Category 4: Valuing People

Category 4 Overview
In the category of Valuing People, WCC employs an aligned approach to organizational quality development. The college groups and manages operations as processes that are repeatable and regularly evaluated for improvement. The college strives to make sure that what is learned is shared among organizational units, that processes address the organization’s key goals and strategies, and that coordination occurs among units, divisions and departments. Items selected for inclusion in Category 4 are designed to reflect the college's respect for people and the willingness to invest in them that incorporates a systematic approach to hiring, retaining and developing of college faculty, staff and administrators.

4C1: Organization of Work Environment to Focus on Student Learning
WCC’s learning-centered commitment is woven into the fabric of the college’s administrative and human resource processes. The college’s learning-centered commitment, supported by the Learning First! Action Project, continuously challenges the college to foster a culture where learning serves as the highest priority and where all college employees routinely ask two basic questions: 1) Does this action improve and expand learning? 2) How do we know? Implicit in the first question is quality improvement and the commitment to create and support a quality infrastructure that supports learning. Implicit in the second question is creating a culture of evidence that supports data-driven decision making and information transparency.

WCC’s Learning First! AQIP Action Project has fostered the collaborative efforts of over 50 cross-functional teams that have worked to improve college processes and procedures in a manner that advances a positive learning environment and facilitates access with student success (See Section 5C1). Each major policy change is supported by research in current literature, best practices and benchmarking.

Education and training of faculty, staff, administrators and students in placing learning first has become embedded into how the college approaches its day-to-day activities. New staff members are introduced to the college’s learning-centered commitment and values during New Employee Orientation sessions held throughout the year. New non-tenured faculty are introduced to these concepts through a comprehensive orientation program, the New Faculty Learning Academy. Learning-centered best practices and theory are woven into the offerings of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) for both faculty and staff (See Section 4C4).

4C2: Institutional and Geographic Factors Shaping Work Environment
When you spend some time at WCC and have an opportunity to become familiar with the people who work there, you soon realize that, regardless of their job or location, they share a common belief in the vision and mission of the college. Each one will share stories of how the college changes lives. In many cases, it is their life or the life of a loved one that has been positively impacted. This common belief is woven into the fabric of the college’s culture and shapes its work environment.

WCC is the third largest employer in the Aurora, Illinois area, employing the equivalent of 1,249 employees during 2006-2007. Located 45 miles west of Chicago, Illinois the college offers competitive compensation and benefits package to recruit qualified administrative, faculty and support staff candidates. The college’s classification system, currently under external review (see Section 4I2), is composed of eight full-time and thirteen part-time designations.

In an effort to keep pace with its growing district, the college is engaging in its 2020 College Master Plan (See Institutional Overview Section 06), which involves the construction, remodeling, programming development, and technology integration of all of its buildings to create learning-centered environments. The college is also in the process of creating an ergonomic environment.
4C3: Demographic Trends
WCC’s 600-square-mile district includes portions of Kane, Kendall, DeKalb, LaSalle and Will counties; these five counties account for almost 67% of the state’s population growth from 2000 to 2007. Such growth is expected to continue, with the current district population of nearly 328,000 expected to grow to 386,000 by the year 2020. In order to meet the demands of the college’s growing district, WCC has consistently created new full-time support staff and new full-time faculty positions. During the past 5 years, the college has created 24 new full-time faculty positions and 38 new full-time staff positions (many a result of consolidating part-time positions). This reflects the college’s commitment to supporting increasing workloads that are the result of enrollment growth by increasing the number of full-time employees. This practice, along with increasing efficiencies in systems, processes and procedures that are evolving through the college’s quality improvement commitment, provided agility, flexibility and resources for the college to achieve its strategic goals.

4C4: Key Training Initiatives
WCC provides education, training and professional development opportunities that advance staff and faculty job knowledge and skills, and recognize employees who actively seek self-development. The college’s fourth Strategic Goal is, “We will value our faculty, staff and administrators and provide them with professional development opportunities that will allow them to positively contribute to the college throughout their careers.” WCC’s major training initiatives include the following: 1) CTLT professional development events; 2) software training; 3) administrative systems training; 4) Administrative In-services and retreat; and 5) new employee orientations which are highlighted in Section 4P2.

First, WCC’s CTLT is dedicated to providing leadership for WCC’s learning-centered commitment by providing resources that foster quality and innovation in the teaching and learning process. In 2006-2007, the CTLT offered a program of 290 professional development events totaling 615 hours, which were attended by 2,625 WCC faculty and staff. During this fiscal year, six online tutorials were also offered as a training option which served an additional 75 adjunct faculty. A total of 487 faculty and staff also sought out over 605 hours of one-on-one assistance through the CTLT.


Third, WCC is currently transitioning from its legacy administrative software to SunGard SCT Banner. Banner Finance went live on July 1, 2004 with Banner Human Resources following in January 2005 and Banner student in November 2006. The college’s migration will complete when Banner Financial Aid is activated in late 2007. In response to these changes, the CTLT offers a variety of training services for SCT Banner. This is available through classroom sessions, training materials and one-on-one support. In 2006-2007, the CTLT conducted 12 Banner-related workshops for a total of 40 new and current employees and 19 Banner Open Lab sessions for a total of 202 employees.

Fourth, WCC administrators participate in monthly in-services and an annual retreat that are focused on leadership, the development of the college’s quality infrastructure, and efforts which further the college’s teaching and learning environment. These activities serve to foster commitment to the college’s learning-centered philosophy. This year’s programming, modeled after the American Association of Community College’s Competencies for Community College Leaders, focuses on leadership development and creating a shared understanding of the following competencies identified for community college leaders as they relate to WCC: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism.

4P1: Hiring Processes
WCC strives to structure the college’s human resource systems to facilitate hiring, developing and retaining high caliber faculty, staff and administrators. Reflective of its learning-centered philosophy, WCC requires all full-time administrative staff and full-time faculty candidates to address their perspective on learning-centered colleges in the context of the position for which they are applying. Recognizing the
important of people in creating a quality-oriented, learning-centered college, the Board of Trustees reviews requests for new positions for the following fiscal year during the budget review process and at the June board meeting. All offers of full-time employment for 1) full-time faculty; and 2) full-time and part-time staff and administrators, are subject to Board of Trustees approval.

First, for full-time faculty, academic deans prepare a position announcement reflective of WCC’s Qualifications to Teach document, which outlines the education, experience and other qualifications required to teach in each discipline, benchmarking and needs-assessment data. After a thorough review of applications, transcripts and the applicant’s learning-centered college statement, deans conduct telephone interviews as part of the screening process and determine which applicants to invite for on-campus interviews with the guidance of the Assistant Vice President of Instruction and Executive Vice President of Educational Affairs, or with the input of the Assistant Vice President of Student Development for counselor positions. All on-campus interviews include an interview with Human Resources, a committee interview and teaching demonstration, and a tour as appropriate. Search committee feedback is analyzed, reference and background checks are conducted recommended for continued consideration, and second interviews are held. Once a recommended candidate is identified, an offer of employment is made.

Second, for staff and administrators, the hiring manager and administrator identify essential responsibilities and minimum qualifications for the position using benchmarking and needs-assessments which address institutional needs, performance needs and learning needs. After a thorough review of applications, transcripts and in the case of an administrative position, the applicant’s learning-centered college statement, the hiring manager conducts phone interviews with top candidates. Those selected for an on-campus interview are interviewed by a search committee and by Human Resources. In the case of administrators, candidates complete a writing sample. Second interviews are coordinated for top candidates and include the appropriate administrator.

Hiring processes for adjunct faculty and staff are directed by the hiring manager. In the case of adjunct faculty, deans compose essential responsibilities and minimum qualifications for the position using benchmarking and needs-assessments. Adjunct faculty candidates are reviewed and offered employment by the academic dean. The college’s Academic Specialist position, fosters the transition of new adjuncts through orientations and consistent communication. Candidates for part-time support staff positions are similarly reviewed and hired by the hiring manager.

4P2: Recruitment, Hiring and Retention of Employees
WCC’s faculty and staff play a pivotal role in nurturing the success of its students. Hiring practices are described in Section 4P1. The following a representative of practices that contribute to the retention of the college’s faculty and staff and a continued posture of student access with success: 1) orientation programs; 2) professional development offerings; 3) committee involvement; and 4) benefits package.

First, the college orient all new staff and faculty through new employee orientation and semester orientation programming. New staff are required to attend a full-day orientation program that includes an overview of the college’s history, vision, mission and strategic directions, as well as a tour of key departments on the Sugar Grove campus. In addition, full-time support staff receive a one-on-one orientation on their first day with Human Resources that covers personnel policies, procedures and benefits. New, non-tenured faculty are required to participate in the New Faculty Learning Academy which addresses WCC’s culture, processes and procedures, the WCC student’s unique needs, pedagogy and instructional technology over a three-year period. All college employees attend a three-day semester orientation program which the President and administrative staff announce new initiatives and accomplishments.

Second, WCC’s CTLT provides professional development opportunities for college employees which further the college’s learning-centered commitment. The college’s mission and core values serve as a cornerstone for the CTLT’s pursuit of the following goals: the advancement of a quality teaching and learning experience through professional development; the creation of a community that inspires freshness of thought, creativity, and innovation; the commitment of service to the learning community by
providing leadership and resources for the enrichment of the teaching and learning process; the exploration of instructional resources, methods, and theories to add value to the learning community; the advocacy of accessibility to resources and programs in a convenient and friendly environment.

Third, employees participate on committees/cross-functional teams that provide opportunities for voicing input, feedback and concerns. (See Section 5C1)

Fourth, the college offers a competitive fringe benefit package to its full-time employees including employer-paid medical, dental, life and long-term disability insurance, employer-assisted medical and dental insurance; Section 125 plan; tuition reimbursement for employee and eligible dependents; and generous provisions for sick, vacation and personal leaves.

Changes in personnel are forecasted and reviewed on an annual basis with formal position requests and recommendations for reorganization approved by the Board of Trustees. This is an example of how the continuous quality improvement cycle is ingrained in college systems and process.

4P3: Work Processes Contributions and Ethical Practices
The college’s work processes and activities contribute to communications, cooperation, high performance, innovation, empowerment and organizational learning. Representative practices include the college’s 50+ collaborative cross-functional teams (See Section 5C1), CTLT professional development offerings (See Section 4P2), the performance appraisal process (See Section 4P6), and the process of group facilitation.

The college uses a Group Facilitation Process to create positive social capital and a culture where conversation and evaluation is valued. The college’s cross-functional teams consistently gather people from diverse departments together to discuss changes in college processes and procedures. These organic conversations focus on change and problem-solving while capitalizing on the energy and talents of team members. The emphasis is on personal commitment to the ideas of quality improvement rather than compliance with external requirements.

Ethical practices are stressed throughout the organization and an expectation of ethical integrity is integrated using multiple mediums. These mediums include, but are not limited to the following: training and development related to ethical practices, a comprehensive ethics policy for college employees, a college Ethics Officer (currently the Director of Human Resources), filing of Economic Interest Statements with the appropriate County Clerk office by all administrators and all members of the WCC Board of Trustees, completion by college employees of State of Illinois mandated Ethics Exam, The Integrity Project, Integrity Week activities, and compliance with Board of Trustees Policies addressing topics such as confidentiality of student records, release of employee personal information, conflict of interests, outside employment, solicitation, and use of college property.

4P4: Training and Development
WCC supports and recognizes faculty and staff members in their professional development efforts aimed at increasing both their knowledge in their disciplines and their excellence in creating learning experiences for students. The opportunity for professional development is made available through a variety of vehicles, including: a) workshops and one-on-one assistance for faculty and staff in the areas of teaching, learning and technology through the CTLT; b) reimbursement of up to $1,500 an $1,000 for full-time faculty and staff, respectively, for approved non-WCC courses, conferences and seminars; c) reimbursement to full-time faculty and staff for approved WCC credit courses; and d) a comprehensive orientation program for non-tenured faculty, the New Faculty Learning Academy, which meets monthly during the semester to discuss teaching and learning, college practice and policies and the college culture. The college also offers staff an opportunity to participate in supervisory seminars, composed of seven sessions, through the Valley Industrial Association during the fall and spring semesters. New managers participate in an orientation that is conducted by the Human Resources department. Training and Development is discussed further in Section 4C4.
4P5: Determining Training Needs
WCC’s continuous improvement posture is a critical factor in determining the training needs of the college’s faculty and staff. The college uses multiple sources of data to determine training needs which include, but are not limited to, to the following: 1) support for new college and department initiatives; 2) training workshop feedback and opinion surveys; 3) needs assessments; 4) support for newly-implemented technologies; and 5) ongoing support and skill improvement for existing technologies. This information gathered is used to improve current training offerings, as well as plan future workshops that will better meet the training needs of college faculty and staff. A substantial portion of the college’s training is offered through the CTLT, but departments also support training specific to their unique needs. For example, TOP offers one-on-one training related to outcomes.

4P6: Personnel Evaluation System
The college’s system for personnel evaluation consists of a formal evaluation prior to completion of the probationary period for all full-time support staff and a formal annual review of all administrators and full- and part-time support staff. The purpose of the performance appraisal process is to:
- Assess individual performance in relation to job responsibilities, performance factors and commitment to institutional core values;
- Identify and recognize strengths and provide guidelines for areas of enhanced performance;
- Improve productivity by providing constructive feedback;
- Identify training and development needs;
- Foster two-way dialog between employee and supervisor regarding expectations;
- Foster mutual understanding and commitment regarding expectations and goals; and
- Ensure that the organization’s strategic goals are met.

The Human Resources department provides training to administrative and management staff on how to effectively conduct performance appraisals. The nine performance factors evaluated during an employee’s performance appraisal include: job knowledge, reliability, quality, dependability/adaptability, communication skills, cooperation/teamwork, service, innovation/initiative, and management skills, if appropriate. The evaluation also integrates an employee self-appraisal which asks employees to identify aspects of the job which they like the least and the best, their major accomplishments, activities they have engaged in and goals for professional development, as well as additional guidance that may be needed from their supervisor and how they could better utilize their capabilities.

The system of evaluation for faculty is designed to assist them in determining their instructional effectiveness, to improve the teaching-learning process, to identify professional development needs and to inform them of their strengths and weaknesses. All full-time and adjunct faculty are evaluated through the use of student evaluations in every credit course section. Non-tenured faculty are also evaluated through classroom observation once per semester by their supervising academic dean and once per academic year by the Assistant Vice President of Instruction. An end of academic year, a conference is held between each non-tenured faculty member and his/her supervising academic dean to discuss their overall performance.

4P7: Recognition, Reward and Compensation Systems
The college’s recognition, reward and compensation systems are designed to attract and retain qualified employees within the financial means of the college. The compensation structure for full-time faculty is determined through the collective bargaining process and placement on the compensation schedule reflects educational attainment, teaching experience and experience in applicable occupational fields. The compensation system for support staff is structured as a set of broad-band salary ranges and placement within each salary range is primarily based on educational qualifications and hierarchy within the organization of the college.

The college actively seeks to recognize employee professional development and contributions to WCC’s teaching and learning environment. The faculty of the year award is presented to a full-time faculty member who demonstrates commitment to student learning and success including activities inside and outside the classroom, knowledge of and leadership provided to one’s discipline, and college leadership
activities and professional development. The college’s monthly employee publication, Newsbits (college employee monthly newsletter), also recognizes outstanding employee accomplishments. College employees are also recognized with service awards based upon length of employment.

4P8: Motivation
WCC determines key issues related to the motivation of faculty, staff, and administrators during the performance appraisal processes; the analysis of the college’s Support Staff Survey (see Section 4R1); and the unit and strategic goal accomplishment review process. Improvement priorities are targeted using recommendations proposed during unit goal setting and strategic goal setting processes. The college is administering the Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) to all employees to better assess employee perception of the college climate. The IPS is the complement to the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory which has been administered by the college to students since 1998. WCC’s President meets with all new full-time employees, and holds meet and greet sessions with the support staff from individual departments.

4P9: Employee Satisfaction, Health and Safety, and Well-being
WCC evaluates employee satisfaction, health and safety and well-being during performance appraisal processes, review of unit and strategic goal accomplishment reports, evaluation of Support Staff and vendor satisfaction surveys, and feedback on the college’s Benefits/Wellness Fairs. Wellness initiatives include, but are not limited to the Safety Committee, Health Insurance Committee, cholesterol screening, health evaluation, osteoporosis screening, flu shots, workstation ergonomics, back-safety training, fitness walks, and To Your Health tips on the college intranet. The college administered a Support Staff Survey in the fall of 2006 (see Section 4R1); the results were shared with all employees. As discussed in Section 4P8, the college has followed-up an administration of the IPS in the fall 2007.

4P10: Measures of Valuing People
Measures of valuing people that are collected and analyzed regularly include, but are not limited to, the following: the Support Staff Survey/Institutional Priorities Survey; CTLT workshop attendance; and performance appraisal feedback. In addition to these measures, the college’s Support Staff Committee garners feedback to address the interests of support staff and to improve working relationships. The committee is comprised of three appointed administrators, and four full-time support staff and two part-time support staff who are elected by the college’s staff. The committee is a long-standing committee that serves in an advisory capacity on staff development topics, recognition events, and reviews the Full-Time Support Staff Handbook and Part-Time Support Staff Guidebook.

4R1: Results in Valuing People
The Support Staff Survey was administered in fall 2006 to garner feedback on communication, training/support and employee satisfaction from all college employees. An overall response rate of 61% was achieved. 76% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the job-related information they received. 85% of respondents indicated that they received the training and support necessary to carry out their job responsibilities. When asked to choose an area as their favorite part of being a WCC employee, 66% focused on the people with whom they worked, both fellow employees and students. Two concerns expressed in the survey included salary rate, both absolute and comparative, and communication. The college’s comprehensive compensation, classification and benefits study (see Section 4I2) is designed to address concerns regarding salary rate while the addition of two part-time support staff members on the Support Staff Committee was made in response to feedback regarding communication concerns.

4R2 Results in Processes Associated With Valuing People
WCC’s human resource systems are structured to ensure that the college is able to hire, develop and retain high caliber faculty, staff and administrators. WCC offers competitive salary and benefits packages. Results in processes associated with valuing people include the following: 1) number of hours of training provided by the CTLT (see Section 4C4); 2) orientation and administrative in-service sessions (see Section 4P2 and Section 4C4); 3) the continuous development of collaborative cross-functional teams to guide quality improvement efforts (see Section 5C1); 4) the launch of the "mywcc" portal which will enhance current employee communication systems (see Section 3I2); and 5) 100% completion rate by college employees for the State of Illinois mandated Ethics Exam.
4R3: Evidence of Employee Productivity and Effectiveness
WCC’s learning-centered work environment has fostered employee productivity as evidenced in the success of the college’s AQIP Action Projects ASIP (see Section 7C1), Learning First! (see Section 1C2) and The Outcomes Program (see Section 1C1, 1P6) and community outreach efforts (see Sections 9P1, 9R1). In addition to these indicators, WCC analyzes: 1) the number of credit hours generated by the college; and 2) summary of population served.

First, the college’s 3-year average growth in credit hours (11.9%) was almost twice the state growth rate of 5.7%. This is reflective of the district’s rising population and program growth.

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>FY2002</th>
<th>FY2003</th>
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<th>FY2006</th>
<th>3-Year Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>136,325</td>
<td>148,141</td>
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<td>159,835</td>
<td>165,778.5</td>
<td>158,690</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>126,683</td>
<td>132,394</td>
<td>136,807</td>
<td>136,076</td>
<td>133,409</td>
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</table>

Second, in FY2006 the college served 21,586 residents through its for-credit and non-credit offerings. Section 211 describes how WCC intends on continuing to meet the needs and demands of the college’s growing district.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2004</th>
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<th>3-Year Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>WCC Number Served</td>
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<td>WCC Percentage Served</td>
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<td>ICC Percentage Served Median</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4R4: Results Compared
Comparative results regarding employee productivity and effectiveness are provided in Section 4R3.

411: Improving Its Processes and Systems
WCC employs an integrated approach to improving processes and systems. The college’s quality infrastructure, which incorporates the college’s Strategic Planning Framework and planning process, facilitates the college’s ability to improve processes and systems for valuing people. WCC’s quality infrastructure, Strategic Planning Framework and planning process are discussed in Sections 8P1 and 8P3.

412: Setting Targets for Improvement
WCC employs an integrated approach to the creation of targets and priorities. The college’s quality infrastructure, which incorporates the college’s Strategic Planning Framework and planning process, facilitates the creation of targets and priorities for valuing people. WCC’s quality infrastructure, Strategic Planning Framework and planning process are discussed in Sections 8P1 and 8P3. Communication of targets and priorities is discussed in Section 5P5. Leadership and communication systems supporting the creation of targets and priorities are discussed in Section 5C1. WCC’s Organizational Effectiveness Model is discussed in Section 7C2.

The college has engaged in a comprehensive compensation, classification and benefits study covering all full- and part-time support staff and administrative positions. This study is needed due to the college’s growth and the increase in the number and complexity of the support staff and administrative positions. The college has contracted with Fox Lawson & Associates to review all job functions to ensure that positions are appropriately classified, to update class specifications, to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and review compensation and benefits in order to determine whether they are equitable internally and in the external market. Employees have been engaged in the project’s four phases. The college expects to complete the study by the end of the current calendar year.