Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement

Category 8 Overview
In the category of Planning Continuous Improvement, 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 8 are designed to reflect the college’s foresight in planning for innovation and continuous improvement.

8C1: Five to Ten Year Vision
The 2007-2008 academic year marks the beginning of WCC fifth decade of service to students and its community. During the past year, the college’s 40th anniversary celebration prompted the college to look back in recognition of the college’s proud heritage, it also challenged the college to look forward to the future and continue the founders’ original vision for the college. With the college district’s population expected to grow, the college will continue to advance the development of a sustainable learning-centered community for current and future WCC students. During the next five to ten years, WCC’s systems, processes, procedures, learning and working environment will evolve to further the college’s learning-centered college journey and quality infrastructure.

The college’s five- to ten-year vision is reflected in the college’s Strategic Planning Framework (See Section 8P1), as well as its 2020 College Master Plan (See Institutional Overview Section 01). The college’s Strategic Goals and Objectives are discussed in Section 8C2. With respect to the college’s 2020 College Master Plan (See Section 812). The goals of WCC’s 2020 College Master Plan is to provide the following: a) flexible, scalable and accessible WCC campus environments; b) a consistent WCC experience at all college campuses (main campus and extension centers); c) learning-centered campus environments that foster excellence in teaching and learning; d) campus environments responsive to community needs; e) the seamless delivery of student services through a one-stop model at each campus; f) accountability and responsibility in the use of taxpayer funds.

8C2: Short- and Long-term Strategies
WCC’s Strategic Goals and Objectives are informed by the college’s vision, mission, values, commitments, and program and services (See Institutional Overview Section 01). All serve as an integral part of the college’s Strategic Planning Framework. The Strategic Goals and Objective are created through a collaborative process that solicits input from key stakeholders. They are reviewed annually and approved annually by the college’s Board of Trustees. The Strategic Goals and Objectives serve as a touchstone for the college’s short-term strategies and the creation of unit goals. Each unit goal is required to tie to at least one strategic goal and objective. This process is facilitated through the use of the web-based data management system WeaveOnline (See Section 7C1).

WCC’s 2007-2008 Strategic Goals and Objectives are as follows:

GOAL 1: We will continuously seek to provide a learning-centered college where each individual, whether student, faculty member, staff member, administrator or trustee, understands their role in creating a positive learning environment through everything they do.

Objective 1.1: We will systematically review Board of Trustee Policies and college procedures to ensure they are consistent with an effectively and efficiently managed organization that is focused on learning.

Objective 1.2: We will consider the college as a system of integrated processes that can be continuously improved. We will analyze those processes to ensure they mutually support one another while minimizing conflict.
Objective 1.3: We will provide ongoing education and training to faculty, staff, administrators and students to build and reinforce their understanding and implementation of learning college concepts and core values.

Objective 1.4: We will ensure that students’ outcome expectations are being met and exceeded through a rigorous system of assessment that ensures all programs are focused on creating learning, growth, and development.

Objective 1.5: In developing our administrative software system, we will ensure it is designed to integrate with and enhance administrative, human resource, student service, learning, facility utilization and management and other college systems.

GOAL 2: We will be valued and respected by our communities for providing exceptional value to our district through the prudent management of resources.

Objective 2.1: We will set and adhere to realistic short- and long-term financial goals and continuously improve a system of lifecycle acquisition and management of property, facilities and depreciable assets such as vehicles, information technology systems, and major office equipment.

Objective 2.2: We will complete the 2020 College Master Plan within budget and on time to meet projected needs.

Objective 2.3: We will strengthen the college’s many connections to citizens, as well as corporate, philanthropic, nonprofit, and government entities for the purpose of maximizing the utility of shared resources.

Objective 2.4: We will continuously improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency through an integrated system of needs assessment, planning, goal setting, budgeting, and assessment of college services and processes.

GOAL 3: We will maintain a vibrant range of educational and training offerings that reflect the changing learning environment and the needs of our constituents.

Objective 3.1: We will continuously strengthen our credit and noncredit offerings by being sensitive to the learning environment, exploring new possibilities for program development, enhancing current programs in response to our dynamic environment, and discontinuing those programs that no longer meet a viable student or community need.

Objective 3.2: We will ensure the quality of all programs through an aggressive and dynamic system of program evaluation including benchmarking other programs and organizations.

Objective 3.3: Based on the belief that serving students, individuals, and organizations that comprise our district is the most important purpose of WCC Community College, we will continuously seek to identify and exceed our constituents’ service expectations.

Objective 3.4: We will incorporate government education and workforce development initiatives as well as widely recognized job standards, credentials and certifications into college systems to assure the college provides programming and services that support student and community needs.

Objective 3.5: We will create learning options that meet student needs in terms of time, place, pace, structure, technology, and method of delivery.
Objective 3.6: *We will be recognized as a leader in the creative use of information technology* and web-based resources to expand teaching and learning opportunities, provide services, and effectively manage operations.

GOAL 4: *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.

Objective 4.1: *We will structure the college’s human resource systems* to assure that we are able to hire, develop, and retain the highest caliber faculty, staff, and administrators.

Objective 4.2: *We will provide education, training, and professional development activities* that enhance staff and administration job knowledge and skills, and will recognize employees who actively seek self-development.

Objective 4.3: *We will support and recognize faculty members* in their professional development efforts aimed at increasing both their knowledge in their disciplines and their excellence in creating learning experiences for students.

Objective 4.4: *We will develop and implement a system to identify and measure satisfaction* and motivation of all employees in areas that are important to them.

Objective 4.5: *We will identify underrepresented groups* among our faculty, staff, and administration; analyze factors associated with that underrepresentation; and develop plans to *ensure that our employees reflect those we serve and provide role models for success to all groups.*

GOAL 5: *We will be recognized by our community as a good citizen,* actively engaging in community organizations and creating partnerships that enhance the educational environment of the district.

Objective 5.1: *We will reach out to all of our constituencies* by creating and strengthening community partnerships with diverse educational, governmental, social, cultural, civic, professional and business organizations.

Objective 5.2: *We will make the new Aurora Campus a partnership for community development* for the city of Aurora working with government, other educational institutions, corporations, labor organizations, economic development entities, and social service organizations.

Objective 5.3: *We will create and continuously improve a communication plan* that promotes understanding of the college’s mission, challenges, goals, growth, programs, diversity and services to both internal and external audiences. We will aggressively market our learning opportunities to maximize enrollments and effectively serve the educational needs of the community.

Objective 5.4: *We will engage the community* by developing targeted constituent organizations that will regularly advise senior college leaders on the needs of the community.

8P1: Planning Process
The planning process is a critical component of the college’s quality infrastructure. The planning process is informed by the college’s Strategic Planning Framework, which is discussed next.

*Strategic Planning Framework:* WCC’s Strategic Planning Framework guide the college’s quality program and planning process. The Strategic Planning Framework is continually refined to provide perspective on where the college is going, is action oriented, encourages creativity, and provides practical guidance. The college’s strategic planning framework is composed of the following: 1) WCC’s vision, mission, values and strategic goals with objectives; 2) Presidential Action Initiatives; and 3) Major Support Plans.
First, the college’s vision, mission, values, commitments, program and service areas, and strategic goals with objectives set the course for the college and help to form a constant course into the future. These are the things that the college must do to remain relevant to those it serves. These elements of the strategic plan help functional area leaders to construct tangible goals and action plans within their individual areas of responsibility. Additionally, these elements help leaders see how their areas integrate with activities across the college. The vision, mission, values, and strategic goals with are reviewed annually as part of a collaborative process that incorporates all administrators. This review is designed to ensure alignment of the Strategic Planning Framework with the college’s strategic directions.

Second, WCC’s Presidential Action Initiative provides the college community with a way to focus on new, different, or emerging issues of importance to the college. The 2007-2008 Presidential Action Initiative is Reinventing the Learning Curve. This Presidential Action Initiative challenges the college to continue to be forward-thinking and to work together to create a learning environment where dreams are shaped and lives are changed. Previous Presidential Action Initiatives have included the following: Creating Pathways for Success, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007; Fostering Responsiveness, Creativity and Effectiveness, 2005; and Leading in a Culture of Change, 2004.

Third, to account for the initiatives that reach across many functional areas of the college and which require a degree of action planning and specificity beyond that of strategic goals and objectives, WCC creates Major Support Plans. These plans include the Five-Year Financial and Budgetary Analysis Plan, Information Technology Plan, Human Resources Plan, Student Development Plan, Program Development Plan, Marketing and Communications Plan, Community Development Plan and the Program Review Plan.

WCC’s Strategic Planning Framework is reviewed by the college’s Board of Trustees on an annual basis. Additionally, a Strategic Goal Accomplishments Report is prepared on annually. This report shares the college’s progress made toward each of the strategic goals and objectives.

**Ongoing Planning Process:** On an annual basis, all college units (over 65 units of accountability) engage in a goal creation and goal accomplishment process that strategically aligns each unit’s annual goals with the college’s Strategic Planning Framework. Guided by the college’s strategic goals and their corresponding objectives, unit supervisors generate goals using unit measures, stakeholder feedback, their comprehensive understanding of the unit’s daily operations, and previous years’ unit goals and unit goal accomplishments. All goals are composed using the SMART goal criteria which requires that each goal statement be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant to the college’s strategic goals, and presented with a timetable for goal achievement. Unit supervisors work with their immediate supervisors to ensure alignment among departments and division goals, and the viability of human, fiscal and physical resource needs. The three division vice presidents provide oversight for the process in their division (Educational Affairs, Finance and Operations, Quality and Strategic Development) to ensure alignment among unit goals, division goals and strategic goals, and resource availability. The senior management team [President and three vice presidents (See Section 5C1)] review all unit goals to facilitate collaboration on common goals, alignment with the college’s strategic goals and resource availability.

Periodically during the year, unit supervisors work with staff to determine progress toward unit goals. Achievement of a significant goal is often shared with the college community through multiple mediums including, but limit to, the monthly President’s Report, the employee newsletter (Newsbits) and “One-Liners” to the President. At the end of the year, unit goal accomplishments are systematically evaluated and unit goal accomplishments are reported. Unit supervisors work with their immediate supervisors to create a Unit Goal Accomplishments Report. The three division vice presidents provide oversight for the process in their division. The senior management team reviews the Unit Goal Accomplishments Report for all three divisions.

Accountability, information sharing and reporting, and strategic alignment of unit goals with the college’s strategic goals and corresponding objectives have been facilitated by the introduction of the WEAVEonline web-based data management system to the goal creation and goal accomplishment process. Goals are entered into the college’s WEAVEonline data management system which requires the
alignment of each unit goal with one or more strategic goals and objectives. As illustrated in the graphic to the right, WEAVEonline captures an assessment cycle which is the continuous quality improvement cycle of Plan-Do-Check-Act. The use of WEAVEonline was launched for the FY2007 goal accomplishment and FY2008 goal creation cycles. The use of this tool in the goal creation and goal accomplishment cycle has been well-received as WEAVEonline used by 95% of staff and administrative units. WEAVEonline, which is also used as a tool for program review and faculty Outcomes Strategies, provides a historical record of unit goal, course assessment and program review data. This tool is supporting the continued development of a culture of evidence and is assisting WCC in making data-driven decisions which support student learning.

8P2: Selecting Short- and Long-Term Strategies
The selection of short- and long-term strategies are informed by the college’s Strategic Planning Framework (See Section 8P1). Processes for selecting short-term and long-term strategies, as well as their strategic alignment, are outlined in Section 8P1.

8P3: Developing Key Action Plans
The process for developing key action plans is informed by the college’s Strategic Planning Framework and integrated into the college’s planning process as detailed in Section 8P1. WCC’s senior management team provides leadership oversight for a) key action plans and frequently monitors their progress, b) the college’s daily operations and c) the college’s continuous quality review of systems, policies and procedures. The President’s Cabinet, made up of the senior management team and four assistant vice presidents, meets on a monthly basis in an advisory capacity and provides input on key action plans. WCC’s process for selecting and developing new quality improvement efforts involves collaborative input by key stakeholders throughout the college, including the President’s Cabinet, and the college’s over fifty cross-functional committees (See Section 5C1), including the Quality Team (See Section 8I1). Progress reports are communicated to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and key stakeholder groups as outlined in Section 5P5.

8P4: Planning Alignment at Varying Institutional Levels
Strategically alignment at all levels is critical to the college’s learning-centered mission. The process for strategic alignment is informed by the college’s Strategic Planning Framework and integrated into the college’s planning process as detailed in Section 8P1. In addition to alignment of institutional strategies through the strategic goal alignment process, WCC’s 2006 administrative reorganization was designed to coordinate and align the following strategic commitments and key action plans: the implementation of the next phase of the Learning First! initiative; the creation of a more strategic and unified approach to implementing continuous improvement principles, measuring effectiveness, and program review; and the provision of leadership and support for the development and educational programming of the new Aurora Campus and the new Plano Campus. The creation of the Quality and Strategic Development division, a unit designed to improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency, now coordinates institutional needs assessment, planning, goal setting, budgeting and assessment of college services and procedures. The division houses two departments with a specific focus on planning continuous improvement: The Outcomes Program (TOP) and Quality and Organizational Development.

8P5: Selecting Measures and Performance Projections
WCC selects measures and sets performance projections for institutional strategies and action plans during the strategic goal alignment process. Measures must accompany each goal in a department or division’s annual goal report. This is reinforced by the WEAVEonline data management system which prompts the entry of one or more measures for each goal (See Section 8P1). Measurable results are then reported in strategic goal and unit goal accomplishments reports. Measures are created at the department level in accordance with mission-specific indicators and reporting requirements. This process
is facilitating the creation of a culture of evidence that supports data-driven decision-making, accountability and information transparency.

8P6: Integrating Resource Needs
As shared in Section 8P1, human, fiscal and physical resource needs are addressed as part of the college’s planning process and strategic goal alignment process. The process is designed to promote fiduciary responsibility and accountability at the unit level where the resources usage are used.

Supervisors engage faculty and staff in the planning process to determine budgetary and resource needs. Unit supervisors work with their immediate supervisors to ensure alignment among departments and division resource needs, and the viability of resources requested. The three division vice presidents provide oversight for the process in their division (Educational Affairs, Finance and Operations, Quality and Strategic Development) to ensure alignment among the division’s resource requirements, the college’s strategic goals and resource availability. The senior management team [President and three vice presidents (See Section 5C1)] review all budget/resource requests. The budget is open for public comment for one month period. After this time, it is approved by the college’s Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

8P7: Developing Employee Capabilities
WCC employs numerous training, communication, and team/committee involvement strategies to develop the capabilities of college administrators, faculty and staff, so that they are able to address requirements regarding changing institutional strategies and action plans (See Sections 4C4, 4P4, 4P5).

8P8: Measures of Effectiveness for Planning Continuous Improvement
WCC employs an integrated model of continuous improvement that aligns the college’s planning process with the college’s quality infrastructure. To measure the effectiveness of planning continuous improvement, the college regularly analyzes its strategic goal accomplishments report, unit goal and unit goal accomplishment reports, as discussed in Section 8P1. Additionally, as discussed in the final Institutional Overview Section entitled Stage of Organizational Development, the college functions as a high performance organization. The principles of high performance are representative of organizations that have achieved a systematic approach to continuous quality improvement. Items selected for the college’s Systems Portfolio are designed to demonstrate that measures of effectiveness for planning for continuous improvement are an integral part of WCC’s culture, quality infrastructure and operations. Section 7C2 discusses the college’s Organization Effectiveness Model, which is based upon planning continuous improvement.

8R1: Results for Accomplishing Institutional Strategies and Action Plans
As WCC progresses on its learning-centered journey, its faculty and staff increasingly appreciated how the college’s processes, systems and organization are connected. This appreciation fosters a systematic, process-driven approach to building the college’s quality infrastructure. This appreciation also supports accreditation under the Higher Learning Commission’s Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). The college’s first three AQIP Action Projects: ASIP (See Sections 6R1, 6R2 and 7P6), Learning First! (See Section 1C2) and The Outcomes Program (See Sections 1C1 and 1P6) have served as exemplary models for quality improvement and are now woven into the fabric of the college. Building upon this success, WCC is in the process of finalizing the selection of the college’s next AQIP Action Projects. The selection process is collaborative and cross-functional. The college plans to formally declare new AQIP Action Projects with the Higher Learning Commission by the end of 2007.

8R2: Performance Projections for Institutional Strategies and Action Plans
WCC’s Major Support Plans (See Section 8P1) outline the college’s projections of performance for institutional strategies and action plans. In addition to the Major Support Plans, WCC’s 2020 College Master Plan (See Section 8I2) highlights the college’s strategy for meeting the needs of its burgeoning district.
8R3: Projections Compared
The National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) for the first year created a best practices report which shows the upper (or lower) 20% on a certain item (depending on whether being low or high is considered best). The categories where WCC was recognized as a best practice are as follows:

- Student Goal Attainment: Percent leavers and non-completers achieving their objective.
- Credit developmental/remedial course retention and success rates:
  a) Developmental Math enrollee success rate
  b) developmental writing enrollee success rate
  c) developmental math completer success rate
  d) developmental writing completer success rate
  e) developmental reading completer success rate
- Credit developmental/remedial student retention and success in first college-level courses
  a) math enrollee success rate
  b) math completer success rate
  c) writing completer success rate
- Retention and Success in Core Academic Skill Areas:
  a) Comp II enrollee success rate
  b) Comp II completer success rate
  c) Algebra completer success rate
- Institution-wide credit grades a) percent successful, percent A & B grades.
- Fiscal year business and industry productivity:
  a) duplicated headcount
  b) total revenue
  c) net revenue.
- Average credit section size (among 20% lowest).
- Credit course student/faculty ratio (20% lowest).
- Distance Learning grades: Percent completer success.
- Student/professional services staff ratio: Career Services, Counseling and Advising, Recruitment/Admissions/Registration, Financial Aid, Student activities.

In WCC’s effort to use benchmarking as a best practice, the college will continue to participate in The Kansas Study and the National Community College Benchmarking Project.

8R4: Evidence of Effectiveness of System for Planning Continuous Improvement
As discussed in the final Institutional Overview Section entitled Stage of Organizational Development, WCC has thrived and prospered in an environment of rapid change and functions as a high performance organization. The principles of high performance are representative of organizations that have achieved a systematic approach to continuous quality improvement. Items selected for the college’s Systems Portfolio are designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the college’s system for planning continuous improvement and that this system is an integral part of WCC’s culture, quality infrastructure and operations.

8I1: Improving 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 current processes and systems for continuous improvement. WCC’s quality infrastructure, Strategic Planning Framework and planning process are discussed in Sections 8P1 and 8P3.

Additionally, WCC’s Quality Team provides leadership for the college’s systematic, process-driven approach to the college’s quality program. This program focuses on quality improvement and quality assurance, and supports the college’s accreditation under AQIP. The Quality Team assists with the following three cycles of improvement:
- **Action Cycle**: A one-year cycle that drives continuous improvement through three to four active AQIP Action Projects. The Quality Team assists with the selection, review and retirement of Action Projects.
- **Strategy Cycle**: A four-year cycle that requires the creation and updating of the AQIP Systems Portfolio and participation in the AQIP Strategy Forum process.
- **Accreditation Cycle**: A seven-year cycle of quality assurance that reviews the Action Cycles and Strategy Cycles. The Accreditation Cycle includes an AQIP Quality Checkup Visit a year before Reaffirmation of Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.

The Quality Team facilitates the college’s quality journey in a manner that advances a culture of evidence and strategically aligns quality initiatives to the college’s strategic planning framework (vision, mission, values and goals). Chaired by the Vice President of Quality and Strategic Development, the Quality Team represents the diverse and distinct perspectives of the college’s learning community. Current membership includes faculty, staff, administrators and students representing a cross-section of functions and locations at the college.

**8I2: Setting Target for Improvement**

WCC employs an integrated approach to the creation of targets and priorities. The college’s quality WCC’s quality infrastructure, which incorporates the college’s Strategic Planning Framework and planning process, facilitates the creation of targets and priorities for planning continuous improvement. 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. One of WCC’s most substantial improvement priorities is the college’s 2020 College Master Plan. The 2020 College Master Plan was created in response to student and stakeholder needs and is discussed in the Institutional Overview Section 06 and Sections 1C1 and 8C1.