Category 6 – Supporting Institutional Operations

6P1 – Identification of Support Needs for Students and Stakeholders

Kirtland uses multiple methods to identify the needs of those we serve including recurring online and classroom surveys as mentioned later in this report. However, we have also recognized a significant impact using less formal methods from focus groups and community forums to anecdotal information collected on recruiting visits or community meetings. Web and social media are also becoming increasingly important in our strategy to identify needs. They are areas that have been bolstered significantly over the past several years.

A key strategy has been working with community leaders to determine the needs for each area. There is no “cookie cutter” approach that will work in every community; each has diverse needs and economic opportunities. In two communities, we have partnered with the local high school and Habitat for Humanity to offer construction trades experience in a real-world project-based scenario for dual-enrolled high school students. It is a win-win situation, providing community service and experience for the students while allowing the school and Kirtland to offer an affordable program.

Representatives from multiple departments meet regularly with our Intermediate School District (ISD), school counselors, principles, and advisory groups to identify needs in areas ranging from academic trade programs (art, automotive, business, etc.) to performing arts and early childhood development. Over the past two years, we have placed emphasis on meeting the need for Dual Enrollment and Direct Credit courses as a result of goals outlined in our strategic plan and based on the impact of funding challenges in our K-12 districts.

Social media is also playing an increasingly significant role in identifying the needs of our stakeholders, from input on our Facebook and Twitter pages to analyzing visits to our websites, videos, and services. We use these tools to do more than market the college or communicate. Our eBrochure is a great example of a tool that is, not only a marketing and communication tool, but also provides feedback and data on which programs and services students are interested it.

With regard to our student’s needs specifically, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a crucial tool used to benchmark support for our learners.

Table 6a is an excerpt from the 2010 Key Findings for Kirtland Community College. It demonstrates the 5 highest areas of student engagement at Kirtland compared to the 2010 CCSSEE Cohort. Of the five, three involve student support functions including tutoring, counseling, and financial aid.
### 6P2 – Identification of Support Needs for Administrative Support Services

As mentioned in our 2007 System Portfolio, we use several very successful groups to identify the needs of our staff and faculty. Target Specific Problem Solving (TSPS) and Target Specific Bargaining (TSB) provide a formal documented process to identify problems and communicate as well as track and measure process improvement.

Both the eServices and Facility departments now use an online work order tracking system (SchoolDude) to not only collect work-orders, but also analyze trends, develop communications, and determine training needs.

Similar to the informal community forums discussed in 6P1, our president regularly hosts “Coffee with the President” to provide an open forum for questions and concerns staff might have.

Finally, over the past two years the College Administrative Team, which meets weekly has been expanded to include functional areas such as Institutional Research, Marketing, and our Foundation.
6P3 – Support Processes that Contribute to Physical Safety and Security
Kirtland’s support processes for safety and security are accomplished through two primary means, one being a campus Safety Committee involving representatives from each area of the college. The other is communication via the Public Safety website, http://www.kirtland.edu/publicsafety and frequent email communications from the Public Safety department. The department publishes several recurring reports including the Campus Security Report and Daily Safety Log along with information regarding specific events such as flu prevention and Emergency Preparedness.

6P4 – Management of Key Support Services
There are numerous tools we use to manage and measure services, some of which include feedback in the form of surveys as discussed in various sections of this document. We also use information such as call volumes, log information, and budgets.

An example is our recent change in the server infrastructure used for our student information system. When the system was reported to be slow during peak registration times, staff reviewed logs, help-desk tickets, and feedback from departments to identify the problem and implement a cost effective solution. More importantly we could quantitatively measure the amount of traffic the new system would need to handle at peak times and implement a solution that was cost effective while addressing the problem. Additionally, we were able to qualitatively evaluate the solution by noting the reduction in calls and help-desk tickets during the next registration.

Another example is the analysis of improved circulation data in our library software to prioritize budgeting for our collection, resulting in a collection that more accurately reflects our student’s needs based on our curriculum.

Communication is the key to maintaining good processes. Our primary venue continues to be face to face communications through our College Administrative Team (CAT). In addition to discussing and coordinating processes throughout the college, the minutes published by this team serve to ensure the entire college is informed. Additionally, posting of agendas to the college community ensures that anyone with an interest in an upcoming topic is aware and can either attend the discussion or make sure someone represents their issue.

Finally, the most important tools are our Strategic Plan and annual Operational Plans (5P2 and Category #8). This is where we communicate the long range direction and priorities, and through the goals, implement actions to move in that direction. Ultimately, our progress or success is measured against those goals on an annual basis.

6P5 – Documentation of Support Processes
Our support processes are formally documented through a combination of policies available through our website (http://www.kirtland.edu/policies), and departmental procedures. There is also an increasing wealth of information and knowledge stored and shared via multiple web based tools including our student information system (Jenzabar EX), our website, and increasingly through Google Applications. Many of these tools serve to automate and document the processes of the college and allow for feedback or input regarding processes.

Social media and web applications are also becoming a crucial part of our support process, encouraging sharing of knowledge and information, and empowering everyone to become involved in process improvement. This is one area where the various parts of our website that
are aimed specifically at supporting our processes provide the best examples. Below are several of our “best practices.”

For some time, we have used web forms and surveys to obtain employee, student, and community input. Most recently, they have been used in the budget building process. This has provided a unique opportunity for “everyone” to have input. This direct input is then used by administration in the budget development process. As an extension of this process, and as a result of the input and questions raised, the president has published a series of informational newsletters to help educate employees regarding budget priorities and issues facing the institution.

An example from a student perspective starts with the Admissions website (http://www.kirtland.edu/admissions), available at “Getting Started.” The process for each type of student is outlined, step-by-step, and if students (or staff) have a question or want to share an idea you can chat with someone from that department - real time, right now! This also ensures that the Student Services staff keeps their processes and information up to date since students see it every day.

Finally, we continue the practices established through one of our earliest AQIP action projects, Retooling Trust Through Effective Communications, as we publish minutes of major committees via email and post Board of Trustee Meeting minutes on the college’s website.

6R1 – Measurement of Institutional Support Services
The following is a representative list of the measures we use regularly. Many are available on our website under Institutional Reports/Surveys (http://www.kirtland.edu/about/institutional.htm). Other reports are more departmental in nature:


6R2 – Performance Results for Student Support Services
Comparing our benchmark CCSSE results in the area of Support for Learners with those identified in our 2007 System Portfolio, Kirtland has demonstrated improvement moving from an overall score of 51.5% (slightly below other small colleges at 51.9%) in 2007 to 53.5% (above the small college average of 51.3%) in 2010. The entire survey results can be found at http://www.kirtland.edu/about/institutional.htm.

6R3 – Performance Results for Administrative Support Services
Our results for other administrative processes are reflected in the administrator’s ability to balance the budget and still maintain a high level of services. For Kirtland, maintaining a balanced operating budget while continuing to improve services - particularly in light of declining revenue and increasing expenses is a valid indicator of performance. We have already shown our success in improving service to our students and discussed expand service to other stakeholders in other areas of this report. We consider accurate budgeting as a service in itself. We have demonstrated performance with the improvement of student services and providing exceptional employee benefits while contributing to our capital improvement fund for facilities upgrades.
6R4 – Use of Information and Results to Improve Services
As we assess the needs of our students and other stakeholders we must take care to focus our limited resources on those areas that will have greatest impact. While benchmarks and measures against other institutions and standards are valuable, the impact on our student’s success is the most important measure. As indicated in our 2007 CCSSE report, persistence continues to be an area of great concern in supporting our students. Using this information, we addressed three of the top four barriers in our 2009 Strategic Plan and are continuously adapting strategies to mitigate them through our annual operational goals. By using IPEDS data, we can measure our impact in these critical areas.

An example of how we directly tie-in to student success is cost or affordability as it relates to student persistence. CCSSE results showed that lack of finances was the top “barrier to persistence” as reported by almost 45% of our students in 2007 (Table 6b). This demonstrates importance of affordability as it relates to our student’s success.

Table 6b

![Figure 6: Barriers to Persistence (Likely or Very Likely)](image)

Through the focus provided by our strategic plan and the ongoing controls in our budgeting process, we have worked to contain costs and provide value for students by maintaining the lowest tuition and fees in our IPEDS peer group over the past 4 years, while continuing to improve services as indicated in Table 6a.
Table 6c

**IPEDS DATA FEEDBACK REPORT**

![Figure 4. Academic year tuition and required fees for full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates: 2006-07--2009-10](image)

To address the area of “Caring for dependents,” Kirtland embarked on a project to build and operate a new Early Childhood Learning Center in collaboration with the Great Start Collaborative. This facility was designed and operates with input from numerous community and student forums. The center opened in early 2011 and we believe will have a direct impact on student persistence as it relates to caring for dependents.

As is common among most community colleges in the country, providing adequate support for “academically unprepared” students was identified in the 2007 CCSSE report and is another key issue for Kirtland. As was mentioned in our 2008 System Appraisal Feedback Report, “tutoring appears to have had a positive impact on classroom performance,” however we feel this is an area where continued expansion is needed. To meet this need Kirtland will deploy additional tutoring using online services through a Title III grant, which will directly support academically unprepared students.

Finally, we have increased our offerings in dual-enrollment and direct credit classes which is also intended to address this barrier, and is a key part of our strategic goal of “Becoming a College Without Borders.”

**6R5 – Comparison of Results with Other Institutions**

Though many of the indicators we track for improvement are intended to look at longitudinal data, we have several areas where we compare performance results against other organizations. In the area of student services, we primarily use CCSSE results and IPEDS data as described earlier.
With regards to financial or expenditure data, we use Michigan Community College Activity Classification Structure (ACS) reports to benchmark and in decision making.

Our eServices (IT) department has used the Center for Digital Education survey as a benchmark for the past 5 years. During that time, we have maintained a national top 10 rating for community colleges of our size. In 2010, we were ranked in the top four compared to others of our size.

**6I1 – Recent Improvements**

Our most wide-reaching improvement, by far, is the development, and, more importantly, the integration of our strategic plan into annual operational goals. Through this process, performance goals are set, measured, and reviewed annually. This also facilitates the integration of the Strategic Goals in every level of the operation.

**6I2 – Selection of Specific Processes to Improve**

Kirtland Community College received its System Appraisal Feedback Report in March of 2008. Since that time the college began a revision of its committee structure to better address the issues with continuous quality improvement. Prior to March 2008, the College depended on the Assessment Committee and the College Administrative Team to steer reaccreditation and quality improvement efforts. These committees were too large and not focused enough to effectively address the issues at hand. We reorganized into three overlapping committees – The Quality Steering Committee, The Joint Strategy Forum Group, and the existing Instructional Council and Faculty Chairs and Deans.

The Quality Steering Committee is responsible for communication, training, engagement, and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements. The Joint Strategy Forum Group, composed of members of our two Strategy Forum Teams, is responsible for overseeing action projects. The existing Instructional Council and Faculty Chairs and Deans are responsible for dealing with student outcome assessment. Some members of each team overlap onto other teams. And, there are representatives from across the college community on appropriate teams.

The Quality Steering committee, which includes the College President, looked at the four main “Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies” found in the System Appraisal. The four areas were:

- Leadership & Planning
- Measuring Effectiveness
- Evidence of Student Learning
- Valuing People through Communication

The committee set out to address these specific areas.