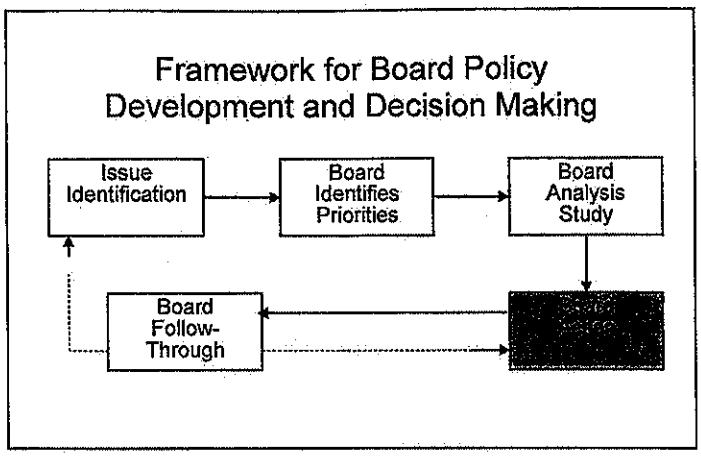
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

July 30, 2009



Agenda Item: Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC) Accreditation Report

Iowa Goal: Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.

Equity Impact Statement: ILCC supports an open-door policy in enrollment of all students.

Presenters: Colleen Hunt, Chief
Bureau of Community College Services

Valerie Newhouse, President
Iowa Lakes Community College

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: The Department of Education recommends continued accreditation for ILCC through 2013. A state compliance accreditation visit will be held in 2013.

Background: This is a report of the evaluation of ILCC for continued state accreditation as an associate degree-granting institution. The Iowa Department of Education conducted the evaluation visit on March 24-26, 2009. The findings reflect the work of the accreditation team in the comprehensive review of ILCC.

ILCC is following the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) model for accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission, a commission of the North Central Association. With AQIP, an institution demonstrates it meets accreditation standards and expectations through sequences of events that align with those ongoing activities that characterize organizations striving to improve their performance.

Accreditation Evaluation

Iowa Lakes Community College

On-Site Comprehensive Visit
Conducted March 24-26, 2009

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
Bureau of Community College Services

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Accreditation Team
Iowa Lakes Community College
March 24-26, 2009

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Iowa Lakes Community College's State Accreditation
Conducted March 24-26, 2009

Purpose of the Visit

The purpose of the visit was an accreditation of Iowa Lakes Community College by the Iowa Department of Education.

Organizational Context

Iowa Lakes Community College is a public, comprehensive educational institution accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The college was established in 1967 under provision of Chapters 260C and 260D, Code of Iowa. "To provide opportunities for quality lifelong learning and promote economic development for [the] communities" of northwest Iowa is the mission of Iowa Lakes Community College.

The area included all or parts of the counties of Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, and Palto Alto. In 1968, the board approved the merger of the Estherville Junior College and its facilities into the new district. The Emmetsburg Community College was merged in 1970 to accomplish the goal of operating two major campuses in the area. The two largest campuses are located at Emmetsburg and Estherville. Campuses are also located in Algona, Spencer, and Spirit Lake.

Over 72,000 people reside in this predominately rural five-county district encompassing approximately 2,900 square miles. Through its five campuses and an interactive distance learning system, Iowa Lakes currently enrolls more than 3,900 full- and part-time students. The college offers liberal arts, career option, and vocational-technical courses leading toward associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. It is committed to continuous quality improvement while serving the changing needs of its constituents.

The Estherville campus facilities serve liberal arts, career option, and vocational-technical programs. Vocational, technical, career option, and liberal arts programs and an alternative high school are offered at the Emmetsburg campus. A facility in Algona was purchased in late 1986 and has been developed into a college campus with facilities for liberal arts courses, community and education services, a success center, and a library. The Spencer campus includes facilities for liberal arts, technical, vocational courses, a computer lab, community services, education services, a success center, library, the area small business development center, and retired and senior volunteer program. The Spirit Lake campus opened in 1984 and houses evening and weekend college, liberal arts courses, a computer lab, community services, education services, a success center, an alternative high school, and a library.

Iowa Lakes Community College is noted for its innovative and visionary programming. In 1982, it was the second community college in the state to build an Instructional Television Fixed System (ITFS) providing interactive television access to five college sites and 14 secondary schools. In 1993, Iowa Lakes became the first community college to complete a hook-up with the Iowa Communications Network (ICN), a fiber optic interactive video system linking all community colleges and the regents' universities in the state. This system now links other colleges, public schools, hospitals, and government agencies throughout Iowa as well. In 1985, Iowa Lakes became the first Iowa community college to mandate entrance assessment of all new students. The goal of this assessment program is to help all students be successful in college by ensuring development of minimum competencies in mathematics, writing, and reading prior to graduation from Iowa Lakes.

The college offers a variety of outreach services to area communities including a full schedule of continuing education courses, college preparatory courses, support programming, business/ industry training and retraining programs, and facilitation of economic development. Iowa Lakes collaborates with three four-year institutions offering baccalaureate degree programs to area citizens who are unable to relocate due to job or family commitments.

The college is governed by a seven-member board of trustees elected by the residents of Merged Area III. Administrative offices are located in Estherville, which houses most members of the president's cabinet, central administrative staff and the college administrative computer center. The president's cabinet, along with supervisory personnel from the administrative team, manages the operation of the college district.

Sites or Branch Campuses/Centers Reviewed

Iowa Lakes Community College Campuses—Estherville, Emmetsburg, and Spencer

Interactions with Institutional Constituencies

1. Cabinet
2. President
3. Chief Academic Officer
4. Campus Deans
5. Chief Financial Officer
6. Administration Building Support Staff
7. Continuing Education and Economic Development
8. Institutional Advancement Staff
9. Grants Office Staff
10. Director Human Resources
11. Coaching Staff

12. Institutional Research
13. Trustees
14. Students
15. Equity Staff
16. Library Staff
17. Admission Staff
18. Global Education Staff
19. Information Technology Staff
20. Campus Support Staff
21. Professional Employee Standards Committee (PESC)
22. Quality Faculty Plan Committee
23. Other Campus Directors: Financial Aid, Registrar, Custodial/Maintenance, Wind Turbine, Student Activities/Government, Housing, Success Center, Bookstore, Food Service, Wellness Center, TRIO/ASPIRES (a student support service program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help increase the number of disadvantaged students who successfully complete a program of study at the postsecondary level of education), ABE (Adult Basic Education)/GED (General Education Development), SAVE (a secondary transitional preparatory program for students on a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) located at the Emmetsburg Campus), and SPNDS
24. Arts and Sciences Faculty
25. Career Option Faculty
26. Alternative High School Staff
27. Student Services Staff
28. Advisory Committee Members
29. Evening Students
30. Assessment Review Committee
31. Executive Director of Facilities Management
32. Nursing and Allied Health Staff
33. Dean of Students
34. Executive Director of Marketing
35. Meet and Confer Committee
36. Secondary Programs Staff
37. Enrollment Management Team
38. Non-Faculty staff
39. Advising for Success Committee
40. Adjunct Faculty
41. College-wide Improvement Team
42. Curriculum Committee

Principle Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

1. Web Page
2. Program Evaluation Books (also Program Review and Evaluation Folders)
   - Account Specialist
   - Agri-Business Technology
   - Ag Production Technology
   - Associate Degree in Nursing
   - Auto Collision
   - Auto Mechanic Technology
   - Aviation
   - Biorenewable Fuels
   - Broadcast Media
   - Business Administration Management
   - Child Care
   - Computer Aided Design
   - Computer Programming
   - Construction Technology
   - Criminal Justice
   - Environmental Studies
   - Farm Equipment
   - Graphic Design and Technology
   - Health Care Administration
   - Hotel/Motel Restaurant Management
   - Human Services/Disability Studies
   - Journal/Photo
   - Landscape and Turf grass Technology
   - Legal Assistant
   - Marine and Small Engine Technology
   - Massage Therapy
   - Medical Assistant AAS (Associate of Applied Science) and Diploma
   - Medical Office Technology
   - Motorcycle and Small Engine Technology
   - Office Specialist/Administrative Assistant/Secretarial
   - Paramedic Specialist
   - Pharmacy Technology
   - Practical Nursing (PN)
   - PN History
   - Recreation and Leisure Management
   - Retail Marketing/Retail Marketing Management
   - Surgical Tech
   - Sustainable Energy Resource Management

- Web Develop and Design
- Welding Wind Energy and Turbine Technology

3. Success Center Instructor Manual April 2007
4. Developmental Education
5. Distance Learning at Iowa Lakes Community College
6. Iowa Lakes Community College AQIP Action Projects April 2008
7. Adjunct Faculty Handbook
8. Admission Bulletin 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08
9. Bargaining Agreement
10. College Catalogs: 2003-05, 2007-2008, 2008-09
11. Enrollment Management Plans 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05,2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08
12. President's Cabinet Retreat, January 25, 2008
13. Examples of Non-Traditional and Diversity Student Survey
14. General Education Statement
15. Info in a Minute FY04 and FY05
16. Quality Faculty Plan
17. Schedules Spring 2007, Fall 2008, and Summer 2008
18. Independent Audit Reports 1994-95 through 2008-09 (historical trends)
19. Auditor's Report June 30, 2006
20. Scholarship Booklets
21. Student Handbook 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09
22. Technology Plan
23. Student Placement Report Data
24. Pandemic Influenza Response Plan June 2008
25. English/Speech Discipline
26. Board Policies
27. Business Discipline
28. Humanities (Art/ Foreign Language/ Music) Discipline
29. Math Discipline
30. Sciences Discipline
31. Before Graduation Satisfaction Surveys
32. ARC (Assessment Review Committee) Retreat Information Report and CAAP (College Assessment of Academic Proficiency) Report 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008
33. Marketing Plan
34. Emergency Procedures 2007-2008
35. Master Building Plan Data (Updating data in 2009)
36. CDs: Academic Matrix Files, CTE (Career and Technical Education) Program
37. Hiring Process Handbook August 2005
38. AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) Systems Portfolio November 2008
39. Secondary Programs Manual March 2006
40. ILCC (Iowa Lakes Community College) Employee Handbook
41. Program Action Plans and Follow-up Meeting

Additional State Review Requirements

- The Quality Faculty Plan, as required by Iowa Code, was reviewed at Iowa Lakes Community College and was found to meet the stated requirements of the Iowa Code.
- Review of faculty personnel files, as required by Iowa Code, did not present any issues.
- The review of faculty load, as required by Iowa Code exhibited evidence of arts and sciences faculty who were exceeding the full-time teaching load as specified in Iowa Code. The college should examine their policies and procedures in order to assure that all faculty members comply with the teaching loads as specified in Iowa Code.
- Iowa Code requirement of reviewing 20 percent of CTE programs per year is being followed.

Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previous Accreditation Visit

- Data collection, data evaluation, and the continuous improvement systems utilized will be critical to achieving the goals of the college's strategic plan. Like all Iowa community colleges, ILCC (Iowa Lakes Community College) in partnership with the Department of Education, must continue to develop its data-driven decision making capability.

  Met—The addition of the Datatel system has allowed the college to collect data for evaluation and continuous improvement.

I. HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Category one identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This criterion focuses on the teaching-learning processes within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how the entire organization contributes to student learning and overall student development. It examines processes and systems related to: learning objectives; mission-driven student learning and development; intellectual climate; academic programs and courses; student preparation; key issues such as technology and diversity; faculty and staff roles; teaching and learning effectiveness; course sequencing and scheduling; learning and co-curricular support; student assessment; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths:

- Document review and interviews indicated that Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC) has student learning outcomes for arts and sciences, career and technical, career option, and diploma programs.
- The college has a mandatory assessment and placement requirement for first-time, full-time incoming students.
- The college assesses students' writing, reading, math, and science reasoning proficiency for graduates in arts and sciences through the use of ASSET-COMPASS (a series of short placement tests covering the areas of English, reading, and mathematics developed by American College Testing) and College Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP).
- The Student Success Center proactively supports student learning. Students with disabilities and developmental students benefit from the services.
- The college offers multiple avenues for course delivery including face-to-face online, hybrid, web-supported, Iowa Lakes Television (ILTV), Iowa Communications Network (ICN), College by Cassette (CBCIP), and Iowa Public Television (IPTV) options serving all campuses.
- Entering students complete a Learning Styles Inventory to assess preferred learning styles. This assists instructors to use appropriate instructional pedagogy.
- ILCC recognizes that enrollment growth may be in online and global educational delivery and is poised to address this growth through its involvement in the Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCOC) and comparable initiatives.
- The college has responsive programming to address emerging technology fields in areas such as wind energy and turbine technology, as well as biorenewable fuels technology. In addition, the college has expanded nursing programs at multiple campuses to include night, weekend, and part-time options.
- The Program Evaluation and Review process provides data for decision-making and program improvement.
- The college's Curriculum Committee model envelopes the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) continuous improvement model, which can serve as a model for other college governance groups.

- The college staff is striving to update multi-media technology and to standardize classrooms.
- Student recruitment and retention efforts are a focal point of the institution. The Advising for Success team is evaluating a centralized advising center as a model to provide student advising services.
- The Enrollment Management Team has a mission and goals commensurate with achieving increased student enrollment and retention. Annual enrollment plans, goals, and measurable objectives provide a framework to continuously improve related processes.
- The college has added credit courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) to meet the needs of students whose primary language is not English.
- Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC) has an effective relationship with high school partners as evidenced by student participation in Postsecondary Student Enrollment Options (PSEO) and Career Academy offerings.
- Program technology is updated through available funding and through industry partnerships.
- The college's career and technical education (CTE) programs partner with business and industry representatives to obtain industry updates and training.
- The college uses student internships and worksite-based learning experiences to help keep programs current. These experiences augment program technology and resources.
- In February 2009, the college updated its Comprehensive Program Evaluation process which was developed and implemented in 1996 to become an "operational practice" that is integrated into its college-wide assessment, planning, and resource allocation practices. The assessment process is faculty-driven and administratively supported and involves a Multidisciplinary Program Review and Evaluation Team. This team documents the identified program strengths and challenges as well as develops strategies which provide college-wide support for the strengthening of the programs' curriculum, student learner achievements, and related program performance outcomes. Faculty and administration shared numerous examples as to how this process is being utilized to set direction for program improvement initiatives, as well as ensuring that adequate resources are provided for effectively carrying out the agreed upon strategies for improvement of the program being reviewed.
- Many of the CTE curricula are based on industry standards. Examples include Construction Technology, Auto Collision and Paint Technology, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Welding, and Automotive Technology.
- Returning to Learning is an innovative way to encourage nontraditional students to reconnect with college credit and noncredit programs.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to develop general education outcomes for all graduates aligned with the college's General Education Statement and linked with core values of ILCC.
- The college is encouraged to identify and implement multiple assessment measures to document student learning of general education outcomes.

- Consider developing an educational program master plan that outlines potential future program implementation, concomitant costs, and facility needs.
- The college is encouraged to review the course scheduling process across all campuses in order to minimize duplication and increase course section enrollment.
- The college is encouraged to update the High School Enrollment Handbook to clarify the differences between PSEO (Postsecondary Student Enrollment Options), tech prep, and concurrent enrollment. This will be important for the college to align their information with the Senior Year Plus state legislation passed in 2008.
- The mean student placement data as reported through the Management Information System (MIS) for CTE (career and technical education) Perkins program indicators reflects that the mean placement rate is 46 percent, while the statewide target is 72 percent. The college is encouraged to utilize information in the Program Review Annual Report to develop an aggregated graduate placement report that is not dependent on the state's unemployment insurance data used to determine the Perkins data.
- Consider including general education course requirements in program of study curricula in the college catalog for career option programs. Such information can assist with student advising and reflect general education expectations for graduates. This could be beneficial for student self-advising. This could also be used to document the alignment with degree requirements.
- As the community experiences an increase in displaced workers, the college is encouraged to develop certificates that may be offered to these workers to upgrade their skills.
- The college is encouraged to strategically plan for enrollment growth in curricular areas requiring clinical sites and worksite-based learning.
- The college is encouraged to consider implementing enrollment caps in CTE program areas to allow for safety and effective student learning.
- The college is encouraged to continue the program review for programs in the arts and sciences area to provide a comprehensive approach to assessment.
- The college has an opportunity to restructure the advising program. The challenge will be to implement the model being considered without additional staff. The college is encouraged to look at different models including a blended method. Graduate assistants might be a solution. Expansion of the College Success Center might also be a solution. An advising day could also be used. A degree audit might also be utilized.
- The college has an opportunity to outline its continuum of student assessment practices for pre- and post-enrollment, enrollment, and define direct and indirect measures of student learning.

II. ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

Category two addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of the major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of the mission. Depending on the organization's character, the category examines processes and systems related to: identification of other distinctive objectives; alignment of other distinctive objectives; faculty and staff roles; assessment and review of objectives; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The college actively pursues grants and funding, such as TRIO (all three grant opportunities), to support and expand college initiatives. In addition, the College has an RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) grant, which is a 35-year-old program. The RSVP grant allows the college to work with volunteers to assist in the community. The Alumni and Friends Association generates scholarships. The President's Circle also provides for foundation donations. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the staff contributed to an internal fundraising drive.
- Intercollegiate athletics are offered by the college. The addition of men's and women's soccer will provide student life opportunities through participation and attendance at sporting events.
- The campus is making a concerted effort to reduce operating expenditures. Some examples include making changes in purchasing supplies, cleaning of rugs, reducing inventory, and implementing temperature set-backs in the evenings and weekends.
- The college is pursuing several "green" initiatives. Some examples include membership in the President's Climate Initiative, wind energy generation, geo thermal heating systems, and waste reduction.
- The college provides cultural events or convocations to expand the cultural enrichment experiences for students.
- The college offers a comprehensive student activities menu meant to address various student interests.
- The college requires a one-credit course for all Associate of Arts degree students—Successful Learning. The course provides opportunities for students to give immediate feedback regarding the class.
- Students indicated that a majority of career and technical education (CTE) programs have clubs or CTE Student Organizations.
- The SAVE program, a 13th year secondary transitional preparatory program for students on a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP), also provides support for students. It is a model program for the state because it is residential. Students build a community of support that is taken into the classroom.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to analyze the cost savings that have been produced by making changes in its conservation of resources. Sharing this information with college staff might encourage additional ideas for resource conservation.
- The college is encouraged to partner with community resources to provide expanded student life opportunities particularly for residential students.
- The college is encouraged to look for additional ways to support the new international student population.
- The college is encouraged to continue to seek additional grant opportunities in light of the current economic situation.

III. UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

Category three examines how the organization works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines processes and systems related to: student and stakeholder identification; student and stakeholder requirements; analysis of student and stakeholder needs; relationship building with students and stakeholders; complaint collection, analysis; and resolution; determining satisfaction of students and stakeholders; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The college provides numerous opportunities for students to give feedback through a variety of surveys and focus groups implemented throughout the year. In addition to standardized student satisfaction and opinion surveys, the college has developed its own set of surveys to be used for special populations of students such as housing students. Of special note is a needs assessment survey distributed to all new students during orientation. The survey is designed to help the college identify needs and student concerns.
- Survey data are used to provide better services. A committee compiles the data and completes a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and later completes an action plan to address needs identified in the surveys.
- Student needs are also identified through focus groups. Opportunities for all students to participate in focus groups regardless of campus location are provided. Three (3) specialty focus groups include gender non-traditional, employees of the college who are former Iowa Lakes Community College graduates, and ethnic minority groups.
- The organization, management, and delivery of student services enhance student retention and success.
- Staff pointed to the importance of nurturing good relationships with community stakeholders.
- An electronic suggestion box on the website provides students and community members an avenue to voice suggestions.
- Students reported staff is eager to understand and respond to student problems. In the words of one student, "If I have a problem it is a problem for everyone on this campus. The whole campus works together to help find a solution." Students reported staff and faculty are always willing to listen. Several mentioned accessible staff and faculty.
- Faculty advisors meet with students up to 3-4 times before the semester begins to determine whether the students' program choice is a good career choice.
- Career and technical education faculty are in touch with their graduates through phone calls and surveys to gather feedback from alumni in order to strengthen their programs.
- Admissions staff and advisors work closely with online students to ensure they are ready for the rigors of online learning.
- Advisory boards give recommendations that are listened to and implemented when possible.

- The college is proactively developing services for displaced workers including General Educational Development (GED), ESL (English as a Second Language), computer skills upgrading, resume writing, and job search and placement activities. This has been in response to plant closings in the community.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Students expressed a concern that evaluations were shared with faculty members in such a way that faculty members might be able to identify who had made the statement. The college is encouraged to review this process.
- Students reported it was sometimes difficult to connect with teachers in online courses. The college is encouraged to review communication strategies.
- Advisory boards meet only one time per year for one and one-half hours. The college is encouraged to determine if this is an effective way to gain input from the advisory boards for programs.
- Multiple interviewees indicated that the five-county area is realizing an overall population decline and decreasing K-12 enrollment. The college is encouraged to continue collecting data to identify opportunities for niche markets. The college is encouraged to develop additional strategies to recruit and support nontraditional students.
- Algona students stated a need for additional access to computers and technology. The college is encouraged to host discussion forums with students.

IV. VALUING PEOPLE

Category four explores commitment to the development of faculty, staff, and administrators, since the efforts of all are required for institutional success. It examines processes and systems related to: work and job environment; workforce needs; training initiatives; job competencies, and characteristics; recruitment, hiring, and retention practices; work processes and activities; training and development; personnel evaluation; recognition, reward, compensation, and benefits; motivation factors; satisfaction, health and safety, and well-being; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- All interview groups stated that employees are the strength of the college. Students expressed pride in their programs and the related faculty. Faculty and staff expressed their pride in students and the facilities and felt that faculty and staff is a key resource to the success of the institution.
- The college provides in-service training two times per year for faculty and staff of the College during which all campuses come together for training and community building.
- Individual departments reported participating in continuing education programs two to three times per year.
- The college is supportive of staff and faculty's involvement in outside organizations and provides opportunities to travel and participate in professional development opportunities as the budget allows.
- The college offers college credit courses at no cost for employees. Family members may take classes at a charge of 30 percent of regular tuition.
- The college encourages the involvement of faculty and staff in group work through a "vertical slice" model in organizing committees and work groups. This provides an integrated institutional approach for input and dialog.
- New Iowa Lakes Community College faculty are assigned a mentor. The mentor is paid; this is a one-year process.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to develop a plan for recruiting and hiring from diverse populations. Some ideas may be to advertise in ethnic newspapers, job sites, ethnic centers, and employment web sites that cater to diverse populations. The college is encouraged to seek members of the local minority population to fill employment needs.
- The college will need to research ways to continue to train and professionally develop its employees in spite of financial cutbacks. Some ideas may be to collaborate with other community colleges and other agencies to bring in speakers and experts in the area and insurance providers to provide Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and safety training.

- The college may want to map their processes. Documentation of processes and procedures in a clear fashion will aid staff's understanding and will improve consistency aligned with the college's continuous improvement philosophy.
- In light of the economic and financial situation, the college is encouraged to find ways to show that the college values people in nonmonetary ways. It will be important to do this to maintain and boost employee morale.
- The Iowa Lakes Community College Human Resources Share (S) drive, under the subsection of Hiring Guide states "On a very limited basis, advertising for a position is not always necessary (promotion of existing employees, temporary part-time employment, adjunct faculty or other specifically approved deviations)." Interviewees indicated that the process has not been consistently followed, and that applicants have been appointed to positions without following the process they believed was outlined. The college is encouraged to make college staff aware of the current college policy.
- Interviews with adjunct faculty indicated that they were not aware of faculty development activities. They did state that they do meet with discipline faculty one time a year and that they are paid for their attendance.
- Although there is an adjunct faculty handbook, there is no faculty handbook. The college is encouraged to develop a handbook for full-time faculty.

V. LEADING AND COMMUNICATING

Category five addresses how the leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide the organization in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines processes and systems related to: leading activities; communicating activities; alignment of leadership system practices; institutional values and expectations; direction setting; future opportunity seeking; decision making; use of data; leadership development and sharing; succession planning; measures; analysis of results; improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The college shares information through the Share (S) drive, the website, e-mail blasts, Info for a Minute, and other tools to share information throughout the college.
- The role of the Meet and Confer Committee was expanded in conjunction with an AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) to include professional development activities. The committee provides a model that can be strength for reliable and consistent internal communication.
- Staff expressed confidence in the selection of the new president and her commitment to the improvement of communication among faculty and staff.
- In connection with an AQIP project, the chief financial officer has made a concerted effort to improve communication with faculty and staff about financial issues and administrative decision making. With the current economic challenges the institution is facing, this has improved staff's understanding of college decision-making and operations.
- Iowa Lakes Community College has an experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated board of trustees that provide leadership and guidance in the operation of the college.

Opportunities for Improvement

- A number of interview groups expressed concerns with multiple changes in leadership over the last decade. The college is encouraged to develop a succession plan for administrative and mid level-management positions that will provide consistency and long-term stability.
- The college is encouraged to clarify operational structures and decision-making groups' roles, responsibilities, membership, tenure, and purpose of work groups. There appears to be ambiguity in committee and work group roles. There is a need for committee charters and an organizational chart to identify lines of communication and decision-making responsibilities.
- Interviewees indicated that communication seems to be top down in certain departments. Faculty and staff are informed of actions after the decisions have been made. Interviewees indicated that there is not always participation and input in the decision- making process. The college is encouraged to study how additional two-way communication might be implemented in these situations.

- The Board of Trustees should review its board policies and concentrate its efforts on providing policy governance and overall institutional direction to the new president and administration. The institution will need this leadership approach in order to guide the college through the current turbulent economic times that the state is experiencing.
- The Meet and Confer Committee was previously established to provide a voice for employees in the professional support and classified ranks in institutional decision making and ongoing professional development. The committee, having been relatively inactive over the last two years, is being addressed. The president has focused new attention to this committee to address issues and concerns for these two important employee groups. This vehicle may re-establish a vital communication link in disseminating and explaining of the decision making results and processes during current budgetary times.

VI. SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS

Category six addresses the support processes that help provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines processes and systems related to: student support; administrative support, identification of needs; contribution to student learning and accomplishing other distinctive objectives; day-to-day operations; use of data; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The college's two foundations assist students through a variety of scholarship programs. This past year the foundations provided 130 scholarships valued at $960,000. Scholarships for students are also supported by the "Friend Raising" campaign (external) and the "We Believe" campaign (internal).
- Student services staff at the different campuses has been cross-trained to enable them to deliver services to students without a student having to make a return trip to campus or wait when other staff are not available.
- Students at Emmetsburg, Estherville, and Spencer reported that access to computers for their academic needs has not been an issue. There are a variety of different means (i.e. computer labs, library, and TRIO offices) on the campuses for students to utilize computer equipment and software.
- The college provides Success Centers on the campuses to assist students who are in need of their services.
- The college utilizes a variety of focus groups to gain input in evaluating services at the college.
- The college has attractive, clean, and well maintained facilities. The college has invested significant dollars in new facilities over the past three years in response to the academic program demands of the marketplace and the college's service district.
- With recent investments over the past three years in its technology infrastructure, the college is relatively well situated with information technology equipment for the short-term.

Opportunities for Improvement

- While the addition of men's and women's soccer will add expanded diversity to the college in the way of ethnicity and full time day time students, it will provide issues in the way of instruction, housing, food services, and student activities on the Spencer campus. Careful planning on these issues will allow the college to provide students with an important educational experience.
- Emmetsburg students interviewed expressed concerns regarding maintenance and the energy efficiency of the dormitories.
- The college has in place an Affirmative Action Committee with a broad scope that also addresses the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). The college is encouraged to develop a

written plan to address facility improvement needs to better serve those with disabilities and to identify a funding stream to support those improvements.

- Currently, the college does not have a formal, written master facilities plan in place that addresses potential expansion opportunities for the institution. The administration may want to consider compiling a detailed inventory of current real estate, facilities, and utility capacities. A new master facility plan may be developed identifying possible land acquisition if needed, future facility additions, and the requisite utilities necessary to serve any new facilities.
- The information technology director's position has remained vacant for approximately a year. Current staff has expertise in their own specific areas. However, as technology is ever changing, the college is encouraged to study the best practices and models in other community college information technology departments to assist Iowa Lakes Community College in determining the best option for the college.
- The college has an integrated and data driven marketing plan. This allows the college to direct the funds used for recruitment to be used to its fullest advantage. To complement the institutional-wide marketing philosophy, the college may want to develop a collaborative program for marketing and recruitment. This plan may need to be expanded to target unique career and technical program areas. A community career day might also be implemented.
- Students and faculty voiced a concern regarding campus safety and security issues during the evening and weekend hours. The institution is encouraged to review and evaluate procedures regarding safety and security issues and to communicate findings to faculty, students, and staff.
- Estherville residential students expressed concerns regarding minimal security measures and lack of enforcement of student discipline in housing facilities. The college is encouraged to study this issue.

VII. MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Category seven examines how the organization collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines processes and systems related to: collection, storage, management, and use of information and data at the institutional and department/unit levels; institutional measures of effectiveness; information and data alignment with institutional needs and directions; comparative information and data; analysis of information and data; effectiveness of information system and processes; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The Office of Institutional Research, with support from Information Technology, provides comprehensive information and data to assist with decision-making. The office also offers assistance with data analysis, development of trend lines, and benchmarking.
- The implementation of Datatel and student information system database software has enhanced the storage, retrieval, and analysis of data.
- The institution employs diverse instruments such as ACT (American College Testing) Student Satisfaction Surveys, the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, focus groups, CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency), ACT Student Opinion Survey and self-developed surveys to provide data for analysis and decision-making.
- The Systems Portfolio reflects that Iowa Lakes Community College outranks other participating institutions on the AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) Examiner.
- Iowa Lakes Community College participates in multiple national studies to generate comparative peer data. Examples include the Kansas study, the National Community College Benchmarking Project, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) peer review.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to review current measures of institutional effectiveness to assure linkage/alignment with institutional mission and goals. It is important for the college to know what and why they are measuring to determine how things link with the bigger picture on a college-wide basis.
- Implementation, follow through, and completion of the Active Campus Portal Project will facilitate students' access to online learning materials and tools, threaded discussions, and student-faculty communication. Training will need to be provided to all within the institution.
- The college is encouraged to correctly report PSEO (Postsecondary Enrollment Options) enrollment and limit this to only PSEO, not TRIO students.

VIII. PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Category eight examines the planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping achieve the mission and vision. It examines processes and systems related to: institutional vision; planning; strategies and action plans; coordination and alignment of strategies and action plans; measures and performance projections; resource needs; faculty, staff, and administrator capabilities; measures; analysis of performance projections and results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

- The college has a five-year strategic plan with college-wide goals and measurable benchmarks. The plan contains critical issues, the strategic planning process, the college profile, goals progress report, and operational objectives for the college. College-wide goals include student academic outcomes, staff development, student enrollment, and financial health.
- Continuous improvement is an important philosophy and goal of Iowa Lakes Community College. Committees involved in this process include: the Academic Council, Assessment Review Committee, Enrollment Management Team, Meet and Confer Committee, and the Professional Standards Committee.
- Based on input from the marketing consultants, Doris and Ron Ingersoll, the college developed enrollment management goals with objectives and follow-up reports. This shows a long-term vision for increasing enrollment and recruitment of students. Continuous improvement decisions are based on data.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Interviewees and document review indicated that the college does not currently have a master facilities plan. Interviewees and document review indicate the Information Technology (IT) plan is dated 2008; however, it is an incomplete plan. The results of the program review process could be utilized for planning purposes. The IT master plan could also be included as part of the master facilities plan. Interviewees stated that much of the HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) equipment is 35 years or older.
- Document review did not show evidence who was involved with strategic planning, environmental scanning, and other initiatives that provide the framework for decision-making in long-term strategic planning. It is recommended that the college map the process that the institution utilizes to develop and update the strategic plan.
- The college might utilize an external SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis along with an internal employee satisfaction survey in order to do an internal analysis.
- The college is encouraged to link their strategic plan with the AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) categories so these are not being done in isolation.

IX. BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Category nine examines the organization's relationships—current and potential—to analyze how they contribute to accomplishing the mission. It examines processes and systems related to: identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationships creation, prioritization, and building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and improvement efforts.

Strengths

External:

- The college has a wind power partnership with colleges in Texas, New Mexico, and with Iowa State University. The curriculum is being developed by collaborating with other colleges. There is also an articulation agreement with the University of Iowa's College of Engineering which allows those students with an AAS (Associate of Applied Science) degree to continue working toward a Bachelors of Engineering at the University of Iowa.
- All Industrial Technology Career and Technical Education programs have articulation agreements into industrial technology programs at the University of Northern Iowa; the health programs are linked with the University of Iowa.
- The college partners with the community in sharing the library and the wellness center in Emmetsburg.
- Emmetsburg provides space for Head Start, preschool, and child care.
- The ICCOC (Iowa Community College Online Consortium) is a model of collaboration between seven Iowa community colleges to offer online distance education.
- Buena Vista University offers a site on campus.
- Partnerships with local high schools through articulation, PSEO (Postsecondary Enrollment Options), and concurrent enrollment have been developed.
- Partnerships with members of advisory committees strengthen career and technical programs.
- The college is providing staff for athletic programs with graduate assistants from Iowa State University.
- The student-faculty-staff relationships appear to be strong. Comments about the strong rapport among faculty, staff, and students to ensure that student needs are met.

Internal:

- The college links continuing education and credit programs. Examples include welding and ESL (English as a Second Language).
- College community relations and support is evidenced by offering college programs and services in each county in its service area.
- The RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) grant provides for volunteers in numerous departments on campus and in local businesses.
- To address the needs of students on the different campuses, prescribed administrative staff rotates through the campuses to provide services to students.

- The Board of Trustees is well informed about the goals of the college and uses data provided by the staff and administration in making decisions.
- A variety of groups interviewed commented on the positive working relationships among faculty, staff, and administration in providing for the success of the college's students.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The college is encouraged to expand the graduate assistant program beyond athletics.
- The college is encouraged to continue to utilize business and industry partnerships to offset the costs to operate CTE (career and technical education) programs in areas such as sponsoring faculty members teaching in program areas and equipment costs.
- Students interviewed indicated that they would like to see partnerships with four-year schools. They would also like to see the college make use of the TV system to bring Bachelors degree programs on campus or to partner with other distance learning options for advanced degrees.
- Interviewees expressed that students enter the college who need remediation. Additional conversations with high schools to discuss the skills needed to enter Iowa Lakes Community College might be considered.
- CTE faculty interviewed indicated they would value additional collaboration with faculty providing the general education component of their programs. Faculty from multiple campuses and disciplines may be able to collaborate to develop and assess general education outcomes and ensure that such outcomes are taught.
- The college may want to consider opportunities to partner with community agencies to provide activities for students.
- The college is encouraged to form a general education advisory committee to assist with the development of general education outcomes for graduates.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations

In consideration of declining human and financial resources, the college is encouraged to research and develop an operational structure method that is transparent and allows people's involvement in the decision making process at multiple levels and provides a better understanding of why decisions are made. The college is encouraged to clarify operational structures and decision-making groups' roles, responsibilities, membership, tenure, and purpose of work groups. The college is encouraged to study how additional two-way communication might be implemented. This may necessitate an institutional realignment of decision-making groups, job descriptions, and supervisory responsibilities. There is a need for committee charters and an organizational chart to identify lines of communication and decision-making responsibilities.

The administrative building, which houses the president's office and where board meetings are held, consists of several levels. The board room is not accessible for persons with disabilities. The building is an historical building and built many years prior to 1977. The team did not find evidence that a written plan was available outlining how the programs and services managed in this building are accessible to persons with disabilities. There was no indication that the Board of Trustees' public meetings are moved or advertised as to how these will be open if a person with a disability (student, staff, or community member) wishes to attend and speak with the trustees. This previously was included in the May 8, 2003, equity visit report and to date has not been addressed.

The State Accreditation Team recommends continued accreditation for Iowa Lakes Community College District. A State Interim Accreditation visit will be held to coincide with the district's next Higher Learning Commission visit in 2013 in four years.