to diverse populations.
- Decreased satisfaction was noted in academic advising.
- Students over 25 were not satisfied with Admission/financial aid service or the response to diverse populations.

3I1 How RCC improves current systems and processes

There are many ways to continually improve while adhering to the vision and mission statements. Constant feedback through surveys and evaluations make the service to students and stakeholders better. Outcome measures must meet the needs of the students. Job outlook is important as these students face the employment market.

RCC continually evaluates the current processes and systems for understanding the needs of students and stakeholders. Group discussions are just one form of communication used to evaluate the processes. An example would be AQIP action groups. RCC encourages feedback from students and stakeholders through written communications and face-to-face contact. The Student Satisfaction Survey is an important part of understanding the students' needs.

3I2 How RCC sets improvement targets and communicates these targets to students and other major stakeholders

The Student Satisfaction Surveys are a valuable tool for setting targets for improvement. RCC conducts periodic conferences with stakeholders. These meetings often lead to targeted improvements of current systems and operations. An example of this is attracting students through more effective marketing techniques. MnSCU drives the minority recruitment initiative. RCC, with the help of the Admissions and Communications Departments, successfully implemented an increase in enrollment of minorities. Results and targets for improvement for students and other stakeholders identify the next AQIP Actions Plans.

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Criterion #4: Valuing People

4C1: Organization of work environment, activities, and jobs

As a member of MnSCU, RCC adheres to the policies set by the MN Department of Employee Relations, MnSCU Board of Trustees and the system office under the chancellor. The president of the college, along with three vice presidents, has the responsibility to carry out these policies. The Administrative Council provides a format to carry out the goals set forth in the mission statement efficiently. The strategic plan outlines specific goals with projected completion dates with AQIP goals designated in each area.

In addition to the management structure, various committees play an important role in the college's successful completion of its goals. These committees include Administrative Leadership Council, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team, Academic Affairs and Standards Council, Student Affairs Leadership Team, Student Life Committee, Student Senate, Faculty Shared Government Council, AFSCME Meet and Confer, and the Technology Round Table.

4C2: Key institutional and geographic factors and part-time employees

Located in a rural area of southern Minnesota, RCC is forty-five miles from the nearest major city. It is composed of two campuses and one learning center. (See Institutional Overview 01.) RCC Management Education Programs also serve 12 counties in SE Minnesota. Because of the large geographical area covered, 14 instructors are located in individual or shared offices located throughout the region.

Although the college is committed to hiring the best possible candidate for each position, its rural setting and the limited opportunity for employment of spouses reduce the number of candidates for positions.

RCC employs 322 faculty and staff. Of the 120 staff, 102 are full-time and 18 are part-time. There are 97 full-time faculty members and 105 adjunct faculty who teach at least one class each semester. There are 78 female staff and 42 males. There are 42 full-time female faculty and 55 full-time males. The adjunct faculty is evenly divided. All staff and faculty go through planned orientations.

4C3: Workforce Needs

RCC evaluates its workforce needs annually. Because so many employees have worked at RCC for more than 15 years, the human resource department is planning for a large number of retirements in the next five years. As the college adds programs to train employees for emerging careers and changing employment opportunities, RCC must plan for adequate staffing.

Because many incoming students need more developmental reading, writing, and English Language Learning, RCC is researching the need to hire additional faculty and support personnel.

4C4: Key training initiatives

The college provides many training opportunities for its staff and faculty, including new employee training and orientations for new full-time and adjunct faculty. Ongoing training initiatives include an all-staff development day and two faculty development days annually.

In addition, all staff and faculty have access to dedicated staff development funds to attend conferences and other training opportunities (separate funds exist for faculty and for staff). The college provides paid sabbaticals for full-time faculty, and MnSCU's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides free enrichment and collaborative activities. The college provides tuition waivers to faculty, staff, and their dependents for college courses. The college provides leadership training for all supervisors.

Assistance with the development of Individual Growth Plans for staff and faculty is a recent addition to the repertoire of personal growth opportunities. In August 2005, RCC initiated an Employee Leadership Development Program for all staff and faculty.

4P1: Identifying credentials, skills and values and insuring hiring processes account for these requirements

Union contracts determine the hiring practices for RCC. The Human Resources department provides the guidelines and coordinates all hiring. The Personnel Action Packet contains information on all aspects of the hiring process – from approval of the position to the final hiring. RCC uses interview teams to represent all pertinent areas of the college in selecting the best possible candidate for each position.

Academic positions adhere to MnSCU's credentialing requirements. The Human Resources department (Academic Affairs for faculty) ensures that all potential employees have the proper certification by checking transcripts, references, and status of any required licensure. As part of the interview process, faculty applicants demonstrate their teaching ability. The college's affirmative action plan outlines the criteria for any employment search. (See Section 4P2)

4P2: Recruiting, hiring, retaining, orienting and planning for employee changes

RCC's recruitment and retention plans are integral parts of the affirmative action plan. Committed to recruit talent from diverse backgrounds, recruitment is the responsibility of every supervisor and administrator who has authority in hiring decisions. The Human Resources Office assists them in this process. The Affirmative Action Officer and the senior administration lead the college's recruitment efforts.

Recruitment methods include internal postings, advertising in local and state newspapers, the college web site, MnSCU, DOER, HigherEdJobs.com, appropriate trade journals, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. There is a student intern program, which can lead to full-time employment. RCC has tried various methods to elicit applications from individuals with disabilities without success. It is continually seeking new venues to attract these individuals.

RCC also strives to retain its workforce by creating a work culture that fosters a feeling of being valued and supported by management and by promoting individual growth. The responsibility for these efforts lies with every employee, but the primary responsibility rests with the Vice President of Employee & Public Relations, college administration, and supervisors.

Retention strategies include a systematic employee orientation process, faculty mentors, an awards and recognition program, review of performance feedback, professional growth plans, college-wide climate survey, the AQIP process, ergonomics evaluations, safety training, crisis management training, staff development opportunities, and opportunities for promotion or transfer.

RCC's planning initiatives attempt to make staff turnover as efficient as possible. The college has had a number of presidents in the last 10 years, which has created a sense of uncertainty. Because many people are involved at so many levels of leadership, transitions usually go well.

4P3: Insuring work process and activity contributions as well as ethical practices

The administration works closely with college committees such as Faculty Shared Governance Council, Academic Leadership Team, the Student Affairs Leadership Team, AFSCME Meet and Confer, and individual classroom instructors to determine work processes.

RCC has clearly stated policies and procedures for ensuring compliance to:

- Discrimination laws.
- Misconduct (Code of Conduct) issues.
- FERPA.
- Sexual harassment laws.
- Workplace violence laws.
- Student rights and responsibilities.
- Academic freedom and ethics of instruction.
- Plagiarism laws.

RCC posts all policy information on the college website and in student handbooks.

4P4: Training and developing employees and reinforcing training

RCC provides training for all staff and faculty, including:

- College and University Personnel Training workshops.
- State and national financial aid workshops.
- State Transfer specialist training for curriculum.
- State union leadership workshops for all unions.
- Workplace mediation training by the Bureau of Mediation Services.
- Blood-borne pathogen training sessions annually.
- Hazardous material training sessions.
- Microsoft Certification training.
- Workplace Spanish classes.
- Ongoing departmental training at MnSCU for specialized software and employment practices.
- Ongoing Desire 2 Learn online course development training and support.

Topics addressed at recent all staff development days include Effective Communication, Strategic Planning, Racism, Global Education, Safety, and various college initiatives. Between 175 and 200 employees attended these full-day workshops in 2002 - 2004.

4P5: Determining training needs

RCC offers training opportunities that faculty and staff need and want. The college uses various methods of determining these needs, such as staff surveys, training for new technology implemented by the college and the state system, feedback from annual performance reviews, and specific requests by employees. Evaluations from training sessions always ask for suggestions for topics for future workshops. This process involves a feedback loop used by Academic and Student Affairs to improve faculty, staff and conference days. The climate survey shows areas that need improvement, such as trust in the workplace and collaboration strategies. These areas become topics for further training. The state mandates some training such as the eight-day new supervisor core-training program.

4P6: Designing and using personnel evaluation systems

Every staff member has an annual performance review while the academic deans evaluate faculty members every three years. Supervisors use a standard method and form to ensure equality. A committee made up of staff members designed the current process, which the union approved. The administration now uses a 360-degree feedback process. The Human Resources department retains evaluations in the employees' personnel files. There is a memorandum of understanding which has been agreed upon by unions and the college regarding personnel evaluation process.

4P7: Designing recognition, reward, and compensation systems and supporting employees through benefits and services

Negotiated agreements for the respective bargaining units determine all compensation packages for RCC. Compensation rate depends on experience, length of service, and state budget constraints. RCC has a committee made up of faculty and staff who coordinates awards and recognition activities. The major event each year is the end-of-the-school-year party where the college gives recognition and gifts for employment milestones and retirements. The college ensures all staff may attend.

Other ongoing recognition include the “Moment of Greatness” forms that employees fill out to recognize someone’s good work and official acknowledgement via email of individuals’ awards and honors.

4P8: Determining, analyzing, and selecting a course of action on key issues related to motivation:

The college administers a climate survey every other year to give all staff members the opportunity to express their opinions. The survey provides feedback to the administration highlighting strengths and weaknesses in areas such as communication effectiveness and employee job satisfaction. The college president conducts regular forums at all campuses to give everyone an opportunity to hear what is happening and to give direct feedback to him.

The college utilizes a Program Review system to assist all academic programs with providing the best possible education. Collegial teams of faculty and academic deans investigate programs to determine that they are achieving their stated goals. Academic Affairs offers monetary and technical assistance to enhance various aspects of programs.

Employee evaluation provides an opportunity for staff members to give input regarding their wants and needs. Planning committees determine the topics and agenda for all staff and faculty development days. Exit interviews provide suggestions for improvement.

4P9: Providing for and evaluating employee satisfaction, health and safety and well-being

RCC strives to create an environment where everyone can feel safe and well. The following policies, committees, and activities all contribute to a healthy work environment:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Crisis Management training.
- Regular tornado and fire drills.
- Gay Straight Alliance.
- Safety Committee (This committee meets a minimum of four times a year. Its mission is to promote safety and welfare of employees and students by reducing workplace accidents and injuries).

- RIOT.
- Wellness Committee.
- Ergonomics task force.
- Employee assistance program.
- Change locks to secure access to buildings.
- Summer all staff picnics.

4P10: Measuring effectiveness of valuing people and analyzing results

One indication of RCC employees feeling valued is their length of employment. Fifty-six percent of the 217 employees have stayed for ten years or longer; 80% have worked for five years or longer. Evaluations from new employee orientations and staff and faculty development days provide feedback. Safety data and worker’s compensation claims provide another measure of how successful the college is at keeping employees safe.

The MnSCU Office of Internal Auditing conducts periodic climate surveys on the following categories: organizational culture and structure, goals and management of change, policies and procedures, information and communication links, evaluation and feedback, and diversity.

4R1: Results for valuing people

Riverland Community College is committed to providing educational and employment opportunities to persons of diverse cultures and backgrounds toward the achievement of their learning, employment and citizenship goals. The College is proactive in its attempt to enrich the cultural diversity of its campus environment by employing people from groups which represent the fabric of our communities.

Goals and Timetables for the Enrichment of College Personnel

EEO Job Group	Women			Minorities			People with Disability		
	Number Under-utilized	Goal	Timetable	Number Under-utilized	Goal	Timetable	Number Under-utilized	Goal	Timetable
Officials and Administrators	0			1	1	6/06	0		
Professionals	12	5	6/06	7	2	6/06	10	2	6/06
Technicians	1	1	6/06	0			0		
Paraprofessionals	0			0			1	1	6/06
Office/Clerical	0			8	1	6/06	1	1	6/06
Skilled Craft	0			0			0		
Service Maintenance	7	2	6/06	1	1	6/06	2	1	6/06

The strong employment-retention data demonstrates that people feel valued. Climate survey results indicate that between 2002 and 2004, an increase in job satisfaction occurred. Of the 217 employees in 2004, 63% responded to the survey. Overall results show a 4.7% improvement over the 2002 survey results. The affirmative action plan and strategic plan also measure results in the areas of meeting hiring and retention goals.

4R2: Results for processes associated with valuing people

Employee exit surveys give input to the administration for possible areas of improvement. Survey results have dictated the recently revised staff development goals. Salaries are competitive, and climate survey participation is strong. There is always room to improve in this area. RCC prides itself on searching for improved methods of showing employees that they are important.

4R3: Results for employee productivity and effectiveness toward goal achievement

The college has developed a focused strategic planning process with measurable objectives for specific initiatives to determine productivity. The college continually updates and adjusts the plan to ensure that it is current.

Student Affairs sets goals, outcomes and actions annually. The president creates an annual work plan. Administrators submit their goals for this plan each year. The administration reviews the outcomes of their goals at the end of each year. The president uses these outcomes in his evaluation process.

4R4: Results comparison

RCC is a member of a state system of colleges and universities. This insures that salary and benefit packages are the same at all comparable public colleges in Minnesota.

4I1: Improvement of current processes and systems

Four areas being investigated for improvement include expand efforts to increase diversity of staff and faculty, expand recruitment efforts to attract disabled individuals, develop a clear plan of action to deal effectively with the projected large number of retirements, and develop a strategy to facilitate changes that occur when a new president is hired.

4I2: Targets, improvement priorities, communication

Many areas need ongoing improvement. Some immediate targets of improvements include convincing the legislature to increase funds for education; the recent passage of a \$5.5-million bonding bill will update science labs and other facilities. RCC is currently updating its Master Facility Plan. All staff and faculty had the opportunity to provide input.

The president's newspaper columns, emails, and forums give the college staff and local cities valuable information about RCC. A systematic review of the strategic plan and AQIP goals show which goals have been achieved and which need to be addressed.

Riverland's Affirmative Action Plan can be found at:
<http://www.riverland.cc.mn.us/administration/AffirmativeActionPlan.cfm>

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Criterion #5: Leading and Communicating

5C1 Leadership and communication systems

RCC is one of thirty-two colleges and universities in a statewide system collectively known as the MnSCU. This centralized system employs a shared governance model that balances responsibilities between the MnSCU Board of Trustees, the Office of the Chancellor, college president and the faculty association. The organizational chart found at <http://www.riverland.edu/Administration/orgcharts.cfm> depicts the formal leadership structure. (See Appendix I)

The institutional leadership system consists of a decision-making body, the Administrative Council, which includes the president, vice presidents, and deans and provides the college's vision, values, and long-range plans in collaboration with key stakeholders. The Administrative Council obtains input through formal consultation with such key stakeholders as the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team, Academic Affairs and Standards Council, AFSCME Meet-and-Confer, Faculty Shared Governance Council, Leadership Council, RCC Foundation, and Student Senates.

The Administrative Council includes the following members:

President

Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs

- Three Academic Deans.
- Dean of Training and Development.
- Dean of Management Education.
- Dean of Student Services.

Vice President of Finance, Facilities, and MIS

Vice President of Employee and Public Relations

5C2 Leadership system alignment with Board of Trustees and senior leaders

The leadership system at all institutional levels align with the practices and views of the MnSCU Board of Trustees, the Office of the Chancellor, and the Higher Learning Commission by incorporating the values, activities, and criteria of the respective groups in the strategic planning. The college president meets monthly with the board of trustees, the chancellor, and the other presidents in the system to communicate and ensure local practices align with the system's expectations.

5C3 Ethics and equity, social responsibilities, and community service and involvement

According to the mission, vision, and values identified in the recently completed college-wide strategic planning process, RCC values people above all, including employees, students, and community members. The value statements reflect RCC's commitment to honesty, mutual respect, integrity, and personal responsibility, as well as diversity and inclusiveness. The Affirmative Action Plan is a comprehensive action plan to assure that college processes incorporate MnSCU and articulated values. Reviewed and approved annually by the Office of the Chancellor, implementation of this plan assures the commitment to equity reflected in policies related to harassment, discrimination, and ADA compliance, along with state and federal laws. The President and senior leadership team developed a search process for new employees that embody the college's values and commitment to equity. RCC joined three other MnSCU colleges in southern Minnesota to hire jointly a Diversity Trainer and Investigator. This shared position is further evidence of the college's commitment to fair and equitable treatment of employees and students. RCC also successfully completed the process of auditing and compliance visits by the following agencies:

- Office of Civil Rights (Federal) ADA compliance visit - July 2004
- Office of Civil Rights (State) Compliance Audit - March 2005
- MnSCU Perkins compliance visit - Fall 2002, 2003, 2004

RCC's organizational structure reflects its commitment to valuing and honoring employee union contracts and assuring representation in the college shared governance system. All students receive via the student handbook the code of student rights and responsibilities, as well as the *Student Code of Conduct*. These values, developed in conjunction with the MnSCU system, College governance, and Student Senate, communicate clearly to students and employees the expectations of the college. The stated values also include a commitment to workforce and economic development. RCC supports service learning programs and employee involvement in community service organizations. The college, in collaboration with the MnSCU system, participates in an auditing, evaluating, and reporting system that monitors a variety of college processes to assure the college meets the highest standards of compliance, honesty, and accountability.

Many administrators, faculty, and staff members participate in civic and other external groups to connect to the communities served. Information gained from service on economic development boards, civic clubs, chambers of commerce, and other community agencies relate to curriculum development and other decision-making processes. RCC forms many partnerships with the business community, including advisory councils, to understand the communities' needs and remain current in fields of study.

5P1 Setting directions in alignment with the mission, vision, and values

The Chancellor and the MnSCU Board of Trustees meet annually to establish system initiatives and activities, formalized as the Chancellor's or System's Work Plan. They clarify their values and expectations in the MnSCU Chancellor's Work Plan through a

standardized format for all colleges and universities in the system. At an annual retreat, the Administrative Council develops the RCC President's Work Plan; the Chancellor's Work Plan and the college strategic plan (mission, vision, and values statements) guide the development of institutional goals. The vice presidents and deans develop their respective work plans in collaboration with the respective department or program and align them with the institution's goals and strategic plan. The work plans of senior leadership, including the vice presidents, deans, and directors, align with those of the Chancellor and the President via the system template for the President's Work Plan <http://www.riverland.edu/PDFs/PresidentsWorkPlan04-05.pdf>. These values and expectations clarify the governance structure amid multiple opportunities for collaborative feedback and revision. Leadership values reflect those in the mission, vision, and values statements of the college's strategic plan. The Leadership Council, consisting of the senior leadership team, the deans, department directors, and representatives from other college constituencies, meets every two weeks to gather input from key internal stakeholder groups, discuss common issues and concerns, make recommendations to the Administrative Council, and reinforce a focus on the institution's mission, vision, and values. The president, vice president, and dean of students, consult student senate leaders for information about students' needs and expectations.

Quarterly retreats ensure long-range planning embodies the mission, vision, and values, and aligns with the MnSCU initiatives. The recently revised College Strategic Plan uses a process, including environmental scanning, that utilized more than thirteen cross-functional teams of staff, faculty, students, community members, and other stakeholders. The Strategic Planning Committee invested extensive effort to ensure all possible stakeholders had input into the plan. The Master Academic Plan that has been in development during the frequent senior leadership changes in the years since merger is nearing completion. Indices used in that and other planning processes include data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, a recent Noel-Levitz Employer Satisfaction Pilot Survey, two college-wide climate surveys conducted in the last four years, Advisory Councils, the data collected from the AQIP Constellation Index, focus groups, and the Action Projects completed by cross-functional teams in the areas of decision-making, student success, satisfaction and retention, and communication.

5P2 Seeking future opportunities and building and sustaining a learning environment

The leaders work in partnership to build and sustain a learning environment by aligning priorities with values on learning, promoting a culture of inquiry, assessment and collaboration, and providing the resources (services, equipment, and facilities) necessary to create a superior learning environment. The college supports a process promoting academic excellence, such as the publication of a President's List, Dean's List, and a cross-functional committee that reviews student academic progress. The college supports organizations promoting academic development, excellence, and involvement, including Phi Theta Kappa and other student groups. The Academic Affairs and Standards Council review all matters pertaining to curriculum and oversees the course outline initiative, which is nearing completion after more than three years of work.

The college provides resources for enhancing staff and faculty professional development with sabbaticals, internships, conferences, and workshops. MnSCU provides professional development opportunities for college employees and has created a Center for Teaching and Learning that provides opportunity for faculty development, including statewide and discipline conferences that faculty may attend. MnSCU also sponsors a local chapter of the Center for Teaching and Learning that provides a forum for teachers to learn from each other about best practices.

5P3 Decision Making

College leaders make decisions in a variety of ways. Some decisions, by the nature and timing of the issue, come from the senior administration. In these cases, communication regarding the decision and assessment of the impact, as well as seeking input and feedback for improvement, follow the decision. The college president and senior leadership team have embraced a philosophy of broad-based empowerment when it comes to decision-making. In Fall 2004, an AQIP Action team project addressed improving communication and stakeholder input into decision-making processes. The cross-functional team working on the project developed criteria and guidelines reflected in the leadership philosophy regarding decision-making. Recommendations have been made and decisions are pending regarding criteria. Stakeholders make decisions at their level as much as possible. Solve-and-dissolve (SAD) committees, task forces, and advisory groups make recommendations regarding decisions in appropriate contexts. The decision-making matrix in Figure 5.1 indicates the major groups, their membership, and their functions.

5P4 Using information and results

College leadership groups use a variety of sources of information to make decisions. The results of the last two climate surveys, the AQIP Constellation Index, Provocative Propositions, and Conversation Day resulted in the recommendations made by the Action Project Team to improve decision-making and communication. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team (V-PASS) and Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) review the data from student satisfaction surveys and performance-measures data. Employer satisfaction surveys and placement surveys, along with the results of national accreditation reviews and board exams, assess the effectiveness of academic programs. MnSCU transfer data and degree criteria show the transferability of the associate degrees and the performance of RCC students. The Program Review Committee reviews all academic programs and liberal arts departments on a three-year cycle, and the Vital Signs process assesses programs with declining enrollment and other concerns. The results of audits and evaluations mentioned in the previous sections become the principle for making improvement decisions. The decision-making matrix in Figure 5.1 indicates the major groups, their membership, and their functions.

Figure 5.1

Decision-Making Matrix

Group	Membership	Function
Chancellor’s Leadership Council	Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and College Presidents	Sharing system and individual college information while recommending system-wide policies and procedures.
Administrative Council	President, VP’s, Deans	Provide leadership in guiding major processes of the College: continuous improvement, budgeting, human resource planning, computer/telecommunications, enrollment development, facilities planning, policies and procedures, academic issues, and College relations and marketing.
Leadership Council	Administrators, supervisors, union reps	Gather input, discuss issues and concerns, and make recommendations to Administrative Council.
Faculty Shared Governance Council	Administrative and faculty leadership reps	Make recommendations to the College regarding personnel, student affairs, facilities, fiscal matters, and general matters.
Academic Affairs and Standards Council	Faculty, administrators, relevant staff	Provide direction for college president in all matters relating to academic affairs.
AFSCME Meet and Confer	President, VP of Employee Relations, state and local union reps	Informal system of problem solving.
Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team (V-PASS)	V-PASS, Deans, Instructional Technology, faculty campus reps	Communication, problem solving, and decision making for Academic Affairs.
Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT)	V-PASS, Dean of Students, Directors, Counselor rep, staff campus reps	Communication, problem solving, and decision-making for Student Affairs.
Technology Round Table (TRT)	MIS, Finance, Faculty, Staff, Communications, Students, reps	Allocate technology funds equitably in accordance with RCC’s Technology Plan.
Budget Committee	College-wide constituency representation	Allocate equipment and reserve budget funds.
Riverland Community College Foundation (RCCF)	Community and RCC leadership representation	Raising funds to benefit the college and students, cultivating regional partnerships, advocate for RCC and its students, teaming with college leadership.
Student Senate	Elected students officers and advisors	Represent RCC students’ interests and concerns; assist in allocating funds generated by student fees.
Diversity Council (proposed)	College-wide constituents	Monitor and advise regarding equity and diversity issues.
Advisory Councils	Community leadership, business and industry reps, academic leadership, and program faculty	Provide advice and support to RCC programs.
Various college committees		
Vital Signs and	Academic Affairs	Assesses program enrollment and other concerns regarding

Program Review	leadership, program faculty	program viability.
Institutional Research Committee		

5P5 Communication between and among institutional levels

The following Communication Matrix gives examples of the extensive use of a wide variety of communication opportunities and strategies among all constituents and organizational levels of the college. The audience code designations are:

“Internal” includes employees of the college, including faculty, staff, and administrators; students; and, if appropriate, the RCC Foundation Board.

“External” may include community members, supporters, potential students, high schools, and patrons, as well as, if appropriate, the Foundation Board.

Figure 5.2

Communication Matrix

Communication Channel	Source	Frequency	Audience
President’s Annual Report	Office of the President	Annually	Internal and External; focused on annual outcomes
President’s Column	Community newspapers	Monthly	External; focused on college and MnSCU news
President’s Forum	President	Monthly	Internal; focused on college news
Regularly scheduled meetings	VPASS	1st & 3 rd Thursdays	Internal; focused on academic affairs
Regularly scheduled meetings	Leadership Council	Monthly	Internal; focused on college-wide activities
Regularly scheduled meetings	SALT	Monthly	Internal; focused on student affairs
Faculty/Staff Conference and Development Days	Administration Faculty Consultants/Experts	2 Faculty Days/year 1 All Staff Day/year	Internal; focused on professional development
Regularly scheduled meetings	AASC	Monthly	Internal; focused on curricular issues
Regularly scheduled meetings	FSGC	Monthly	Internal; focused on college-wide activities
Regularly scheduled meetings	Student Senate	Monthly	Internal; focused on student issues
News releases	Marketing Dept.	Continually	External; focused on informing the public
College Internet Website	Marketing Dept.	Continually	Internal and External; focused

			on updating all audiences
College Intranet Website	Marketing Dept.	Continually	Internal; focused on updating employees
<i>The Current</i> Newsletter	Marketing Dept.	Periodically	Internal; focused on updating employees
<i>True North</i> Newsletter	Strategic Planning Team	Periodically	Internal; focused on strategic planning
<i>Opportunities</i> Newsletter	Admissions and the RCC Foundation	Periodically	Internal and External; focused on admissions and foundation activities
<i>The Alumni Newsletter</i>	RCC Development and Foundation	Periodically	External; focused on alumni
Departmental Newsletters	Performing Arts Theatre Farm Business Management Dept. Athletics	Periodically	Internal & External; focused on respective program
<i>The Potty Post</i> Poster Tip Campaign Student Newsletter	Student Affairs	Monthly	Internal; focused on student awareness and education of college services
Mailings	Marketing Admissions Student Affairs Academic Affairs Theatre Dept.	As needed	Internal and External; focused on respective group's activities
Published meeting minutes	AASC FSGC VPASS SALT LC Administrative Council	After meeting	Internal; focused on respective group's decision making and communication
Extensive email communication (within developed guidelines)	College-wide	As needed	Internal and External; focused on updating stakeholders

5P6 Communicating expectations

The leadership of RCC communicates the shared mission, vision, and values of the college in the following ways:

- RCC has developed the mission, vision, and value statements by modeling the values of inclusion while publishing them in a variety of formats.
- By the use and support of the decision-making and communication channels listed in 5P4 and 5P5, the vision was in response to perceived needs and the mission and values of the college, as found in the current strategic plan. AQIP teams in response to concerns expressed in the Climate Surveys and the AQIP Constellation Index and Conversation Days developed many of the communication and decision-making processes currently in use.
- High performance expectations, communicated in 5P4 and 5P5, regarding institutional directions and opportunities are part of the Strategic Plan. The MnSCU Chancellor's Work Plan served as a model for the RCC leaders and

departments' plans, and these plans showed the course of action the leaders took to ensure the values of equity, excellence, and integrity. These plans also focus on an expectation of continuous improvement to meet the commitment to RCC students and stakeholders.

- The President and other leaders regularly email the RCC community to recognize special achievements and awards earned by employees and to reinforce their support of such excellence.
- Annually, the college conducts an awards and recognition banquet for employees. The college recently embarked on an "Expect Respect" poster campaign to inform all students, employees, and others using the facilities of RCC's values and expectations.
- The leadership promotes and encourages community involvement and service in a variety of ways. RCC has leadership recognition in the service organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and Chamber of Commerce) in all three local communities. RTD regularly hosts a Chamber Business After Hours at all three campus locations. RCC encourages employees to serve the community in a wide variety of local, state, and national service organizations.
- RCC promotes community service to its students through service learning programs. The health and nursing programs have volunteered to assist with wellness and immunization clinics, and law enforcement and human services programs have significant service learning components. The Student Senate worked with the local MSCF chapter and college supervisors to co-sponsor funds to replace fishing boats lost in the recent Asian tsunami and regularly conducts blood and food shelf drives.

5P7 Encouraging, developing, and strengthening leadership

RCC encourages leadership abilities in many ways at all levels of the organization. All college employees can share in the Annual Awards and Recognition Day. There is an ongoing "Moments of Greatness" campaign in which employees recognize one another for special achievement or service. During monthly supervisors' meetings, members share experiences and best practices and learn new skills. The search process for new positions reflects the mission, vision, and values. Supervisors encourage all employees to apply for new positions and promotions when they become qualified.

In addition, new staff and faculty orientation programs assure integration and communication of best practices and values to new employees. Academic Affairs conducts regular part-time and full-time faculty orientations and developed a faculty handbook, available on the intranet web site. Faculty and staff experts develop workshop sessions and Brown Bag Seminars, open to the public, allowing them to share expertise in interest areas outside their fields.

The Faculty Evaluation process includes administrative and student evaluation of faculty, and optional peer input and faculty member's portfolio. A Faculty Development Policy and staff development funds distributes monies on an equitable basis. A faculty-mentoring program provides support to new faculty and faculty teaching concurrent enrollment classes in local high schools. Faculty leadership opportunities, within the local

chapter of MSCF and representing faculty on college-wide committees, are available. All staff members with the supervisors develop collaboratively an Annual Individual Performance Evaluation. The administration recently initiated an opportunity for all employees to develop Individual Growth Plans. These seminars (co-hosted by the Human Resources and the Instructional Technology Department), show how to incorporate these plans into the Performance Evaluation and how to obtain additional staff development funding beyond that mandated by the union contracts.

5P8 Succession

The governor appoints the fifteen members of the MnSCU Board of Trustees, and the state senate confirms the appointments. When a trustee leaves before or at the end of a term, the Office of the Chancellor works with the Office of the Governor and state senate to invite nominations and select a new trustee.

The MnSCU Board of Trustees appoints the chancellor. Should the chancellor's position become vacant, the trustees work with external consultants to advertise, recruit, and secure candidates for the position. The Chancellor uses a similar process when a college presidency becomes vacant.

When vacancies occur in senior leadership at the college, the president works with internal stakeholders to review the job description, assesses opportunities the vacancy offers the college for possible restructuring, and uses the human resources department to advertise, recruit, and secure candidates nationwide in an open, competitive hiring process.

At all state and local levels of the MnSCU system, the articulated system initiatives and activities and the articulated mission, vision, and values statements of the college preserve the values of the system and college. RCC has generated a living strategic plan that will transcend turnover in leadership.

5P9 Measuring leadership, communication, and analyzing results

The following matrix gives examples of the measures of leading and communicating that are collected and analyzed regularly. Due to the short time since merger, many of these have recently been implemented.

Measures of Leading and Communicating

Measure	Frequency
Strategic Planning Process	Update every 3 – 5 years (currently in cycle)
Constellation Index, Conversation Days, and Provocative Propositions data	One-time data to initiate the AQIP process
Climate survey data	Biannually
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Biannually (even years)
ACT Student Satisfaction Survey	Biannually (odd years)
Noel-Levitz Employer Satisfaction Survey	Biannually (begin in 2005)
Graduate Follow-up Survey	Annually
PSEO Student Survey	Annually
AQIP teams data/results	Annually
360 Degree Administrator Evaluations	Annually
Individual staff evaluations	Annually
Individual faculty evaluations	Every three years
Feedback on President’s Forum	Monthly
Evaluation of Development Days	Held at the end of the event

5R1 Results for leading and communicating

The strategic planning process has been in development since the merger. The results are in the updated mission, vision, and values statements. (See Institutional Overview 01.) The current stage of planning is completing outcomes and goals for each department in the college, assessing the progress toward those goals, and identifying areas of improvement. (The Strategic Planning document is an attachment). The AQIP Constellation Index, Conversation Day, and Provocative Propositions resulted in the development of three action projects: one on decision-making; one on student success, satisfaction, and retention improvements; and one on improving communication with external stakeholders. The action project updates and outcomes are available in the action project directory <http://www.aqip.org/actionproject/search.php>. RCC has integrated the recommendations into managerial work plans and decision-making systems and has linked these to the results of the most recent climate survey.

The results of the RCC internal climate survey, administered in 2004 and compared with one administered in 2001-2002, can be summarized as follows:

Top Ten Areas of Agreement on 2004 Climate Survey:

- I understand my roles and responsibilities.
- My work supports the goals of RCC.
- I am proud of the education provided to students at RCC.
- I enjoy coming to work.
- I consistently follow the state and federal laws and regulations that have a bearing on my job.
- The college provides a safe working environment.
- RCC is an accessible and safe place for persons with disabilities.

- I have sufficient authority to do my job.
- Advancements in computer technology at the college have improved the quality of instruction.
- The college has an environment that supports diversity.

Areas of Mixed and Strong Disagreement on the 2004 Climate Survey:

- The Leadership Council provides effective direction for employees.
- Inappropriate behavior is dealt with consistently and promptly and necessary disciplinary action is taken, regardless of an employee’s position.
- The college’s strategic plan has been adequately communicated and implemented throughout the college.
- The college consistently seeks outside consultation to ensure that it strives to be “state of the art.”
- People can communicate honestly and openly at Riverland Community College.
- The Leadership Council has an accurate perception of what is happening at the college.

Results of the CCSSE Survey, the ACT Student Satisfaction Survey, the Graduate Follow-up Survey, and the PSEO Student Survey show student responses under 3R2.

The Presidential forums are informal, but there is documentation of issues raised at OCUC and subsequent actions to address those issues. A summary of the feedback from the evaluations collected after faculty and all-staff development days serves as suggestions to plan future days.

5R2 Results comparisons

RCC generates internal comparisons when the survey data instruments become part of a regular schedule, e.g. climate survey (see 5R1). The regular administration of surveys, especially in the cases of the nationally normed surveys, allow for internal and external comparisons. The MnSCU system collects, analyzes, and disseminates data of various kinds for all MnSCU colleges, including college-to-college comparisons. An example of this type of comparison is the collection of financial data on individual program costs. These data generate a cost per student (FYE) program report, and MnSCU publishes the comparisons annually. These comparisons drive the funding formulas for each college in the system. MnSCU also publishes enrollment data (submitted by the Admissions Office), tuition and fee costs, and degree costs.

RCC, in compliance with federal, state, and MnSCU regulations and policies, also participates in regular audits of the Business Office, Financial Aid, the policies and procedures regarding the administration of the ADA and Civil Rights Act, and Perkins grant monies.

5I1 Improvement of current processes and systems

The results of the AQIP process, including the Constellation Index, and the last two climate surveys, generated the three Action Projects at the Strategy Forums. College-wide teams and sub-committees completed the Action Projects. The Faculty Shared Governance Council, Leadership Council, and Administrative Council discussed the team or sub-committee's recommendations (including Decision-Making Guidelines) with positive responses. Past action teams have been retired per AQIP guidelines. The Strategic Planning process initiated a survey of key stakeholders to collect opinions, define priorities, and guide institutional decision-making; for example, leadership identified four key strategic initiatives and is in the process of surveying key stakeholders to help prioritize action on these initiatives (<http://staff.riverland.edu/strategicplanning/>).

5I2 Targets, Improvement priorities, communications

RCC has not systematically engaged in “benchmarking” data to compare results with higher education institutions outside the MnSCU system; planning to engage in that data collection and analysis is in progress with RCC senior leaders. Upon release of the Master Academic Plan draft, internal stakeholders indicated faculty involvement was not adequate in the development of the plan. Leadership plans to use this key stakeholder feedback to improve the Master Academic Planning process in the future. Another area requiring improvement is the need for succession planning. The Leadership Development process will help in identifying future leadership, and the Administrative Council will develop an approach to succession planning. The monthly President's Column addresses issues to improve communication with external stakeholders. Expansion and clarification of the Leadership Council's membership and its role to become more inclusive are in response to the concerns in the climate survey.

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Criterion #6 Supporting Institutional Operations

6C1. Key student and administrative support service processes and associated needs of student and other stakeholder groups

Each department and service area defines and monitors the key student and administrative support processes. Student services focus on all students: incoming and prospective students, current and returning students, and graduates. Student support services include admission and registration, classroom utilization and technology, tutoring and student success center, disability services, career counseling and employment readiness services, placement services, academic advising, financial aid and scholarships, work-study, student activities and organizations, student housing, student senate, athletics, bookstore, student writing center, contracted dining service, and the library. The use of student surveys, comment cards, and faculty and staff who work directly with students identify the students' needs. The needs/wants identified through the surveys determine the course offerings whether online, in class, or on weekends. Students register for courses online or on a walk-in basis. Students can view course schedules, tuition bills, grades, financial aid awards, and pay bills online.

Administrative support services include technology services, contracted dining services, a centralized purchasing department that provides for the procurement of goods and services, support staff who work effectively and efficiently with faculty and administration, copy and mail processing center, an intra-college courier service, signage, switchboard, and financial services including grant application and management.

6C2. Key student and administrative support reinforce Criterion 1 and Criterion 2 processes

Student support services, administrative support services, and faculty work collaboratively to reinforce student learning and assist in meeting learning objectives. Initially, prospective students may attend a campus-wide recruiting event during either the day or evening. Students meet with admissions and attend a new student orientation either in person or online. Counselors evaluate assessment scores and make referrals and recommendations. Student support services provide information and assistance regarding financial aid, technology services, online learning, writing center, assessment of incoming student basic skills, student leadership opportunities, disability services, and advising by counselors and program faculty. (See Criterion 2 - 2C3)

6P1 Identifying student support service needs

Prospective students complete questionnaire cards, PSEO and graduates complete student satisfaction surveys, and current students address their needs with faculty, staff, and the counseling department. Students who are in need of special services or disability services can complete a self-referral form to obtain needed services. Incoming students who are on Individualized Education Plans may have transitional meetings scheduled with college personnel. (See Criterion 3 - 3P1)

6P2 Identifying key stakeholder support service needs

The administrative support needs are those necessary to operate and maintain academic programs and a facility plan that increases the level of efficiency for each department. Career programs utilize advisory committees and rely on their input to make reasonable changes and accommodations to the existing programs. Each tier of management works collaboratively within a check-and-balance system to ensure the level of departmental efficiency and to address the needs and concerns of students, faculty, staff, administration, and advisory board members for career programs. Annual faculty satisfaction surveys are conducted to measure level of faculty satisfaction regarding administrative support services. The use of email, surveys, comment cards, focus groups, and meetings held internally or externally from the college provide feedback from faculty, staff, students, and administration. (See Criterion 4 - 4P10)

6P3 Managing key student and administrative support service processes on a day-to-day basis

Managed on an incoming, day-to-day basis by faculty, individual departments, support staff, and administration, the key student and administrative support services include regularly scheduled departmental meetings, three divisional meeting per year, a division manual updated annually, and a policy and procedure manual available for disability and tutoring services. Students, faculty, staff, and administration receive a student handbook annually and the college catalog biennially.

6P4 Using information and results to improve services

Each department at the college encourages an ongoing dialogue and feedback for services and areas for improvement. Necessary changes to the current system use the information collected. RCC utilizes data collected from student satisfaction surveys and focus groups to assess the effectiveness of student services and makes appropriate changes.

6P5 Measuring student and administrative support service process effectiveness and analyzing results

Prospective students, current students, and graduates complete the Student Opinion Survey. This information, shared with all departments, identifies strengths and growth areas. Other assessments utilized include The Community College Student Report, Evaluation of Orientation, Technology Survey, Student Engagement Survey, Graduate Exit Survey, Withdrawing Student Survey, and the Post Secondary Enrollment Option Student Survey. Additional measures of support services are collected through placement tests and post-tests for developmental reading and writing students, reports that reflect online registration and technology use and inquiry, and bookstore sales reports help provide additional information in specific areas. Employees within the college analyze and incorporate these data into improvement plans.

6R1 Results for student support services processes

Students receive student identification cards that allow access to the library and discounts from community merchants. In response to student needs and alternative learning styles, online courses and technological advances have ensured a smooth transmission for online learners.

6R2 Results for administrative support service processes

RCC received the Excellence in Financial Management Award for 2004 and has received it for eight consecutive years. The Excellence in Financial Management Award, presented to the entire college or university, shows the continued leadership and team effort in financial management. Only two other colleges in the MnSCU system have accomplished this. Nine colleges and three universities received the 2004 Excellence in Financial Management Award.

6R3 Results comparisons

RCC also received the 2004 Excellence in Facilities Management Award. This award is in recognition of the college or university's continued leadership and team effort for facilities management. Seven colleges and three universities received the 2004 Excellence in Facilities Management Award. RCC has received it for four consecutive years, and only one other college has received it for four consecutive years.

RCC has maintained five percent of the previous fiscal year revenue in reserve as stated in MnSCU Board Policy. RCC is one of the few colleges that have maintained this and have not had to put together an action plan on how to restore and maintain this balance. RCC has implemented this year that fifty percent of the unused balances in cost centers will roll over to the next fiscal year. Each division of the college may use its rollover funds for investment dollars throughout the next fiscal year. RCC has used resale dollars, such as the sale of the carpentry house, to purchase instructional equipment and supplies for the program and to pay for related activities for the students. Fifty percent of the profits of the carpentry house go back to the students in scholarships, tools for the department, and a field trip to the National Builder's Association Convention.

6I1 Improvement of current processes and systems

RCC recognizes a need for gathering, benchmarking, analyzing, and synchronizing data in systematic, standardized reports for methodology strategies. Established college-wide goals, reviewed on an ongoing basis, allow for examining best practices, comparing with other institutions, and making necessary changes to meet the needs of students, staff, faculty, and administration.

An Institutional Research committee has been newly formed and will become an AQIP action project. This committee will address college strategies for research and its data.

6I2 Targets, improvement priorities, and communication

Individual departments and administrators agree to specific targets for each area. Student Success Center is examining a way in which identified students in need of services receive referral information at the time of admission to the college. At this time, students must identify themselves as having a disability in order to receive services. A goal of this department is to provide seamless service delivery. Current results regarding college processes, disseminated via email and hard copy to all faculty, staff, and administration, represent these priorities. These results include, but are not limited to, advisory committee meeting notes, departmental meetings, division meetings, leadership meetings, and the e-newsletter.

Criterion #7: Measuring Effectiveness

7C1. Collecting, Storing and Accessing Information and Data

RCC uses the Integrated Statewide Records System (ISRS) to collect and store data and information. RCC also utilizes the State Colleges and Universities Personnel and Payroll System (SCUPPS) and Statewide Employee Management System (SEMA4) as well as the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS), Resource 25, and other systems to collect and store data. (See Table 7C1)

Table 7C1. Centralized and Decentralized Information Storage Systems and Access

Name of System	Records Maintained	Access
ISRS Links to state data; uses BRIO software to facilitate use and manipulation of data.	Individual Student Records Congregate Student Data Employee Records Financial Records Facilities Management Records Class rosters	Several levels of access exist. Staff and faculty who use data regularly receive training and secure access.
SEMA4 Common form reporting to state; interfaces with other colleges in MnSCU system	Human Resources Payroll Processing	Staff and faculty who use data regularly receive training and secure access.
SCUPPS HR Reporting Data	Personnel Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast Facts • Assignments • Bargaining • Costing • Education • Employee Personnel & Demographic 	Staff and faculty who use data regularly receive training and secure access.
DARS Allows students to access current transfer and course information for degree progress.	Individual student academic progress records	Registrar’s Office and individual students have secure access.
Resource 25	Course schedules Room schedules	Registrar’s office and academic affairs staff.
Student Affairs Office	Student Satisfaction Data Student Engagement Data Employer Satisfaction Data Graduation Rates Retention Rates Student records Student Services Program Review Counselor confidential records	General access upon request. with the exception of counselor files which are confidential.

Human Resources	Employee Personnel Files Affirmative Action Material Interview Process Documentation Climate Survey data Professional Development Plans Professional qualifications Employee Performance Evaluation documentation Confidential Documentation	Staff and faculty who use data regularly receive training and secure access.
Academic Affairs	Program Review Summaries Vital Signs Reports Course outcomes/outlines Advisory Board Minutes/Agendas	General access upon request. Riverland Library stores copies of program reviews
Institutional Common Drive	Graduation rates Enrollment management data Admissions data Course outlines/ outcomes Committee minutes	General college access by faculty and staff.
Individual health program faculty	State board scores and licensure	General access upon request.
Facilities and Finance	Fund balance information	General access upon request.
CAPP – Computerized placement test	Student entry test data	Students, Counselors, Program Advisors and Assessment Department personnel
Financial Aid	Student financial aid data and information	Student data privacy restrictions govern access.
Individual Program Policies and Procedures	Individual Program Policies and Procedures	Handbook provided to incoming students and available to staff on request.
College and Department Policies and Procedures.	College and department policies and procedures.	Department manuals provided to staff as needed. College information accessible to all on riverland.edu

7C2. Key Institutional Measures

Table 7C2 lists information collected and used internally at the institution level. Information is organized according to college value statements from the Strategic Planning process.

Table 7C2. Key Institutional Measures

Value Statement from Strategic Plan	Measure of Effectiveness
Valuing people	Employee satisfaction Institutional climate Professional qualifications Professional development activity Employee longevity Employee performance- faculty and staff evaluations Student satisfaction with college services
Valuing learning	Program quality (history, goals, uniqueness, assessment methods, curriculum, human resources, physical resources, financial resources, marketing and recruiting, community interaction) Advisory board activity Course outcomes/student learning outcomes Program viability Student performance Student progress Graduation rates Retention rates Student satisfaction with learning Employer satisfaction with graduates State board pass rates Benchmarks for student placement and testing.
Providing access and affordability	Total Headcount (FTE) Total Headcount (FYE) Yearly cost comparison of MnSCU institutions
Demonstrating respect and responsibility	Institutional climate Retention rates Student satisfaction
Valuing diversity and inclusiveness	Student satisfaction with college services State and national ADA/EEOC visits and reports Affirmative Action Plan
Functioning within a culture of inquiry	Student services participation in state-wide “Using Data for Decision Making” initiative Institutional Effectiveness Plan activities
Enhancing instruction through technology	Program quality Instructional quality
Demonstrating fiscal responsibility	Fund balance Cost per FTE Instructional Cost Study
Developing community and workforce	Employer satisfaction with graduates as measured by the Noel Levitz’s pilot project.

Processes

7P1. Selecting, Managing and Using Information and Data

Criterion 1. To Support Student Learning

RCC selects and manages student data based on tradition and just-in-time need with some analysis. The collection of data is carefully maintained. A new emphasis on a culture of inquiry is changing RCC’s approach to selecting, managing, and using data to reflect a

more proactive approach. RCC's Student Success Center assesses entering students for placement into appropriate courses through a standardized, state-mandated process. The ACCUPLACER exam indicates college preparedness levels in reading, writing, and math. This data, stored in the ISRS, the CAPP, and in individual student records, is accessed as described in Table 7C1. The Student Success Center collects academic attainment, retention, and completion-rate data for students participating in supplemental academic services.

RCC's counselors collect and maintain individual student information and data. Based on this information and data, counselors and program advisers assist students in registering for appropriate courses and for academic advising to promote student progress and success. The Registrar maintains course registration, completion, academic attainment, academic progress reports, the Satisfactory Progress Committee, and refers students needing improvement to RCC counselors.

Student learning outcomes for each course guide instructors to potential curriculum needs and to provide assessment criteria. Academic Affairs and program faculty collect and review board certification data to improve instruction and student success.

Academic Affairs conducts yearly full-time faculty evaluations on a three-year rotating basis. Part-time faculty have an initial evaluation their first semester and then begin a three-year rotation thereafter.

RCC staff and faculty use academic attainment, retention, and completion data to request and manage federal and other external resources in support of student learning. Employer satisfaction data have been updated regularly (every other year) and shared with program faculty.

Criterion 2. Overall Institutional Objectives and Strategies

The selection, management, and use of the following data and information supports RCC's commitment to institutional effectiveness:

- Advisory board agendas and minutes.
- Budget Committee recommendations and allocations.
- Technology Round Table agendas, minutes and allocation budgets.
- Staff Development Committee allocations.
- Professional best practices and benchmarking.
- Strategic planning outcomes.
- Institutional effectiveness activity outcomes.
- Program review summaries.
- Vital Signs information.
- Instructional Cost Study data.
- Employer and employee surveys.
- AQIP focus group and action group outcomes.

- Add from list of 50 data sources reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee.

RCC’s Strategic Planning Committee reviewed internal and external sources of data and information to develop a new mission and vision statement and institutional values. (See Organizational Overview)

Academic Affairs uses institutional enrollment data, cost-study data, and program-review summaries to allocate resources for new-program initiatives. College officials use these data and information to assign programs and courses among the three instructional sites and satellite locations.

7P2. Determining and Meeting the Information and Data Needs of Departments and Units

Data collected in response to State, Federal, and MnSCU mandates, capital budget committee processes, other budget processes, department requests answer these needs. Storage is determined by the Minnesota Records Retention Schedule and the systems described in Criterion 7 - Table 7C1.

The following ways satisfy the needs for information and data:

- Accessing ISRS and other system data and information directly.
- Requesting and receiving needed information from committee minutes or members.
- Email or phone request to, and response from, the Dean of Student Affairs or the Registrar’s Office.
- Accessing college publications, handbooks, and/or web site.

7P3. Determining Needs and Priorities for Comparative Information and Data.

For comparative data and information, colleges selected include those with similar characteristics: geographical location, student demographics, co-located campuses, comprehensive college, and experience with the particular issue or focus.

Some departments are more proactive than others are in consistently looking for and applying benchmarks. Student Affairs includes a “better practices” agenda item on each bi-monthly meeting agenda for sharing with staff. They conducted intensive benchmarking for student entry assessment processes with Minnesota West – Worthington, Alexandria Technical College, Ridgewater Community College, and Central Lakes Community College.

The availability of MnSCU information often determines the data selected for use. The availability of nationally developed and normed assessment tools also affects the data sought. Budget processes and program viability drive needs and priorities.

7P4. Analyzing Sharing Institutional-level Information and Data

The Strategic Planning Process, an ongoing initiative, analyzed institutional performance data and information. This process resulted in new mission and vision statements and nine Value Statements. (See Institutional Overview 01) A new emphasis on a culture of inquiry is changing RCC’s approach to analyzing performance data and information. AQIP Action Teams used existing data and information and sought new sources of information to find the gap between the effects of current policies and procedures and the desired outcomes. The gap identified better procedures for improved student outcomes. All college staff, faculty and student senate contributed to and received information from the Strategic Planning process.

7P5. Ensuring Departmental and Unit Analysis of Information and Data Alignment

The next step in the Strategic Planning Process is for each department and program to develop goals and objectives using the mission, vision, and value statements. This will ensure alignment and consistency within the institution. The departmental and program goals when developed will be shared college-wide.

7P6. Ensuring Effectiveness of Information Systems and Related Processes

Table 7P6.

Quality Indicator	PROCESS AND MEASURES
Integrity	<p>Process: MIS checks access and security into our computer systems at several points. Login names and passwords are changed on most systems on a regular basis depending on each specific system. Data entry controls are in place for specific screens and fields; access to specific information is controlled to the specific users. Data entry controls down to the field level are checked for integrity. Most data is secured with nightly backups to backup systems. Network monitoring for security breach attempts is standard. All computers are automatically updated as new virus information becomes available. All email and web access is scanned for viruses and spam before reaching ushers.</p>
	<p>Measure: Each process described above is an actual running process. Login processing, password settings, data entry controls, virus scanning and tape backup systems are all automated systems that run at regularly scheduled intervals. Each server and workstation maintains security log files, application error log files, and system integrity log files local to that system.</p>
	<p>Usage: MIS reviews information on these live systems to determine its “normal” baseline concerning network load and usage. Growth in usage of the system is monitored to help plan for upgrading and budgeting for future growth in the system.</p>
Reliability	<p>Process: Data entry controls are in place to maintain specific formats of data down to the individual records or fields. All patches and updates are implemented when available to ensure top-level performance and security of both servers and network systems. Uninterruptible power supplies feed power to all the network servers. All computers are automatically up-dated as new virus information becomes available. All email and web access is scanned to viruses and spam before reaching the users. Login scripts are in place to perform routine system maintenance for each user at time of startup and login.</p>
	<p>Measure: Data entry processing controls are active programs that require correctly formatted data entry. Users cannot exit screens until they have put in correction information.</p>

Accuracy	Process: Data entry verifications take place down to the field level to ensure information is entered correctly. Controls are in place to prevent duplicate student and employee records. Reports are run regularly to check for accuracy of student information.
	Measure: Several key data entry fields have been selected to be “required” fields where the user must enter correct information in the correct format in order to leave that screen. Many of these same fields are set to check for duplicate records as the data is entered. Offices that are responsible for the information regularly check their data accuracy through daily and weekly reports.
	Usage: Required fields have made our processes more efficient in gathering student information. We are gradually eliminating duplicate forms and work as we process student records.
Timeliness	Process: Computer operations are normally available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Regular upgrades are scheduled for network performance and reliability. Quality of service specifications are implemented across the network for bandwidth management. Gigabit fiber optics bandwidth is available among all buildings on the main campus. ATM communications are between main campus and all extended campuses. Most computers, servers, and network switches are on a replacement schedule of three years.
	Measure: MIS works closely with all areas to aid in anticipation of increased need for network bandwidth and performance. Automated systems are now in place to update computer software during the login process. Auto-installing updates are implemented college wide for virus protection of all computers. Faculty are polled well in advance to determine software needs for upcoming school periods so installations and testing can take place before the next semester begins. To minimize retraining, staff training is generally scheduled “just in time” to transfer the learning to the applications that are soon to be used.
Confidentiality	Process: All users are to have a unique User ID and Password for each system they access. Each user account is established with appropriate levels of access needed to perform individual duties. Access to server or database level administration is restricted to on a few key personnel.
	Measure: During new employee orientation, supervisors discuss security and confidentiality as it relates to individual positions. Each position is configured through the security system to allow users access to only the information they will process. A procedure currently being implemented is a new form required for signing by all employees stating that they understand our confidentiality and security policies. These forms will become part of each individual personnel file.
	Usage: Addressing confidentiality is an ongoing process as we experience turnover in employees. Each person has different issues that pertain to his/her duties.
Standardization	Process: All computers are centrally purchased through PC Services to maintain a standard hardware platform for the clients. All servers and network equipment are also centrally purchased to meet College standards. All software application purchases are reviewed by MIS with each departmental request to maintain College standards. Microsoft has been selected as the standard operating system and office suite for word processing and spreadsheets.
	Measure: Each grant request is now evaluated to assure that identified equipment and software needs fall within the standard requirements for the District. The Business Office only accepts requests to purchase equipment and software that have been sent to MIS first. This process allows MIS to verify that standards are met and maintained. Over the past five years the college has worked very hard to centralize and standardize computing and AV equipment to increase efficiency and productivity. As a result, we can freely share information between offices and departments. The use of our internal web site has grown significantly because of standard software applications.
	Usage: Standardization has made the free flow of information at the College something that is almost taken for granted. For example, we can view each other’s calendars to set up meetings. Training and support are also much easier because everyone uses the same software and hardware.
Security	Process: Each computer requires user authentication back to the servers for employees and students to use the network. Access to applications is controlled by network access with a single login account for each system needed. Security of records can be defined down to individual records in databases.
	Usage: Security is paramount to our efficient operations. To keep our operations running smoothly, our systems must be secure from hacking and intrusion. Constant vigilance is maintained in securing our spaces and systems.
Ownership	Process: Application data and process owners consist of Financials, Human Resources/Payroll, Client Reporting, Student Services, Alumni, Foundation, individual departments, and specific offices. A prime

	example is each department maintains its own areas on the intranet WIRE and knows and maintains the accuracy of its own information for distribution to the College.
	Measure: Each area of the College has responsibility for the integrity of the data its area generates or needs. This is measured through the reporting system for each area. Some are monitored online through web sites; some are monitored through printed reports or applications.
	Usage: Placing responsibility for the integrity of information in the owner's hands has made sharing of information electronically much more efficient. We no longer must rely on one department to follow up with all the other offices to make sure that information is current and accessible.

7P7. Measuring and Analyzing Systems and Processes of Measures Effectiveness

The overall Institutional Effectiveness Plan was developed in 2004. Reviewed annually, the plan establishes criteria for measuring institutional effectiveness. (See Institutional Overview for value statements)

7R1. Measuring Effectiveness

The Institutional Effectiveness Plan directly relates information and data to the college mission and goals. The primary desired outcome of the plan is alignment of decisions with the college's mission and goals.

7R2 Results

The new Riverland Institutional Effectiveness Plan has not yet been tested. Implementation of the IEP and subsequent assessment activities will occur in 2005-06.

Comparative results outlined in MnSCU's instructional cost study assist us with future program planning.

7I1. Improving of Current Processes and Systems

Processes for analyzing, disseminating and applying data are weak and require systemic improvement. The emphasis on a culture of inquiry and implementation of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and the Strategic Plan will result in improved processes and systems for measuring effectiveness.

Specific areas of improvement include

- Retention data need to be reviewed, analyzed, shared, and used.
- ISRS data shared with program faculty more effectively.
- Student outcome data and information more effectively analyzed and shared.
- Program Review and Vital Signs process improved to result in more value to specific programs.
- RCC has an opportunity to fully integrate the strategic plan throughout the college on a daily basis.

7I2. Targets, Improvement Priorities, and Communications

Targets for improvement determine originate with college leadership and sometimes emerge from programs and departments as issues arise. An Administrative Council retreat resulted in priorities for improvement for the institution as a whole.

Table 7I2. Addressing Specific Improvement Priorities.

Improvement Priority	How Addressed
College-wide culture of inquiry	Institutional research guidelines
Full integration of the Strategic Plan with other major plans in the college.	College leadership will take responsibility for integrating major plans.
Improved aligning of departmental goals with institutional goals.	Formal department and program planning processes aimed at mission and values.
Sharing and use of student outcome data.	Dean of Student Affairs will take responsibility.

The Leadership Council, Faculty Shared Governance Council, Academic Leadership Council minutes, President Forums, Academic Affairs and Standards Council (curriculum issues only), True North newsletter (Strategic Planning), all-campus email memos, Faculty Conference Days, Orientations, Performance Evaluations, Professional Development activities and Staff Development Days are vehicles to communicate improvement priorities.

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Criterion #8: Planning Continuous Improvement

8C1 Institutional vision

(See Institutional Overview 01.)

8C2 Short and long term strategies and alignment with mission and vision

The RCC Strategic Planning committee articulated a new vision for the college. The short and long-term initiatives relative to the institutional vision, published in draft form in the College Goals 2005 document, outline the strategic goals for the college. These goals include refining institutional assessment practices, designing, and implementing an institutional planning process. The draft states that RCC “must articulate its process for institutional planning.” The outcomes to be achieved are:

- Instill a culture of inquiry at the college that values and uses data based decision-making.
- Define a process for planning at the institutional, divisional, departmental, and program levels.
- Employ a process that integrates and aligns college-wide planning with MnSCU directions and goals, AQIP criteria, the master academic plan, the technology plan and the master facilities plan.
- Conduct a process that is inclusive, regularly scheduled, uses ongoing environmental scanning and evaluation, and clearly communicates the respective accountability at all levels.
- Focus on innovation and ensure flexibility.
- Engage college employees in the process, so they support its outcomes.

8P1 Planning process

Changes in the planning process grew from changes in the college administration. The proposed processes implement systems that assure effective planning for the major priorities of the college and create accountability and structured evaluation of outcomes.

MnSCU's strategic plans influence RCC's strategic plan. MnSCU identifies activities as “foundational to the ongoing operation of the individual institutions and the system.” The MnSCU annual work plan outlines priorities and the institutional, presidential, and the office of the chancellor responsibilities to accomplish these initiatives for the year.

Subsequently, the President of RCC develops work plans for the college in alignment with the MnSCU Chancellor's work plan. The President's plan aligns the system activities with the institutional objectives. Including projected outcomes, a place for actual institutional outcomes, projected completion dates, whether the item has been completed or is in progress as well as whether the activity meets particular HLC/AQIP criteria.

The leadership channels throughout the college communicate the President's plan to the entire college. Leadership subgroups formulate the Goals, Actions, and Outcomes (GAO) worksheet. These worksheets outline departmental goals, action steps to achieve goals, resource people, partners, budget issues, responsible parties, and the time lines for each step. Expected outcomes and the methods of evaluation complete each goal statement.

Within the proposed framework, initiatives that arise from the faculty and staff members of the college may also indirectly shape college initiatives. The MSCF contract mandates the existence and describes the function of two primary communication/decision-making councils, the Faculty Shared Governance Council (FSGC) and the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).

AFSCME members contribute through a meet-and-confer process. Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) provides input through divisional meetings, establishing primary goals and providing input to the Dean of Student Affairs; similarly the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team (V-PASS) conducts assessment and goal setting for the Academic Affairs division. MAPE and MMA do not have any meet-and-confer bodies. Individual persons or programs may appeal to their designated dean or supervisor for changes in the planning process.

8P2 Selecting short- and long-term strategies

MnSCU priorities give direction to the selection of college initiatives and long-term goals. The decision-making process determines how these initiatives meet local needs and align with the overall college priorities. Within the departments, divisions, and committees of the college, group sessions develop long and short-term strategies. For some initiatives, focus groups discuss certain proposals and provide feedback to revise or reinforce selected strategies. Other methods include brainstorming, forming committees or task forces, reviewing survey and environmental scan results, listening to stakeholders, using consultants, and validating data gathered during the assessment process.

8P3 Developing key action plans

After looking at all of the possible strategies, reviewing data, reflecting on what has been tried in the past, and determining what resources (budgetary, personnel, facilities, equipment, and partnerships) are available, the stakeholders select the action plan to give the desired results.

8P4 Coordinating and aligning planning processes

Coordination of the planning process happens through consistent communication of MnSCU initiatives, the RCC Strategic plan, and the strategic goals. Efforts to promote acceptance of the goals by stakeholders move the college in desired directions. Publishing updates, sharing meeting minutes, and working through the checks and balances of the administrative structure, committee structures, and the union protocols promotes effective communication.

8P5: Selecting measures and setting performance projections

The process is in a state of change. The way we currently select measures and select performance projections is through participation in accreditation studies, talking with advisory committees, reviewing industry standards, and surveying students' satisfaction. The perceived urgency of need, the skill levels of the stakeholders, and the clarity of their vision strongly influence the measures selected and the setting of performance projections.

8P6: Accounting for resource needs

Budget allocation by standing committees within the institution strongly influence the raw amounts of revenue to which each department has access. The department then further allocates to specific priorities and projects. Strategic planning should drive the priorities of monies allocated. Program review is an opportunity to show a need for funds to come to a particular initiative.

8P7: Ensuring faculty, staff, and administrative development

Faculty development is part of the continuous improvement cycle. Faculty development fund allocations run on a three-year cycle. Staff members also have access to funds for development. Staff members can increase their allocation of funds by developing an Individual Growth Plan. Faculty Conference Days provide instruction on topics identified through environmental scans and surveys.

8P8: Measuring and analyzing planning effectiveness

Common data gathered and used for the purpose of planning for improvement include climate surveys, status of the budget, credit enrollment figures, FYE, tuition and fees, diversity, campus safety, demographics of student population, class size, graduation rates, placement rates, employer satisfaction with the graduates, completion of initiatives, numbers of people who participate in advisory capacities, facilities usage, state of repair of building and grounds, satisfaction with course work, faculty evaluations, scheduling classes, Master Academic Plan, Master Facilities Plan, and Master Technology Plan.

8R1 Results for planning strategies and action plans

RCC has recently linked through the strategic planning process, the institutional goals to the value statements. A planning process has been proposed that is inclusive, regularly scheduled, uses ongoing environmental scanning and evaluation, and clearly communicates the respective accountability at all levels.

8R2 Performance projections

Guided by the strategic plan, Riverland will continually refine the evaluation and data collection practices of the college to better assess the effectiveness of course and program offerings, as well as college operations and institutional practices to support student learning.

8R3 Comparisons of performance projections

Some of the measures we use to compare our outcomes with similar institutions are through benchmarking retention rates, the college wide AQIP process, and CCSSE initiatives. We use system wide cost comparisons to look at our expenditures in relationship to others in the system.

8R4 Results for planning system effectiveness

Career programs participating in state and national accreditation programs outside of AQIP have used specific outcomes and measures to show whether they have met identified goals. Liberal arts programs have used the broad concepts of the Transfer Curriculum to guide the development of course materials, however, no outcomes have been assessed using those criteria.

8I1: Improvement of current processes and systems

- Give more thought and effort to the analysis of the decision-making process.
- Learn as much as possible about effective decision-making and the factors that interfere with it.
- Look and learn about the decision-making procedures in effective agencies.
- Develop a decision-making model for RCC. The model, written in measurable terms, can be the template for decision evaluation.
- Use the model to look objectively at decisions made within the college. Do the decisions measure the established criteria? Does RCC communicate those decisions? Do the major stakeholders have an appropriate voice in the decisions made? Are the goals realistic? Are the goals measurable? How are the data analyzed? Do the data support current bias and not look at the suggested implications for change? Does the planning fit with the strategic plan? Does it fit with the MnSCU plan? Does it align with other initiatives at the college? Does this planning foster collaboration? Does the decision-making model foster an entrepreneurial spirit within the college or stifle it? Do RCC people feel they have an active voice in the planning process?
- Build in timelines for the actual review of the planning process and to assess goal attainment.
- Review and refine the process of goal attainment or non-attainment and keep records of achievements or non-achievement to assess planning effectiveness.
- Celebrate and reward successful entrepreneurial projects.

8I2 Targets, improvement priorities, and communications

The specific improvement priorities RCC is targeting and how they will be addressed are part of the Mission, Vision, and Values Statements of the college (See Institutional Overview 01.) and the goal statements for the Strategic Plan.

Some of the methods used in the past to communicate results and improvement priorities include shared minutes, newsletters, emails, presidential forums, and educating faculty/staff members about the planning process at staff development days.

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Criterion 9: Building Collaborative Relationships

9C1 Key collaborative relationships

RCC builds key collaborative relationships with educational institutions, community members, and area businesses. These relationships define growth and success.

Education: Figure 9.1 identifies the key collaborative relationships with educational institutions.

Entity	Nature of Relationship
Higher Learning Commission	AQIP; Accreditation
Minnesota State Colleges and University System	Program approval; governance; articulation agreements
Office of the Chancellor	Representative at legislature; coordinates programs; credit transfers; enforces policies
Area high schools	Feeder of students to RCC; post secondary options; concurrent classes
State Colleges & Universities	Receiver of RCC students; Articulation agreements

Community: Figure 9.2 identifies key relationships with community organizations and local media.

Entity	Nature of Relationship
Community Members	Facilities availability; social opportunities; business/community partnerships
Local Media	Resources for expertise; support for RCC's programs and services
Donors/Foundation Members	Financial support for students; support for college in the community

Business: Figure 9.3 identifies the relationships with employers and the business community in our region.

Figure 9.3 RCC Key Relationships – Business

Entity	Nature of Relationship
Employers	Workforce preparation and training; employ graduates
Advisory Committees	Support for academic programs; curriculum development
Area businesses	Receivers of training for employees (RTD); donations for new and current programming, scholarships, and equipment; business and industry partners

9C2 Reinforcing mission and supporting institutional directions

The development of key relationships is essential to RCC's mission as expressed in the RCC vision statement. (See Institutional Overview 01.) Developing relationships is expressed in three of the nine value statements.

Above all, we value people, students, employees, community members.

We value a culture of inquiry, assessment and collaboration.

We value our role in the workforce and economic development.

9P1 Creating, prioritizing and building relationships

Collaborative relationships meet a variety of needs at RCC. RCC's relationship with the baccalaureate institutions in Minnesota allow students to complete their baccalaureate degree after completing two years at RCC. To accomplish this, RCC has articulation agreements with baccalaureate institutions and many liberal arts programs are part of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Other relationships meet the needs of community residents, employers, businesses and to comply with the requirements of MnSCU and the Office of the Chancellor.

An AQIP action team identified the key collaborative relationships. This committee gathered existing data from previous surveys and needs assessments, including the AQIP Constellation Index, Conversation Day input, and other feedback mechanisms. The team conducted a preliminary analysis and implemented a ranking exercise to determine the top stakeholders to the College and ranked the level at which communications with the various audiences are effective.

Based on a priority score, the essential key relationships include

Area High Schools: RCC builds relationships with area high schools in the constituent groups of student, faculty, and administration. RCC partners with high schools to provide concurrent classes for students to prepare them for higher education. High school students also have Post Secondary Enrollment Options program. (See Institutional Overview 04.) Other activities to build these relationships include Big Night on Campus, Big Day on Campus, Career Day, Music and Theatre events, and Financial Aid Nights.

MN Baccalaureate Institutions: The MN state universities accept RCC's Associate in Arts degree as the first two years of a four-year degree through the MN Transfer Agreement.

Local Employers: Area businesses and advisory committee members employ RCC graduates. They are also key partners in the Riverland's Training and Development division. RTD is a resource for business and industry and responds to their training needs. The advisory committee members also provide input into the current trends in the industry.

Community Members: RCC builds relationships with the community by offering educational, cultural activities, and sporting events, and by coordinating activities at the James Wegner Art Gallery, the library, KSMQ television station, London Dash, French Frolic, and theater performances.

Donors: RCC's Foundation raises, manages, and distributes resources to support, enhance, and promote the educational opportunities RCC offers the people of this region. The Foundation accomplishes its mission by raising funds for scholarships, program enhancements, and leadership development; cultivating regional partnerships; advocating for the college and its students; and teaming with college leadership. (See Institutional Overview 04.)

Local Media: RCC's communications department assists news media representatives by providing accurate, timely information and answering questions.

Office of the Chancellor: Key collaboration with officials in this office is necessary because they offer financial support, connect RCC with the legislature, set-statewide goals for MnSCU institutions, and offer legal support.

Advisory Committees: All technical programs utilize advisory committees to make recommendations for curriculum changes. Committee members recruit students, donate supplies and equipment, and raise funds for the programs.

Government/Legislators: RCC builds relationships with this group because they offer financial support for the institution and the students.

9P2 Ensuring needs are being met

Individual departments collect, monitor, and report data results to key collaborators. An Institutional Research Committee, established to improve methods for gathering and evaluating the statistics and information, is responsible for meeting these needs.

9P3 Creating and building relationships within the institution

The following functions build and encourage relationships within the institution:

- representatives of various employee unions on planning committees
- president's monthly forums
- faculty/staff website
- True North newsletter
- Annual President's Report to the Community
- biannual Opportunities Newsletter
- biennial climate survey
- president's monthly newspaper columns

9P4 Measuring collaborative relationships and analyzing results

Figure 9.4 identifies the methods RCC uses to measure the results of collaborative relationships.

Priority Relationships	Method	Measurement
Local Employers	Process	Individual interview results; satisfaction; advisory committees; surveys; placement rates; President's report to the community
Government/Legislators	Process	Governmental Affairs Taskforce; tracking via website
Donors	Process	Funds and equipment provided; testimonials
Area High School	Process	Enrollment reports
Office of the Chancellor	Process	Personal communication; membership on statewide committees
Local Media	Process	Monitor four area newspapers, clip and log articles; track TV interviews; participate in weekly radio show on two radio stations.
Community Members	Process	Attendance at events; perception of satisfaction; cooperative projects
Advisory Committees	Process	Semiannual meetings; continuous curriculum development

9R1 Results in Building Collaborative Relationships

Area High Schools

RCC builds partnerships with 91 area high schools. As noted in 9P1, many departments throughout the college build relationships, such as admissions, financial aid, communications, and faculty members in individual programs and liberal arts.

- RCC's enrollment of traditionally aged students is 43%.
- Attendance at the October 2004 Big Night on Campus was 400.
- Career Day attendance in 2004 was 821 students representing 14 schools.
- Concurrent enrollment in Fall Semester 2004 was 439 students.
- PSEO enrollment in Fall Semester 2004 was 657 students.

Local Employers

Relationships with local employers are not only important for placement but also for their membership on advisory committees and users of RTD services.

- There are 34 advisory committees for technical programs that meet twice a year.
- The number of graduates, who are placed in employment or continue as students in four-year institutions, is 84.9%.
- In 2004, RTD generated more than \$1,000,000 in tuition revenue; delivered 3156 credits; served 419 business/industry clients; and initiated 125 training contracts.

Donors

RCC donors supply financial support and visibility in the community.

- Students received \$54,205 in scholarships in 2003-04.
- The Program Support Grant Awards for faculty and staff in 2003-04 awarded \$15,100 in grants from 20% growth in the foundation fund balance from fiscal year 2003 to 2004.
- Addresses of 8,919 alumni established a contact group.

9R2 Results comparisons

The MnSCU and the Office of the Chancellor collects and compares data for two-year colleges.

- Enrollment data by ethnicity, age, gender, major, and enrollment status.
- Foundation donations scholarships awards.
- State appropriation dollars.
- RTD management reports.

9I1 Improvement of current processes and systems

- An Institutional Effectiveness Process is in place to identify the department or office responsible for tracking specific data.
- RCC is in the process of implementing a strategic plan. The goals of this plan will address improvement needs.
- Institutional Research Committee will ensure that data collected by the college is valid, reliable, and useful. Institutional research will ensure student success, foster a culture of inquiry, support institutional effectiveness and facilitate the achievement of the college mission, vision, and strategic planning initiatives.

9I2 Targets, improvement priorities, communications

- Need to establish outcomes after strategic plan is in place.
- Continue to enhance and establish tracking measure for the key collaborators identified in 9C2.
- Communicate with faculty, staff, administrators, and appropriate students and stakeholders via newsletters, student senate meetings, president's column, news

releases, informational meetings, advisory committee meetings, annual report and faculty staff website.

- Internal communication needs will continue to assess and address the internal climate survey.
- Expand relationships with alumni to facilitate fund raising and program enhancement.

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AQIP and RCC Glossary of Abbreviations

AA	Associate in Arts
AAS	Associate in Applied Science
AASC	Academic Affairs and Standards Council
ACT	American College Testing
ADN	Associate Degree Nursing
AFA	Associate in Fine Arts
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
AS	Associate in Science
BOSS	Bikers of Student Success
BRIO	Name of a software application system
CATs	Classroom Assessment Techniques
CCSSE	Community College Survey of Student Engagement
CE	Construction Electrician
CELSA	Combined English Language Skills Assessment
CEU	Continuing Education Units
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
COS	Cosmetology
CPT	Accuplacer/Course Placement Test
CT	Computer Technology
CTL	Center for Teaching and Learning
CUPPS	College and University Program Planning System
D2L	Desire2Learn
DARS	Degree Audit Reporting System
DOER	Department of Employee Relations
FBM	Farm Business Management
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FSGC	Faculty Shared Governance Council
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
FYE	Full Year Equivalent
GAO	Goals, Actions, and Outcomes
GPA	Grade Point Average
HIST	History
HLC	Higher Learning Commission
HR	Human Resources
HUMA	Humanities
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
ISRS	Integrated Statewide Records System
ITV	Interactive Television
LANS	Local Area Network
LC	Leadership Council
LE	Law Enforcement
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
MAPE	Minnesota Association of Professional Employees
MIS	Management Information Systems

MMA	Middle Management Association
MnSCU	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System
MnTC	Minnesota Transfer Curriculum
MSCFA	Minnesota State College Faculty Association
NRHEG	New Richland, Hartland, Ellendale, and Geneva
OCUC	Owatonna College and University Center
OIT	Office of Instructional Technology
PAS	Post-Secondary Agriculture Students
PSEO	Post-secondary Enrollment Options
RCC	Riverland Community College
RCSGA	Riverland Community Straight Gay Alliance
RIOT	Righteous Invasion of Truth-Christian Fellowship
RTD	Riverland Training and Development
SAD	Solve-and-Dissolve Committees
SALT	Student Affairs and Standard Council
SCUPPS	State Colleges and Universities Personnel and Payroll System
SEED	Seeking Education Equality and Diversity
SEMA4	Statewide Employee Management System
SM	Supervisory Management
SOCI	Sociology
SPCH	Speech
THTR	Theater
V-PASS	Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Leadership Team

Appendix I

