

# **SYSTEMS APPRAISAL FEEDBACK REPORT**

in response to the *Systems Portfolio* of

## **SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**October 12, 2007**



**Academic  
Quality Improvement  
Program**

The Higher Learning Commission **NCA**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

The following are summary comments on each of the AQIP Categories crafted by the Appraisal Team to highlight Sinclair Community College's achievements and to identify challenges yet to be met.

### **Helping Students Learn**

Sinclair Community College (Sinclair) seems to be successful in addressing student needs and is especially strong in addressing student development, placement needs, technology in the classroom, curriculum currency, and diversity issues. Students are examined upon entry and are given a range of services to meet their needs. Initiatives, such as Achieving the Dream, will further help Sinclair focus its efforts on helping underserved students succeed. However, measures of success (e.g., graduation rates) are still low, despite generally above-average measures of student engagement such as those for the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Performance targets and priorities appear to "emerge" rather than have any direct ownership and intervention.

### **Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives**

Sinclair's three other distinctive objectives provide avenues for the College to be closely aligned with its community and region. This close alignment is generally viewed in positive terms. However, the current political and economic climate of the immediate area and the state as described here make it obvious that these objectives come with distinct challenges, even to the point that the alignment can be seen in negative terms, regarding Sinclair's resources for meeting those challenges. Those challenges are not addressed or even acknowledged in the portfolio.

### **Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs**

Overall, Sinclair's ability to measure and track student satisfaction and performance seems well established, especially the Office of Research, Analysis, and Reporting (RAR) which provides exceptional resources for understanding student and other stakeholder needs. The processes appear to be formal and systematic and students are examined upon entry and are given a range of services to meet their needs. Unfortunately, there was little information provided on how well Sinclair compares to other institutions within its service area, within the state, and/or within the nation. Sinclair could benefit from a concerted effort to identify peer and benchmark institutions. Given the size and diversity of the student body, it is important also that analysis of

results be broken out into sub-groups of students, especially since the Organizational Overview highlights diversity promotion as part of Sinclair's strategic vision and mission.

### **Valuing People**

Sinclair has a strong foundation of well-established processes that empower and support its employees, thus revealing how the College values people. Two initiatives that demonstrate this are the yearlong diversity audit and a training module for managers that is being developed by the Vice President of Organizational Development and the Vice President for Workforce Development. The current Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey results provide a basis for discussion and collaboration between Sinclair employees to improve processes for valuing people. However, it is unclear how the examples of recent improvements were derived from the results presented from the PACE survey. Furthermore, the 3-4 year gap between administrations of the survey (the next iteration of the PACE will not be until 2007-2008 and nothing else is apparently being administered in the mean time) allows for a disconnect between current reality and the reality at the time of the last survey. Furthermore, there was little benchmarking beyond what is available from PACE and salary comparisons with other Ohio CCs. A plan-do-check-act cycle requires robust data-gathering tools so that data-driven decision making is well informed. The continuous improvement process evident for individual faculty members demonstrates that this philosophy is already understood and accepted by the employees at large, and Sinclair is in a good position to expand that philosophy of individual learning to organizational learning.

### **Leading and Communicating**

Sinclair utilizes internal constituencies to gather and analyze information that guides leadership at the College. But it is not clear exactly who is involved or how the individuals involved in this key activity at the lower levels of the organization are utilized. While Sinclair has processes in place that appear to be leading, if not best-practice, quality, the College should strive to find peer institutions (within or outside the state) with which it can benchmark. And although Sinclair is pro-active in providing faculty, administrators, staff, and students a variety of opportunities for leadership development through several formal programs, there appears to have been no formal process-focused evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs or of employees' satisfaction with them. Additionally, there is no formal succession plan in place.

### **Supporting Institutional Operations**

Sinclair identified four campus functions as providing key support service processes – three in student services and the Institutional Research function -- since those processes affect most students and data affects the entire institution. While Sinclair can be proud of its data collection and research processing, there still appears to be a systematic disconnect between gathering data, analyzing results, and using that data to drive improvement decisions.

### **Measuring Effectiveness**

Sinclair appears to have a complex and service-oriented Instructional Technology (IT) department that supports the institutional development of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) process, thus providing the College with any needed data, information, and measures for data-driven decision making. Sinclair's IT and RAR offices demonstrate exceptional processes and service. The level of work being accomplished by RAR is what would be expected at many larger 4-year institutions. The Scorecard system is available to all employees and provides information on targets and performance. But while the IT infrastructure is robust and gives RAR the tools to perform its reporting and analysis work, there is room for improvement in the identification of benchmarking and peer organizations. There is also an opportunity for improvement in identifying measures for assessing how well Sinclair measures institutional performance (e.g., usage of and feedback regarding the scorecard). With the development of the scorecard and other online quality measurement tools, Sinclair should also be careful to avoid falling into a data-gathering pattern that excludes the numerous types of qualitative research it already does, such as focus groups.

### **Planning Continuous Improvement**

Sinclair has made concerted efforts to identify benchmarks, best practices, and outside resources to better assess and develop initiatives for student success. Sinclair's Strategic Development Issue Analysis laid out strategies to lead its direction over the next five to ten years, illustrating its vision beyond its current successes and challenges. Sinclair has an impressive strategic planning process and has numerous improvement initiatives in place that place great emphasis on **continuous** assessment and improvement. The new planning process unifies disparate plans into a more consolidated plan. This realignment has streamlined the planning process and incorporates data (KPIs) into decision making. However, the text was vague as to what were the specific transformations of the realignment. The continuing College-wide program alignment effort launched in Fall 2006 is repeatedly pointed to

as an indicator of the effectiveness of strategic planning; however, the specific processes, purposes, and outcomes of the alignment are not clearly defined. No quantifiable or measurable results were provided as to the effectiveness of the changes other than anecdotal evidence.

### **Building Collaborative Relationships**

Sinclair has built and maintained an impressive list of external collaborations and partnerships. With each collaborative relationship, a specific College liaison is assigned to coordinate the partnership and interact with the partners, thus ensuring open communication and oversight. The vast majority of these partnerships appear to be successful, leading to positive outcomes for the students and partners involved. There appears to be a formal, or at least semi-formal, process for evaluating and prioritizing collaborative efforts. Unfortunately, the documentation of the measures was largely unclear. While it is understandable that different collaborations have different desired outcomes, and that criteria for evaluating the success of these partnerships varies, efforts could be made to establish common measures for the College's collaborative relationships. Having internally significant evaluation criteria (including what has been learned from past relationships) may help the College in pursuing, building, and determining future key collaborative relationships.

Internally, Sinclair has shown that it cultivates an inclusive attitude that fosters knowledge sharing and builds trust. Stated directly in the portfolio, Sinclair is seeking to break away from operational silos by embracing the use of cross-functional teams. This method fosters greater understanding of how individual units work together for common goals. Identifying appropriate benchmarks for measuring Sinclair's effectiveness will continue to be a challenge, but the college is well-positioned to contribute to defining relevant information and data-gathering tools.

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## **ELEMENTS OF Sinclair Community College's FEEDBACK REPORT**

The *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* provides AQIP's official response to your *Systems Portfolio* by a team of readers trained in evaluation. After appraisers independently reviewed your document, the team reached consensus on essential elements of your institutional profile, strengths and opportunities for improvement by Category, and significant issues for your institution. These are presented in three sections of the Feedback Report: Accreditation Issues

Analysis, Critical Characteristics Analysis, and Category Feedback. These components are interrelated in defining context, evaluating performance, surfacing critical issues, and assessing institutional performance.

It is important to remember that the Systems Appraisal Team had only your *Systems Portfolio* to guide their analysis of your institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Consequently, their report may omit important strengths — if you were too modest to stress them in your *Systems Portfolio*, or if your discussion and documentation of them was unconvincing. Similarly, the team may have pointed out areas of potential improvement that are already receiving the institution's attention. Again, the team used its best judgment in identifying improvement opportunities. If some of these areas of potential improvement are now strengths rather than opportunities because of your own focused efforts, that is all to your credit. If the team was unsure about an area, we urged it to err on the side of giving your institution the best possible advice about where investing your efforts might pay off. If some of their advice comes after the fact, after you've already tackled an area, no harm is done.

**Executive Summary.** Summative statements agreed upon by the Systems Appraisal Team based upon the institution's achievements and challenges in regards to each of the nine AQIP Categories. Strategic challenges for the institution are listed in detail within the Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis section of the Appraisal Feedback Report.

**Strategic and Accreditation Issues Analysis:** Strategic issues are those most closely related to your institution's ability to succeed in reaching its mission, planning, and quality improvement goals. Accreditation issues are areas where you have not yet provided evidence that you meet the Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, or where the evidence you have presented suggests you may have difficulties, now or in the future, in meeting these expectations. If accreditation is essential for your institution then any accreditation issues identified are, by definition, also strategic. The Systems Appraisal Team identified both of these kinds of issues through analysis of your Organizational Overview and the feedback it provided for each Category, as well as by reviewing the Index to the *Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided along with your *Systems Portfolio*. This list of strategic issues offers a framework for addressing ongoing improvement of processes and systems, serving as an executive summary of the Report's key findings and recommendations.

**Critical Characteristics:** Your Systems Portfolio's Organizational Overview provides context for the team's knowledge of your institution's identity, mission objectives, strategic goals, and key factors related to improvement. Critical Characteristics are those features most important for understanding the institution's mission, environment, stakeholders, competitive position, goals, and processes. Characteristics having the greatest relevance to each Category are identified in the Report.

**Category Feedback:** The Report's feedback on each of AQIP's nine Categories specifically identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. An **S** or **SS** identifies strengths, with the double letter signifying important achievements or capabilities upon which to build. Opportunities are designated by **O**, with **OO** indicating areas where attention may result in more significant improvement. Comments, which are keyed to your *Systems Portfolio*, offer brief analysis of each strength and opportunity. Organized by Category, and presenting the team's findings in detail, this section is the heart of the Report. At the end of the list of strengths and opportunities for each Category is the team's consensus assessment of the institution's stage of development on that particular Category. This section consists of a series of statements reflecting the reviewers' assessment of the institution's current status in relation to critical quality characteristics: robustness of process design; utilization or deployment of processes; the existence of results, trends, and comparative data; the use of results data as feedback, and systematic processes for improvement of the activities that the Category covers. Since institutions are complex, maturity levels may vary from one Category to another.

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## **STRATEGIC AND ACCREDITATION ISSUES**

In conducting the Systems Appraisal, the team attempted to identify the broader issues that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for your institution in the coming years. These are all strategic issues, ones you need to grapple with as you identify your institution's strategies for confronting the future and becoming the institution you want to be. The team also examined whether any of these strategic issues put your institution into jeopardy of not meeting the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation expectations.

**Issues Affecting Compliance with the *Criteria for Accreditation*.** An important goal for the Systems Appraisal was to review your institution's compliance with the Higher Learning

Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*. The peer quality experts who served on the team were all trained in evaluating colleges and universities using the Commission's *Criteria*, and the Systems Appraisal process they followed included careful steps to ensure the team used the *Criteria* as a major factor in their review. As the team reviewed your presentation of your institutions under each AQIP Category, it searched for accreditation-related issues and concerns. In addition, the team used the *Index to the Criteria for Accreditation* that you provided with your Portfolio to perform a comprehensive review of the *Criteria* and each Core Component to ascertain whether you presented compelling evidence that your institution complies with each of these Commission expectations.

The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Sinclair Community College has presented evidence that it complies with each of the Five *Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. Although the Systems Appraisal does not in itself constitute a review for continued accreditation, the team's conclusion upon reviewing your Portfolio against the *Criteria* will serve as a telling piece of evidence during the Commission's next scheduled AQIP review of your institution for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

**Issues Affecting Future Institutional Strategies.** The Systems Appraisal Team identified the following strategic issues to assist Sinclair Community College in prioritizing and taking action on the important broad challenges and opportunities it faces. From these you may discover your vital immediate priorities, shaping strategies that can lead to a quantum leap in the performance of your institution. Implementing these strategies may call for specific actions, so AQIP's expectation that your institution be engaged in three or four vital Action Projects at all times will help encourage your administrators, faculty, and staff to turn these strategic goals into real accomplishments. Knowing that Sinclair Community College will discuss these strategic issues, give priority to those it concludes are most critical, and take action promptly, the Systems Appraisal Team identified:

Sinclair notes repeatedly throughout its portfolio that it benchmarks extensively, but provided little evidence, with the exceptions of CCSSE, PACE, tuition and faculty salaries. It is unclear the extent to which the lack of representative benchmarked results in the portfolio presentation is a true reflection of the decision-making process.

Despite the high quality of the IT and RAR offices, there was nevertheless a lack of drilled-down results presented (i.e., results broken out by population subsets). The

population served by Sinclair is large and has great diversity in terms of demographics and preparedness. Repeatedly throughout the document, Sinclair's focus on diversity was stated, but only highest-level aggregate data was presented.

Sinclair employs a Plan-do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle for its strategic planning. However, many of the tables and figures demonstrating results lack supporting narratives describing how those results fit into the PDSA cycle. Furthermore, while improvement narrative often stated that results informed the decision-making process, it was difficult to draw clear linkages from a described process to a specific result measuring progress on that process and then an improvement noting specific results to the original process.

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## USING THE FEEDBACK REPORT

The AQIP *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* is intended to initiate action for improvement. It is therefore important that the Report produced by the Systems Appraisal Team stimulate review of organizational processes and systems. Though decisions about specific actions are each institution's, AQIP expects every institution to use its feedback to stimulate cycles of continual improvement. At the next Strategy Forum an AQIP institution attends, its peers will examine in detail how it is using the feedback from its Systems Appraisal.

An organization needs to examine its Report strategically to identify those areas that will yield greatest benefit if addressed. Some key questions that may arise in careful examination of the Report may be: How do the team's findings challenge our assumptions about ourselves? Given our mission and goals, which issues should we focus on? How will we employ results to innovate, grow, and encourage a positive culture of improvement? How will we incorporate lessons learned from this review in our planning and operational processes? How will we revise the *Systems Portfolio* to reflect what we have learned?

How an organization interprets, communicates, and uses its feedback for improvement ought to support AQIP's core values, encouraging involvement, learning, collaboration and integrity. Based solely upon an organization's *Systems Portfolio*, the Report reflects a disciplined, external review of what an organization says about itself. The report should help an organization identify ways to improve its *Systems Portfolio* so it functions better to communicate accurately to internal and external audiences. But the Report's chief purpose is to help you to identify areas for improvement, and to act so that these areas actually improve. These improvements can then

be incorporated into an updated *Systems Portfolio*, guaranteeing that future Systems Appraisals will reflect the progress an institution has made.

Within a year following the Systems Appraisal, an institution participates in another AQIP Strategy Forum, where the focus will be on what the institution has learned from its Appraisal (and from its other methods of identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities, and what it has concluded are its major strategic priorities for the next few years. AQIP's goal is to help an institution to clarify the strategic issues most vital to its success, and then to support the institution as it addresses these priorities through Action Projects that will make a difference in institutional performance.

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## CRITICAL CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to identify what team members understood to be the critical and distinguishing characteristics of your institution. They are the shared understanding of the most important aspects of Sinclair Community College, its current dynamics and the forces surrounding it, and its internal momentum and aspirations, at least as team members understood them. This section also demonstrates that the Systems Appraisal Team recognized and knew what makes Sinclair Community College distinctive. Should you find some characteristics that you think are critical and missing from this list, you may want to clarify and highlight these items when you revise your *Systems Portfolio* and other literature explaining your institution to the public.

### Item    Critical Characteristic

- O1a    Sinclair, a public, non-profit, comprehensive, non-residential community college serving Montgomery and Warren Counties in Ohio, is located in downtown Dayton.
- O1b    Sinclair has a 120-year history in the region and began meeting community needs in 1887 by educating area residents for jobs with area employers, though the curriculum today is greatly expanded.
- O1c    Sinclair is guided by its credo (*Find the need and endeavor to meet it.*), its vision (*Before us lie uncharted worlds of opportunity. Sinclair will be the bridge into that future, giving open access to opportunity, intellectual challenge and self-discovery for students with*

*diverse needs.*), and its mission (*We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities*).

- O1d Sinclair serves over 34,000 credit students annually. In the fall semester of 2006 it served 24,000 credit students, and 31,000 non-credit students.
- O1e In 2005, the Ohio Board of Regents designated Warren County as a primary service areas for the College, in addition to Montgomery County. As a result of this designation, it is estimated that enrollment will expand between 5,000 – 7,000 students in 25 years.
- O1f Students attend courses on a 55-acre, 20-building campus, at one of 79 off-campus sites, or via multiple distance learning modalities.
- O1g Montgomery County voters support Sinclair through a \$2.5M levy, allowing the lowest tuition in the state (\$45 per credit hour for in-district students), no debt burden, and unrestricted net assets worth \$86.3M.
- O1h Sinclair is governed by an 11-member board of trustees – six appointed by Montgomery County Commissioners, one by Warren County Commissioners, and four by the Governor. The board has the authority to make final decisions about matters of educational policy, financial management, personnel appointments, and physical facilities development.
- O1i Sinclair's internal organizational / leadership structure was revised in June 2006.
- O2a The Sinclair Strategic Plan, for which updates were approved in 2006, consists of six high level goals, with each goal containing one to five strategies.
- O2b Academic programs meet diverse needs and serve diverse populations. The comprehensive nature of Sinclair's academic mission is addressed by degree and certificate programs, continuing and lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities, and extensive collaborations within the community: specifically certificates, short-term certificates, and non-credit courses directed at employer-defined needs and community needs.
- O2c Sinclair integrates diversity promotion and student access in its strategic vision and mission.

- O3a Sinclair serves 59.4 percent of all Montgomery County residents attending a public institution of higher education in Ohio. One third of Sinclair students are from outside Montgomery County.
- O3b Young students are making up a greater proportion of Sinclair students while minority student enrollment remains relatively unchanged (at 20%).
- O3c A large portion of the College's students come under-prepared for college work as evidenced by 73 percent requiring some form of remediation. Forty-eight percent of Sinclair graduates were required to enroll in remediation courses.
- O3d Student learning support needs are assessed in multimodal manners at different points in a student's stay at Sinclair.
- O3e The cost of education and the need for financial assistance are two of the cited reasons contributing to the challenge of student access and success.
- O4 Partnerships include PK-12, US and international four-year universities, the greater Dayton community, and regional and national businesses and industries.
- O5a In Fall 2005, Sinclair employed 355 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 114 full-time adjunct faculty, and 624 part-time instructors. Among the faculty, 53.7% of instructors are female, 12% of instructors are minority, and nearly a quarter (23%) of Sinclair's faculty has been employed with the College for 21 years or more. Additionally, there are 397 administrative/professional staff and 566 support staff.
- O5b There is one collective bargaining unit at the College, which is for police officers.
- O5c Sinclair Human Resources promotes professional development programs to enhance minority faculty retention and development.
- O6a There are 281 scheduled instructional spaces on the Sinclair campus: 140 are classrooms (106 multimedia-equipped), 141 are labs (53 multimedia-equipped), and 52 are classrooms equipped with computers for student use. The recently renovated library and the Center for Interactive Learning reflect commitment to maintaining technological currency.
- O6b The campus facilities (in cooperation with the University of Dayton) include the AIM (Advanced Integrated Manufacturing) Center, a space with over 100 manufacturing labs

- providing workforce development and production development in partnership with area employers. The College's investment in facilities and equipment has a market value of \$442 million.
- O6c Students at all Sinclair locations have access to on-campus services and 24-hour online access to the College for services such as advising, counseling and financial aid.
- O6d Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.
- O6e The College utilizes Datatel's *Colleague* as its enterprise software.
- O6f Sinclair has an ID one-card debit system, Tartan Card, for ease of transactions such as campus meals and parking, as well as account funds transfer.
- O7a Ohio is a higher education provider-dense state with 111 higher education institutions, with a distinct recent increase in for-profits (i.e., proprietary and distance-learning providers). There are nine public and twenty-four private higher education institutions within a fifty-mile radius of Sinclair, resulting in competition for recruiting and retaining students and faculty.
- O7b Southwest Ohio is experiencing increased out-migration of the college-age cohort due to contraction of the manufacturing market.
- O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair's workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.
- O8b Key vulnerabilities include: increased competition for diminishing state dollars, clinical sites, manufacturing job availability for graduates, declining population growth plus greater under-preparedness of student population, and the vulnerability of levy funding in the current political climate of diminished resources.

## CATEGORY FEEDBACK

In the following sections, each of which deals with strengths and opportunities for improvement for one of the nine AQIP Categories, selected *Critical Characteristics* are again highlighted, those the Systems Appraisal Team believed were critical keys to reviewing that particular AQIP Category. The symbols used in these “strengths and opportunities” sections for each Category stand for *outstanding strength* (SS), *strength* (S), *opportunity for improvement* (O) and *pressing or outstanding opportunity for improvement* (OO). The choice of symbol for each item represents the consensus evaluation of the Systems Appraisal Team members, and deserves your thoughtful consideration. Comments marked SS or OO may need immediate attention, either to ensure the institution preserves and maximizes the value of its greatest strengths, or to devote immediate attention to its greatest opportunities for improvement.

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### AQIP CATEGORY 1: HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

*Helping Students Learn* identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, and is accordingly the pivot of any institutional analysis. This Category focuses on the teaching-learning process within a formal instructional context, yet also addresses how your entire institution contributes to helping students learn and overall student development. It examines your institution's 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, program and course delivery, faculty and staff roles, teaching and learning effectiveness, course sequencing and scheduling, learning and co-curricular support, student assessment, measures, analysis of results, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 1, Helping Students Learn:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- O1b Sinclair has a 120-year history in the region and began meeting community needs in 1887 by educating area residents for jobs with area employers, though the curriculum today is greatly expanded.
- O1c Sinclair is guided by its credo (*Find the need and endeavor to meet it.*), its vision (*Before us lie uncharted worlds of opportunity. Sinclair will be the bridge into that future, giving open access to opportunity, intellectual challenge and self-discovery for students with diverse needs.*), and its mission (*We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities*).
- O1d Sinclair serves over 34,000 credit students annually. In the fall semester of 2006 it served 24,000 credit students, and 31,000 non-credit students.
- O1e In addition to the Montgomery County service area, Warren County in 2005 was designated by the OBOR as a primary service area for the College. As a result of this designation, it is estimated that enrollment will expand between 5,000 – 7,000 students in 25 years.
- O1f Students attend courses on a 55-acre, 20-building campus, at one of 79 off-campus sites, or via multiple distance learning modalities.
- O2b Academic programs meet diverse needs and serve diverse populations. The comprehensive nature of Sinclair’s academic mission is addressed by degree and certificate programs, continuing and lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities, and extensive collaborations within the community: specifically certificates, short-term certificates, and non-credit courses directed at employer-defined needs and community needs.
- O2c Sinclair integrates diversity promotion and student access in its strategic vision and mission.
- O3c A large portion of the College’s students come under-prepared for college work as evidenced by 73 percent requiring some form of remediation. Forty-eight percent of Sinclair graduates were required to enroll in remediation courses.
- O3d Student learning support needs are assessed in multimodal manners at different points in a student’s stay at Sinclair.

- O6a There are 281 scheduled instructional spaces on the Sinclair campus: 140 are classroom (106 multimedia-equipped), 141 are labs (53 multimedia-equipped), and 52 are classrooms equipped with computers for student use. The recently renovated library and the Center for Interactive Learning reflect commitment to maintaining technological currency.
  
- O6b The campus facilities (in cooperation with the University of Dayton) include the AIM (Advanced Integrated Manufacturing) Center – a space with over 100 manufacturing labs providing workforce development and production development in partnership with area employers. The College’s investment in facilities and equipment has a market value of \$442 million.
  
- O6d Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.
  
- O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair’s workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 1, Helping Students Learn.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1C1	S	The systematic approach to align general education with specific and measurable learning outcomes integrated across the curriculum is set in place to support student success. Each degree-seeking student must complete a core of approximately 20 quarter-hours of courses.
1C1	O	While it appears that Sinclair Community College has addressed the issue of common learning objectives (since it mentions those objectives

- are listed on the Web and in the catalog and that there are 20 quarter-hours of general courses for degree-seeking students), the actual common learning objectives are not presented in the portfolio.
- 1C2 S Sinclair has a well-established review process to ensure the alignment of its curriculum with its mission, vision, and philosophy. The College has also developed a Curriculum Management Tool (CMT) to ensure that assessment is infused into the curriculum, providing integrated course and program outcomes.
- 1C3 SS Sinclair uses technology extensively within its formal instructional context, including the ANGEL learning management system, which fosters communication between instructors and students.
- 1C3 O While there is a brief overview of program offerings at Sinclair, there is no discussion of the key programs, leaving it unclear what the College considers to be its key programs.
- 1C5 OO While this section discusses values, codes, opportunity, and diversity, it does not discuss the College's climate that celebrates intellectual freedom, inquiry, and reflection.
- 1P1 S Specific program learning outcomes are developed by program faculty. Common student learning objectives and program learning outcomes are determined by faculty members through the General Education Committee. This is supplemented by input from other internal and external stakeholders.
- 1P1 O While the text makes clear that common student learning objectives are determined by the Sinclair faculty, with approvals from the General Education Committee, the Instructional Council, and the Provost, the systematic process involved in setting these objectives is not made clear.
- 1P2 S Based on its credo to "find the need and endeavor to fill it," new academic programs and courses designed by faculty to facilitate student learning are implemented in response to community needs assessments, graduates' employer feedback, and advisory committee input. Sinclair

also uses the Ohio Transfer Module and the Transfer Assurance Guides when designing new programs to help ensure transfer to other Ohio public institutions.

- 1P2 O Although advisory committees meet at least twice per year, the portfolio does not demonstrate the connection between their processes and their results by providing one or more examples of what the committees have decided and implemented in regard to curriculum development or revision.
- 1P3 S All degree- and certificate-seeking students must complete placement testing before meeting with academic advisors prior to registering for classes with exam results available immediately after testing. Prerequisite knowledge required of Sinclair students is determined by academic departments and divisions. Accuplacer software is then utilized to assess student knowledge levels for course and program placement. The process is completed when a cross-divisional advisory board meets annually to study placement results in an effort to improve student success in core courses.
- 1P3 S In a proactive and service-oriented position, Sinclair gives Distance Learning students the option of self-assessment placement testing and counsels them as to their likely success with this instruction format prior to their enrollment.
- 1P4 S Expectations relative to student preparation and learning objectives are communicated via the course catalog, course schedules, Web, bulletins, mailings, postings, career fairs, college nights, and advisements. Each course has a master syllabus available online and a teaching syllabus which is available both online and in person. Supplementing these efforts are one-on-one advising sessions and information that is provided to students through an assortment of outreach programs.
- 1P4 O Even though Sinclair makes its expectations on learning objectives available to students, it has only one method – advising – that ensures communication. Consequently, even though the process is described as

- consistent and systematic, the College has no way of ensuring that the process is complete – that those expectations are read, understood, acted on, and feedback is provided. Sinclair could measure these communication avenues to determine effectiveness of each format.
- 1P5      SS      Sinclair has implemented a holistic counseling and intervention system, which targets at-risk students via its Student Success Plan, incorporating the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) as well as the Counseling Action Plan (CAP). The College assists students in the selection of programs through its admissions/enrollment process, academic advising, and career services. Helpful tools include e-advising using Web Advisor and a career-related flowchart included with the application.
- 1P6      SS      An AQIP Action Project, Taking Assessment to the Next Level, is a driving force behind recent improvements designed to take effective teaching and learning assessments to the next level. Data informing direct and indirect learning effectiveness come from six divisional Learning Liaisons, current student surveys, graduate surveys, and technical graduate surveys, and the General Education Website. Direct learning measurement is facilitated through the Curriculum Management Tool.
- 1P6      SS      All faculty reviews (annually for non-tenured, tri- annually for tenured) must include evidence of practice related to indicators of teaching/learning effectiveness and student development.
- 1P6/1P9      O      Although department chairs assist each faculty member in identifying targets for improving teaching effectiveness and identifying resources needed for development of teaching effectiveness, and although professional development goals are noted on the annual faculty performance review, no formal mechanism is identified to ensure that adequate support for meeting targets is provided.
- 1P7      S      Sinclair's course delivery system appears to be a well-established process that involves student needs, program requirements, technology, facilities, qualified faculty and staff, and an outside consultant for distance

learning. For example, yearly student planning schedules and *Schedule 25* (software) are used to anticipate course demand and classroom space needs.

- 1P7 O While course delivery appears to be a well-established process at Sinclair, with steps and an associated timeline determined at least a year in advance, neither the steps of that process nor the tools utilized are identified in the portfolio.
- 1P8 SS Sinclair's multi-faceted curriculum monitoring process is driven by numerous, pointed questions requesting evidence of effectiveness. The process involves the provision of standardized data to all programs to assist in self-study documentation. The documents must provide evidence regarding student competencies, learning outcomes, demand for courses, program quality, transferability, and cost-effectiveness-- information that serves as the basis for changing or discontinuing programs and courses.
- 1P9 S Assessments administered throughout the students' stay at Sinclair, and the mid-quarter reports through the Student Assistance Program, help determine student learning support needs. Through referrals based on the needs assessments, the roster of learning support programs stay involved in the student learning and development process.
- 1P9 S New students identified as "at-risk" are offered support through the Individual Learning Plan, as well as counseling and support services. Those students in remedial courses still having difficulties are referred to Student and Academic Support Services through Early Alert.
- 1P9 O Faculty development needs are determined through formal reviews, as well as through a form filled out at the end of Fall Faculty Development Day. There is no mention of other ongoing opportunities.
- 1P10 S All Sinclair student clubs are linked to academic instruction through the required faculty advisor. In addition, the College has a Building

- Connections to Instruction program which includes faculty-sponsored, co-curricular events that are funded from Student Activities.
- 1P11 S As a result of a strategic change, Sinclair has gone from a “narrow and deep” assessment methodology/process to a systemized, collective, shared, “college-wide, routine, institutionalized practice.” With this new change, student assessment processes at Sinclair are currently being addressed in a two-pronged approach: 1) the faculty-led Assessment Committee, and 2) an AQIP Action Project: Taking Assessment to the Next Level.
- 1P11 O While Sinclair is working to improve the sharing of common practices, the work of systematizing practices by the Assessment Committee is left vague. The Committee’s goal is stated, but not the processes by which it strives to achieve its mission.
- 1P12 S Collection of data from a variety of sources (e.g., employer surveys, transfer surveys, graduation follow-up surveys, retention rates, success rates and graduation rates) regarding the level of student academic preparation for further education or employment is imbedded in Sinclair’s annual academic program/department review process.
- 1P13 S Faculty use the CMT to assist in determining course and General Education outcomes.
- 1P13 S The Sinclair Division of Instruction has identified several measures of student success that are regularly collected and analyzed. The College uses state performance measures as benchmarks; all degree programs include a capstone course; and documentation of direct measures of program outcomes has been integrated into the annual updates of Sinclair academic programs and departments.
- 1R1 O The high non-success rate in gatekeeper courses, such as developmental mathematics and developmental English, leads to longer time toward completion of degree and higher rates of withdrawal. However, it is difficult to determine the connection between data in Figure 1.8 and

student performance in remedial level math or English, and whether or not the minor improvements in non-success rate for top-45 are at all linked to improvement processes.

- 1R2 S A consistently higher pass rate than the national rate documents the knowledge acquired by Sinclair's Allied Health graduates. Surveys of employers and alumni are also indicators that Sinclair graduates have acquired the knowledge and skills base required for success.
- 1R2 O There is no evidence of a "plan-do-check-act" cycle, with regard to student learning, that incorporates the findings into a systematic improvement plan. Little information is provided regarding processes of compiling and utilizing results from the employer survey. For example, what was the return rate on the surveys? What were the pass rates for programs other than Allied Health?
- 1R2 O Figure 1.11 uses self-reported data to examine how prepared transfer students feel compared to their fellow students. While students may "feel" more prepared, no outcomes-based evidence is provided to determine actual performance results.
- 1R2 OO The portfolio does not make a connection between the College's various accrediting agencies and its evidence of student knowledge acquisition.
- 1R2 O While "good" and "very good" results on the employer survey (Figure 1.10) are consistently high for all of the years included, the spike in ratings for 2003-2004 could be investigated to determine what led to that success and whether it can be duplicated.
- 1R3 SS Students who participate in Individualized Learning Plans appear to have higher next-term retention rates than those that opt out. There also appears to be a side benefit of minimizing/eliminating the difference in persistence between white and minority students.
- 1R3 S Sinclair meets or exceeds the National benchmark score for the CCSSE in three areas and the Extra Large Colleges benchmark in four areas. The results are used to promote several strategies including the College-

wide Student Success course, the Math AQIP Action Project, etc. Due to the success of its retention efforts, Sinclair received a MetLife Foundation Community College Excellence Award for their efforts documented by CCSSE in 2002 and 2005-2006.

- 1R3 O While the text and Figures 1.12 and 1.13 appear to verify positive results for Sinclair students with ILP's, the Figures also appear to present data which conflicts with the text. In 1.12, while the transitioned ILP students had a higher retention rate than the other groups, the No Shows/Non-participating ILP students had basically the same retention rate as the Active ILP students. For 1.13, while the tutoring/lab use students do have a higher retention rate, it does not appear to be enough to warrant a positive statement.
- 1R3 O Despite the diversity of Sinclair students and instructional programs, no measures of success in attaining educational goals are provided for students other than those first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who are included in the Graduate Rate Survey—CCSSE.
- 1R4 OO No data or discussion regarding comparative data is provided.
- 111 S Inherent in Sinclair's academic Program Review process is the utilization of data to identify improvement opportunities. Those opportunities are then connected to the College's strategic planning process and used in setting institutional goals. The Assessment and General Education sub-teams of the College-wide Assessment Committee are developing repeatable processes for reviewing assessment practices.
- 112 O There is an apparent lack of linkages between the improvements section and the results section. For example, what are the targets for improvement? What data support the issues? How do the statements provided reflect improvements in student learning? How are improvements communicated?

## **AQIP CATEGORY 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES**

*Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives* addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of your institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of your mission. Depending on your institution's character, it examines your institution's 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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives:**

***Item Critical Characteristic***

- O1b Sinclair has a 120-year history in the region and began meeting community needs in 1887 by educating area residents for jobs with area employers, though the curriculum today is greatly expanded.
- O1c Sinclair is guided by its credo (*Find the need and endeavor to meet it.*), its vision (*Before us lie uncharted worlds of opportunity. Sinclair will be the bridge into that future, giving open access to opportunity, intellectual challenge and self-discovery for students with diverse needs.*), and its mission (*We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities*)
- O1e In addition to the Montgomery County service area, Warren County in 2005 was designated by the OBOR as a primary service area for the College. As a result of this designation, it is estimated that enrollment will expand between 5,000 – 7,000 students in 25 years.
- O6d Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.

O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair's workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 2, Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2C1	S	Three explicit institutional objectives were identified from Sinclair's Core Indicators: physical access to the College through regionalization, fiscal access to the College through keeping education affordable, and community engagement.
2C3	S	Easing student concern about access and cost allows students to concentrate on learning. Engaging the community provides the students additional educational opportunities outside the classroom.
2P1	S	Distinctive objectives are determined primarily by the College's Strategic Planning process. State and national initiatives also serve as another medium of shaping Sinclair's other distinctive objectives.
2P2	S	Sinclair uses multiple methods to communicate its other distinctive objectives. These methods include KPIs, town hall meetings, print media, and the College Web site.
2P3	SS	Faculty and staff needs for Sinclair's other distinctive objectives were determined by a cross-functional team. In light of the state's emphasis on having the College do more with less, Sinclair developed an ongoing assessment of resource allocation to assure that institutional efficiencies continue to meet resource needs, a concept that is crucial to meeting the challenges of regionalization with current resources.

- 2P3 O There is no clear language that speaks to how Sinclair determines the needs of faculty and staff to meet Sinclair's distinctive objectives. Also, no detail is provided on the process for prioritizing existing and/or new services, given the current fiscal restrictions.
- 2P4 S Assessment measures of the College's distinctive objectives are carried out by the collection of data by the Sinclair RAR office and Budget and Analysis office. That data is provided to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees for review, decision-making, and feedback.
- 2P5 S Specific measures of accomplishing Sinclair's distinctive objectives include regional population statistics, employment and economic growth/decline, county educational attainment, and changes in underserved populations.
- 2P5 O Measures for two of the College's three distinctive objectives appear to be in place, but community engagement measures appear to be more informal (minutes, dialogue, participation, surveys). While that information is important for public relations, it is not quantitative.
- 2R1/2R2 S While too soon for some measures or trend data, early enrollment results for the access through regionalization distinctive objective indicate a promising start; comparative in-district tuition costs and recent doubling of scholarship dollars address the affordable access objective.
- 2R2 O Comparative data for the College's distinctive objectives is not provided. While it is noted that peer institutions have been less active, thereby having no basis for benchmarking, other benchmarking possibilities are available.
- 2R3 S Sinclair's other distinctive objectives directly correlate with strengthening ties to its community and region by providing an educated workforce through partnerships.
- 2R3 O As Sinclair extends its access through regionalization and low cost, there is no discussion of an awareness of the delicate balance between affordable expansion and having the resources necessary to fund that

expansion, particularly in light of the state's mandate to do more with less and the fact that there is currently no levy in Warren County for support of the College.

- 211            O    Perhaps it is too early in the improvement cycle for the College's distinctive objectives, but the text description of evaluating findings to assess need for change and recent program realignment does not adequately describe a process cycle for improvement.
- 211            O    While personnel and data collecting processes are in place, specific targets for improvement of the College's distinctive objectives (beyond current Learning Centers being self-sustaining within three years) have yet to be set.

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### **AQIP CATEGORY 3: UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS**

*Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs* examines how your institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs. It examines your institution's 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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- O1b    Sinclair has a 120-year history in the region and began meeting community needs in 1887 by educating area residents for jobs with area employers, though the curriculum today is greatly expanded.

- O1e In addition to the Montgomery County service area, Warren County in 2005 was designated by the OBOR as a primary service area for the College. As a result of this designation, it is estimated that enrollment will expand between 5,000 – 7,000 students in 25 years.
- O2b Academic programs meet diverse needs and serve diverse populations. The comprehensive nature of Sinclair’s academic mission is addressed by degree and certificate programs, continuing and lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities, and extensive collaborations within the community: specifically certificates, short-term certificates, and non-credit courses directed at employer-defined needs and community needs.
- O2c Sinclair integrates diversity promotion and student access in its strategic vision and mission.
- O3a Sinclair serves 59.4 percent of all Montgomery County residents attending a public institution of higher education in Ohio. One third of Sinclair students are from outside Montgomery County.
- O3b Young students are making up a greater proportion of Sinclair students while minority student enrollment remains relatively unchanged (at 20%).
- O3c A large portion of the College’s students come under-prepared for college work as evidenced by 73 percent requiring some form of remediation. Forty-eight percent of Sinclair graduates were required to enroll in remediation courses.
- O3d Student learning support needs are assessed in multimodal manners at different points in a student’s stay at Sinclair.
- O3e The cost of education and the need for financial assistance are two of the cited.
- O6c Students at all Sinclair locations have access to on-campus services and 24-hour online access to the College for services such as advising, counseling and financial aid.
- O6d Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 3, Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
3P1	S	The Office of Research, analytics, and Reporting (RAR) conducts the identification of student needs. Multiple methods as illustrated in Figure 3.2 are put into place to accomplish this. The information, results, and findings are then presented to Sinclair employees, leadership, and members of the Board of Trustees to aid in the decision-making process.
3P2	S	A relationship-building process is in place prior to and immediately after student enrollment with key feeder school districts and community programs. This process includes organized outreach Admissions activities with prospective students and student support services such as testing, orientation, advising and registration.
3P2	O	The importance of classroom interaction is stressed; however, previously discussed CCSSE results (Figure 1.14) show "Active and Collaborative Learning" and "Student-Faculty Interaction" as the lowest performing benchmarks.
3P3	S	In identifying stakeholder needs, Sinclair relies on a mix of methodologies, as illustrated in Figure 3.3, insuring a diversity of perspectives and a broad range of types of data for informing decisions. Additionally, through group activities, and learning communities, there are Student Support offices, Student Government, Student Clubs, and other social and cultural events that engage students outside the classrooms.
3P4	S	Sinclair has built and maintained a strong history of collaboration and partnerships via the College's visibility locally, within the community, business, state, regional boards and government agencies. This is accomplished through the use of newsletters, personal briefings, staying in touch with legislators and interacting with citizens at community sponsored events.

- 3P5 S Data-driven analysis appears to inform Sinclair’s decision making process. The Director of Strategic Enrollment Management, in collaboration with RAR, monitors demographics and regional economic and other change characteristics to determine the necessary strategic decisions or activities that need to occur based on the data that is collected and analyzed.
- 3P6 S While informal resolution to complaints is encouraged, formal coordination through an Ombudsman’s Office allows for assessment of the process. Student complaints are tracked for follow-up, resolution, and documentation.
- 3P6 O There is no description of how students and stakeholders are made aware of the Ombudsman’s availability to handle complaints.
- 3P7 SS Student and stakeholder satisfaction at Sinclair is measured using processes described in 3C1, 3C2, and 3P3. Sinclair conducts satisfaction surveys and often combines results with other student performance.
- 3R1 SS Sinclair collects data on psychological and emotional access. Additionally, it collects data on physical access, quality and environment satisfaction from students and stakeholders using an outside research firm. Data collected usually exceed expectations.
- 3R1 O Figure 3.5 shows results over multiple years for the point of graduation survey and current student survey, but reports only a single year for the community attitude survey.
- 3R1 S Outreach/regionalization efforts appear to be positive given the percent of respondents who state that there is a Sinclair location “close enough.” (Figure3.5)
- 3R1 OO Despite the importance of diversity and the increasing portion of Sinclair students who are younger students, results are not broken down by student subgroups (see Figure 3.5). Furthermore, there is no data discussing the success or failure of efforts to address the growing under prepared population.

- 3R1 O Results of the Transfer Student Survey (Figure 3.6) for 2001-2005, while consistently high, do not demonstrate an identifiable trend, yet no interpretation or explanation of the results is provided. Other methods of assessing students' perceptions of their preparation may be more useful or the survey instrument may need to be refined.
- 3R1 S Sinclair is the most affordable institution in Ohio for residents of Montgomery County. This is further demonstrated by Figure 3.5, which shows that respondents agree that SSC offers a high quality of education at an affordable price.
- 3R2 SS A high degree of satisfaction with the college is evidenced by the high percent of residents who either took a class at Sinclair (45%) or knew somebody who did. Having a 59% market share for Montgomery County is also impressive.
- 3R3/3R4 S The passage of the last tax levy by 73% of Montgomery County voters demonstrates the community's continuing support for the college's efforts.
- 3R3/3R4 O While the Employer survey indicates ongoing employer satisfaction with Sinclair graduates, satisfaction results from other key stakeholders is largely anecdotal.
- 3R3/3R4 OO Foundation Dollar Acquisition appears to be wildly variable ranging from \$721K to \$5.8M back to \$1.3M just within four years. Given Sinclair's strong financial position and its ability to keep tuition low, thus access high, it is important that there be some predictability to accurately projecting available finances for future scholarships and projects.
- 3R5 O In the tables provided, only trend data is presented. With few exceptions, Sinclair mostly benchmarks only against its own past performance, with the exception of the CCSSE survey. Granted, the College's focus is within its immediate service area, but wider-ranging benchmarking and comparison can only help strengthen its claims to quality as well as identify best practices from like institutions.

- 311 S RAR is the central data gathering and dissemination point for College planning and review. Data provided by RAR is assessed and considered in light of strategic priorities. College leadership sets performance targets annually during the strategic planning process.
- 312 S Through participation in the national Achieving the Dream initiative, Sinclair will now be in a position to gather and share comparative data using the Making Community Colleges Count initiative as part of its strategic planning efforts.
- 312 SS The College's strategic planning process used triangulated data from RAR to identify and set targets for improvement.

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#### **AQIP CATEGORY 4: VALUING PEOPLE**

*Valuing People* explores your institution's commitment to the development of your employees since the efforts of all of your faculty, staff, and administrators are required for institutional success. It examines your institution's 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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 4, Valuing People:**

***Item Critical Characteristic***

- O5a In Fall 2005, Sinclair employed 355 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 114 full-time adjunct faculty, and 624 part-time instructors. Among the faculty, 53.7% of instructors are female, 12% of instructors are minority, and nearly a quarter (23%) of Sinclair's faculty has been employed with the College for 21 years or more. Additionally, there are 397 administrative/professional staff and 566 support staff.

- O5b There is one collective bargaining unit at the College, which is for police officers.
- O5c Sinclair Human Resources promotes professional development programs to enhance minority faculty retention and development.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 4, Valuing People.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
4C1	S	The College uses collegial processes in its governance, including a mutual gains process that allows faculty and staff to participate in decisions affecting their work environment.
4C1	O	While Sinclair is currently reorganizing itself to meet changing community needs, no rationale is provided for how a 63% increase in administrative/professional employees concurrent with an increase of less than 10% in faculty positions in the past decade serves to strengthen the focus on student learning.
4C1	S	All full-time positions have Continuous Improvement Targets (CITs) that complement departmental/divisional/college objectives, which in turn align with the Strategic Plan.
4C2	O	The College employs three types of part-time workers, but the numbers in Figure 4.1 (473 full time faculty; 625 part time faculty) do not reflect the 60% full time/ 40% part time balance described in Figure 4.3.
4C4	SS	Sinclair spends 3-4% of its operating budget on training initiatives that are identified and planned by a cross-institutional Staff Development and Innovations Committee that meets regularly to develop and offer employee professional development opportunities.
4C4	O	Training initiatives that are <i>key activities</i> to the operation and future of the College are not identified.

- 4P1 S At the time of the job creation, credentialing for new non-faculty positions, while varied, is based on specific benchmarking information identified by HAY group criteria that encompass know how, problem solving requirements, and accountability.
- 4P1 S Consistent processes are used to identify and define faculty positions, including the use of one universal job description template for each faculty rank of Instructor, Asst. Professor, Assoc. Professor, and Professor, with discipline specific requirements articulated by the department Chair and OBOR.
- 4P2 O Although current support for part-time faculty includes an orientation CD, Part-time Faculty Support Services facilities, and a mentoring program, there is no standardized orientation program or support network outside of mentoring for part-time faculty at Sinclair Community College beyond the initial first term evaluations.
- 4P2 S Personnel processes for recruiting, hiring, orienting, and retaining employees are effectively in place, witnessed by their turnover rate of four percent in 2006. Search committees are comprised of a diverse representation of stakeholders and individuals that are familiar with the current position or department and are trained in appropriate search protocols essential to maintaining the integrity of the process.
- 4P3 S A well-established system of cross-functional teams and employee empowerment, coupled with the institutional commitment to professional development, pay-for-performance, and recognition for nationally visible innovative contributions to promoting learning and creativity, ensure that the work environment contributes to effective institutional performance.
- 4P4 S Training and development for all personnel occurs via multiple mediums. This includes the job description, promotion, and performance review process. Additionally, the CIT program and the Staff Development and Innovation Committee (SDIC) are established and ongoing systems that support personnel throughout their careers.

- 4P5            S        Training needs are identified on the division/departmental level in alignment with the Sinclair Strategic Plan. New strategic directions also contribute to identifying training needs. Recognizing the need for internal leadership training (which would contribute to succession planning), the College is currently working on an internal talent development plan.
- 4P6            S        Sinclair Community College has independent evaluative systems for faculty and non-faculty that are designed to provide feedback on individual performance and use performance evaluation criteria that are aligned with mission, vision, and the strategic plan: a required Faculty Performance Review provides information on how the instructor is meeting the skills identified in processes identified in 4P1; non-instructional personnel are evaluated with the Focus on Excellence process. All employees then use CITs to improve their performance, whether it be in helping students learn or in the accomplishment of the College's other distinctive objectives.
- 4P7            S        The use of the well-established cross-functional teams provides an avenue to ensure that employee recognition, reward, and compensation are aligned with the College's mission of student learning and access. A comprehensive package of benefits amounting to 30 percent of an employee's total compensation shows the College's commitment to employee support. Faculty are eligible for merit pay and full-time non-faculty can apply for incentive pay.
- 4P8            S        Surveys and venues for face-to-face discussion (senates, retreats, councils) are used to determine key issues related to employee motivation.
- 4P9            O        While the College has personnel and processes in place to address employee health and safety, methods for evaluating employee satisfaction and well-being are not addressed. Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) results are reported in 4R1, but that process is not described here.

- 4P10 S Sinclair collects and analyzes a variety of measures related to how they value people, including tracking employee turnover, absenteeism, diversity data, faculty workload, health insurance cost, salary benchmarks, safety statistics that include information on workman's compensation and employee accidents/injuries, SDIC activities, and annual performance reviews.
- 4R1/4R2 S Sinclair employees rated the college climate on the degree of their formal influence, communication, collaboration, organizational structure, work design/Technology, and student focus more highly than the norm on the PACE and results on a variety of other measures (healthcare survey, participation in professional development opportunities, turnover rate) of valuing people show a high degree of satisfaction by Sinclair employees.
- 4R1/4R2 O Since the PACE was launched in 2004, no follow-up seems to have been taken. Sinclair's performance as reflected in the PACE results, while good, is a reflection of a single point in time. There is not yet an historical trend to give context to target setting or possible changes in attitude in the intervening years and no specific targets are evident for future performance.
- 4R1/4R2 S In the last three years Sinclair has moved from being significantly below other Ohio community colleges in its faculty pay to being in line with the statewide average.
- 4I1 S Sinclair has used the results of employee feedback on its orientation process to implement improvement changes in the areas in need.
- 4I2 O The College's Strategic Plan is used to set targets for improvement, but these targets are not identified nor are strategies for meeting these targets discussed here.

## **AQIP CATEGORY 5: LEADING AND COMMUNICATING**

*Leading And Communicating* addresses how your institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide your institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment. It examines your institution's 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, and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 5, Leading and Communicating:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- O1c    Sinclair is guided by its credo (*Find the need and endeavor to meet it.*), its vision (*Before us lie uncharted worlds of opportunity. Sinclair will be the bridge into that future, giving open access to opportunity, intellectual challenge and self-discovery for students with diverse needs.*), and its mission (*We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities*).
- O1g    Montgomery County voters support Sinclair through a \$2.5M levy, allowing the lowest tuition in the state (\$45 per credit hour for in-district students), no debt burden, and unrestricted net assets worth \$86.3M.
- O1h    Sinclair is governed by an 11-member board of trustees – six appointed by Montgomery County Commissioners, one by Warren County Commissioners, and four by the Governor. The board has the authority to make final decisions about matters of educational policy, financial management, personnel appointments, and physical facilities development.
- O1i    Sinclair's internal organizational / leadership structure was revised in June 2006.
- O2a    The Sinclair Strategic Plan, for which updates were approved in 2006, consists of six high level goals, with each goal containing one to five strategies.

- O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair’s workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.
- O8b Key vulnerabilities include: increased competition for diminishing state dollars, clinical sites, manufacturing job availability for graduates, declining population growth plus greater under-preparedness of student population, and the vulnerability of levy funding in the current political climate of diminished resources.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 5, Leading and Communicating.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5C1	S	Sinclair’s communications are coordinated by a Strategic Words And Text (SWAT) Team whose responsibility is to gather, prioritize, and disseminate issues/messages. Within that policy decision making structure is a functioning governance system that includes cross-functional teams, standing committees, task forces and work groups.
5C2	S	Sinclair has established Continuous Improvement Targets (CITs), which are set by employees annually. This is aligned with the strategic plan established by the leadership team.
5C3	S	The College has retained the core values of its founder in providing affordable quality higher education opportunities. These core values are imbued in Sinclair employees by leadership expectations to meet the needs of the community it serves.
5P1	S	Using the Strategic Plan, leadership has developed strategic clusters to support Sinclair’s mission, vision, and values. The division/department defines activities and projects in light of the strategic clusters. The Operations Council reviews these activities and works to ensure

alignment. Results are measured through the College's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Additionally, the recent reorganization now better aligns administration with these clusters.

- 5P1 O Results of KPIs measuring departmental/divisional activities are not presented in the results section. It is unclear how alignment is measured.
- 5P1 O Sinclair Community College utilizes that strategic planning process to determine actionable objectives that are aligned with its values and the mission of the college. However, the strategic clusters are developed after review and discussions with the Sinclair Executive leadership, the Board of Trustees, and the Operations Council. There's no discussion of involvement of the remainder of the college in the establishment of "Strategic Clusters." This suggests a top down process rather than an inclusive one that promotes ownership and buy-in.
- 5P2 SS Guidance in seeking future opportunities occurs via active participation at the state level by the Board of Trustees, President and the Vice Presidents. This is further supported by a variety of advisory committees that solicit the guidance and support of area business, industry, and other leaders. Internally, Sinclair has built into its formal organizational structure departments critical to building and sustaining its future.
- 5P3 S Sinclair employs a decision-making process that engages various internal constituencies, including those that would be impacted by the decision. At the highest levels, internal and external constituencies are used to gather and analyze information to advise presidential team decisions.
- 5P4 O The reader is referred to 7C2 for additional information regarding the use of KPIs. There it is noted that "While recent changes have occurred in the development of the Strategic Plan, several of the KPIs are still in use . . . ." This statement calls into question the actual number of KPIs that are still in use and just how the KPIs are being used currently in decision making.

- 5P4 S KPIs are utilized as a barometer of institutional effectiveness as well as for decision making. Coupled with the work of the RAR staff, Sinclair leadership has an abundance of information on which to base their decisions. This includes the use of a balance scorecard to evaluate and measure overall performance.
- 5P5/5P6 S Leaders communicate Sinclair's shared mission, values and performance expectations via multiple mediums. This two-way communication system that allows employees to speak directly with leadership includes the State of the College address by the President, one on one and direct group communication, the faculty performance review process, program review, budget planning process and the merit and promotion process.
- 5P5 O While Sinclair has methods of communicating across the campus and with its off-site centers, the methods described do not, in fact, "ensure [that] communication occurs throughout the organization." Rather, they ensure that information is made available. That availability does not ensure that communication is taking place. More details are required to show the effectiveness of these mediums and to demonstrate how all levels of the institution are involved in the communications and decision-making process.
- 5P7 S Strengthening leadership abilities is ingrained in Sinclair's professional development initiative, which began in the '70's. In addition, the College sends employees each year to the nationally recognized community college leadership programs (League for Innovation, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, and the Chair Academy) in addition to Leadership Dayton and the Black Leadership Development Program. It should be noted that Sinclair's use of internal constituencies in its decision-making process has led to documented expanded service opportunities in the region.
- 5P8 S Sinclair very consciously employs a deliberate process to introduce new employees to the Sinclair culture, thus helping employees' understanding of its mission, vision and values.

- 5P8 OO While there is recognition that no formal leadership succession plan is in place, and although assessments are administered to new directors and above and the re-organization deals with succession and career paths, there is no discussion of just how those assessments and the re-organization address the need for a formal leadership succession process.
- 5R1 O While Sinclair's scores on PACE indicate that a perception of a "high consultative system" is shared among administrators, faculty, professional staff, and students, administrators consistently give higher scores than other groups, suggesting that communication systems are more effective for this group than others. No benchmark, comparative, or target data is provided regarding communication measures.
- 5R1 O The portfolio refers to the PACE results regarding a healthy campus climate as a measure of leadership and communication. Nine communication questions on PACE are included, but no questions related to leadership. Along with noting that Sinclair's communication system falls within the consultative range, these results assume the reader has a working knowledge of PACE.
- 5R2 SS Sinclair employees' PACE results show that the College received higher satisfaction rates on all six areas than those of other reporting two- and four-year institutions since 1999.
- 5I1 S Specific examples of improvements made in Sinclair's internal communications as the result of its KPIs, RAR research, PACE results, and stakeholder feedback show a leadership commitment to continuous improvement processes.
- 5I2 S Improvement targets are set based on results from RAR, PACE, and community surveys. For example, the need to streamline and centralize marketing resulted in analysis of data, a decision-making process, and agreement, and then communication. Since this happened in 2006-2007, it is too early to measure the effectiveness of this improvement.

## **AQIP CATEGORY 6: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS**

*Supporting Institutional Operations* addresses the variety of your institutional support processes that help to provide an environment in which learning can thrive. It examines your institution's 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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- O6a    There are 281 scheduled instructional spaces on the Sinclair campus: 140 are classroom (106 multimedia-equipped), 141 are labs (53 multimedia-equipped), and 52 are classrooms equipped with computers for student use. The recently renovated library and the Center for Interactive Learning reflect commitment to maintaining technological currency.
- O6b    The campus facilities (in cooperation with the University of Dayton) include the AIM (Advanced Integrated Manufacturing) Center – a space with over 100 manufacturing labs providing workforce development and production development in partnership with area employers. The College's investment in facilities and equipment has a market value of \$442 million.
- O6c    Students at all Sinclair locations have access to on-campus services and 24-hour online access to the College for services such as advising, counseling and financial aid.
- O6d    Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.
- O6e    The College utilizes Datatel's *Colleague* as its enterprise software.

O6f Sinclair has an ID one-card debit system, Tartan Card, for ease of transactions such as campus meals and parking, as well as account funds transfer.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 6, Supporting Institutional Operations.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6C2	S	Sinclair clearly identifies how their key support service processes reinforce activities in Categories 1 and 2.
6P1	S	Sinclair utilizes silent shoppers to provide feedback on how various departments (including Financial Aid and Career Services) are performing in regard to levels of services provided. This method allows administrators to truly see the student experience as well as to determine areas whereby modifications are required. The College also utilizes external consultations, focus groups, verbal feedback and survey analysis to improve on student services.
6P2	S	Sinclair's Annual Planning and Budgeting processes are the conduits through which administrative support is identified and provided for initiatives as well as for the needs of faculty and staff. This is further supplemented by the establishment of a research agenda project that is facilitated by the RAR office.
6P3	S	The integrity and commitment of managers in key support service areas, including the documentation of their area processes, remains essential in ensuring that those departments are meeting the support service needs of their constituents. Day to day management of Sinclair's student and administrative support processes occurs through the respective directors and professional staff. Policies, procedures, and forms are annually reviewed and updated
6P4	S	RAR's maintenance of DAWN (the college's data warehouse system), makes routinely needed information accessible to a variety of

stakeholders and enables them to discuss the research requests prior to each project to ensure that an appropriate design is chosen. Sinclair's stakeholders can also access their specific reports via computerized systems.

- 6P5            S        Each of the key support service areas at Sinclair Community College has identified methods to measure their service processes. For example, availability, accessibility, and affordability of textbooks are key to students' and faculty's success, particularly at the beginning of a term. Therefore, the Tartan Campus Store responded to complaints regarding long check out lines during the first week of classes, slow delivery for web orders, and cost of materials by increasing the number of checkout registers at peak times, improving the computer interface for online orders, and increasing efforts to make books affordable by finding more used textbooks and buying back more textbooks based on data that was collected and analyzed.
- 6R1            S        Sinclair utilizes stakeholder feedback to incorporate documented process, procedural, and infrastructure changes in its support services departments. Results from this effort indicate improved financial aid processing and awards, increased student participation with Career Services, and a stable trend of good customer service experiences at their campus store. (6R1).
- 6R1            O        Results do not support or reinforce efficient processes as discussed in this section. In addition, no customer satisfaction data was included in this section to validate statements that were provided. For example, given the 64% increase in the number of counseling appointments and the 9% decrease in the number of customers served, Sinclair Career Services spent considerably more effort assisting fewer clients.
- 6R2            S        The creation of the RAR Office has resulted in cost and time savings in gathering, analyzing, and reporting data. RAR emanated from several strategic office mergers which resulted in greater efficiency in terms of process as well as human capital investments after the merger. For

- example, after the consolidation and with the work of the RAR, Sinclair realized a salary savings of \$120,000 per year.
- 6R2 O The accuracy of enrollment projections has declined, as shown in the increase of the error rate from 0.5% to 5%. No explanation is offered nor were any discussions included to explain how this result may be addressed by implementing improved processes or other targeted initiatives.
- 6R3 O There is no comparative data on processes or process improvements for the Financial Aid office.
- 6R3 S Research conducted by Sinclair's RAR has been cited in national studies and the office often receives requests for advice and consultation from peer institutions. This higher education leadership role further enhances the stature of the college.
- 6I1 S Improvements to the key Sinclair institutional support systems are made using a traditional Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. For example, by opening enrollment for building the RAR research agenda to anytime during the year, the office has been able to respond to requests in a more timely way, which has enabled grant-seeking, marketing, and other functions that depend upon current data.
- 6I2 O Continuous improvement targets have been identified for all four of the services chosen for in-depth review; however, specific plans for meeting these targets have not been identified in the portfolio.
- 6I2 S The College's Continuous Improvement Targets process assists the key support services in clarifying the targets for their processes. While no specific targets and performance-to-targets were discussed in the results section, it is notable that targets are set for key processes such as financial aid and that those targets are linked to other data such as enrollment projections.

## **AQIP CATEGORY 7: MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS**

*Measuring Effectiveness* examines how your institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to collection, storage, management, and use of information and data – at the institutional and departmental/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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its Systems Portfolio section covering Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

- O2a    The Sinclair Strategic Plan, for which updates were approved in 2006, consists of six high level goals, with each goal containing one to five strategies.
- O3d    Student learning support needs are assessed in multimodal manners at different points in a student's stay at Sinclair.
- O6e    The College utilizes Datatel's *Colleague* as its enterprise software.
- O8a    Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair's workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College's most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 7, Measuring Effectiveness.**

***Item            S/O    Comment***

7C1	S	All Sinclair employees have access to a complex data collection and storage system which involves Colleague, DAWN, and institution-specific tools that provide data information to a wide range of users. Sinclair has developed several Sinclair-specific digital tools for data collection and storage as well as software for planning and record keeping, all of which are supported by the Information Technology division and enable more efficient data collection and analysis. This emphasis on developing tools that are well-conformed to Sinclair's specific needs helps ensure their usability and effectiveness.
7P1	S	Sinclair uses a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle using their six strategic clusters as a means to select, manage, and use information and data from a robust variety of sources to support their activities in the other AQIP Categories.
7P2	S	The College's CIO leads an annual IT planning process that starts with identifying upcoming data needs and proceeds to an annual IT Master Plan developed by the IT team, which is connected to Sinclair strategic planning process. To help plan the coming year's research projects, RAR makes a call for research questions, although the effectiveness of this can be somewhat hampered by the often immediate and ad-hoc nature of requests throughout the year.
7P3	S	Continuous Quality Improvement is part of the internal culture that utilizes comparative data and best practice information to drive decision making at the college. Data from all access points, internal sources, and external sources (e.g., federal, state, local, and private agencies) are prioritized to show alignment with the strategic plan, assessment initiatives, and or process improvements.
7P3	O	Given the list of Comparative Data Sources for Benchmarking (Figure 7.3) it is surprising that much of the data presented here and in earlier categories lack comparisons (with the exception of CCSSE data).
7P4	SS	Information and data regarding institutional performance are translated to a balanced scorecard with color-coded KPIs. These results are reviewed

by the President, Operations Council, and the Board Of Trustees.  
Results are then communicated to the broader campus.

- 7P5            S        Departments are charged with developing plans on an annual basis in response to the College's strategic goals. This program alignment process ensures that departmental analysis of information aligns with the College's annual objectives.
- 7P6            S        Both the IT department and the IT Steering Committee oversee Sinclair's data collection and analysis system which is comprised of numerous measures to routinely determine accessibility, availability, and reliability. Additional services are provided by external consultants.
- 7P7            S        KPIs serve as the primary method of measuring effectiveness and are reviewed annually by upper leadership for target setting and to determine their viability in demonstrating institutional effectiveness. In addition to the institutional KPIs, IT publishes weekly reports that are measures of monitoring detailed in 7P6 for accessibility, availability, and reliability and RAR routinely reports on measures for student and stakeholder success.
- 7R1/7I1       S        Sinclair's annual review of KPIs assists the College in analyzing its success and need for improvement in accomplishing its mission, vision, and strategic plans. As noted throughout Category Seven, measuring Sinclair's KPI system provides annual evidence of how the College is meeting its mission and goals.
- 7R1            S        Sinclair shows positive results in keeping average class sizes small, increased use of web site page views, and greater reliance on web-based course registration.
- 7R1            O        The expected effect of the organizational realignment process on addressing the negative impact of Sinclair's net income ratio is not clear. Generally speaking, the purposes of the organizational realignment have not been clarified.
- 7R1            O        7P7 states that KPIs are reviewed annually by leadership. No indication in the results section is given regarding what criteria leadership uses to

determine the viability of measures of effectiveness, and what improvements (if any) can be reported in how well Sinclair measures institutional effectiveness.

7R2            SS    Sinclair's IT division was rated "Outstanding" by an external evaluator: Gartner Research. The Student Success Plan received the national 2004 EDUCAUSE Award for Excellence in Information Technology Solutions.

7I1/7I2        S    Improvement of Sinclair's measurement system and target setting are integral to the annual PDSA cycle of their KPI process.

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### **AQIP CATEGORY 8: PLANNING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

*Planning Continuous Improvement* examines your institution's planning processes and how your strategies and action plans are helping you achieve your mission and vision. It examines your institution's 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 efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement:**

***Item    Critical Characteristic***

O1c    Sinclair is guided by its credo (Find the need and endeavor to meet it.), its vision (Before us lie uncharted worlds of opportunity. Sinclair will be the bridge into that future, giving open access to opportunity, intellectual challenge and self-discovery for students with diverse needs.), and its mission (We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities).

O1i    Sinclair's internal organizational / leadership structure was revised in June 2006.

O2a    The Sinclair Strategic Plan, for which updates were approved in 2006, consists of six high level goals, with each goal containing one to five strategies.

- O2b Academic programs meet diverse needs and serve diverse populations. The comprehensive nature of Sinclair’s academic mission is addressed by degree and certificate programs, continuing and lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities, and extensive collaborations within the community: specifically certificates, short-term certificates, and non-credit courses directed at employer-defined needs and community needs.
  
- O3d Student learning support needs are assessed in multimodal manners at different points in a student’s stay at Sinclair.
  
- O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair’s workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.
  
- O8b Key vulnerabilities include: increased competition for diminishing state dollars, clinical sites, manufacturing job availability for graduates, declining population growth plus greater under-preparedness of student population, and the vulnerability of levy funding in the current political climate of diminished resources.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 8, Planning Continuous Improvement.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
8C2	S	Sinclair’s short and long term goals and strategies are embedded in the six clusters of its Strategic Plan, which connects its operating units to the institutional mission and provides a coherent framework for choosing, planning, and evaluating various initiatives. This plan is consistent with Sinclair’s mission: “We help individuals turn dreams into achievable goals through accessible, high quality, affordable learning opportunities.”
8P1	S	The College has an integrated planning and budgeting process that has been in place for more than 20 years. It begins with the Board of

Trustees at an annual special meeting in January where they begin reviewing opportunities and vulnerabilities identified through internal and external performance data. They then work to align institutional priorities with its operating units, employ an Annual Strategic Planning Calendar, and utilize active KPIs. The College revised its strategic planning process in 2005-2006 to improve institutional alignment among priorities, activities and resources, and to increase participation at all levels of the organization.

- 8P1 O It is stated that as part of the annual cycle, institutional objectives and activities are linked to decisions regarding the allocations of resources. However, it is unclear by what systematic process these objectives and activities are linked. No example or illustration is provided.
- 8P2 S Although Sinclair's goals are developed to cover a three- to five-year span, the College flexes as needed to respond to regional and state conditions, such as economic downturns. Short and long term objectives are influenced by internal and external factors and are reviewed by an Operations Council to determine whether objectives support accomplishment of college-wide goals.
- 8P3 SS All Sinclair personnel (i.e., college leadership, faculty and staff) participate in an annual summer retreat wherein leaders facilitate review of progress toward existing goals. Participants interactively analyze multiple data sources. These plans are then shared with the entire campus community.
- 8P3 S In the Fall quarter, Operational units in the College take part in a bottom-up identification of activities to align the work of their respective units with the College's goals and objectives and to support implementation simultaneously. When activities require the participation of multiple units, cross-functional teams are established with a focused charge relative to the objective.
- 8P4 S A cross functional team reviewed all departments and programs to make formal recommendations about which programs should be continued,

scaled, or discontinued as part of the realignment process ensuring that all its programs and activities are aligned with mission objectives to result in improved coordination and resource allocation.

- 8P4      OO      The continuing College-wide program alignment effort launched in Fall 2006 is repeatedly pointed to as an indicator of the effectiveness of strategic planning; however, the specific processes, purposes, and outcomes of the alignment are not clearly defined.
- 8P5      S      Sinclair tracks and reports performance data on a series of KPI's that remain indicative of overall College health, status, and progress on key institutional objectives. Where there is not a direct relationship, Operations Council identifies additional metrics that it uses to assess status and progress on each College-wide goal or objective.
- 8P5      SS      Sinclair is seeking to break away from operational silos by embracing the use of cross-functional teams. This method fosters greater understanding of how individual units work together for common goals.
- 8P6      SS      Planning and budgeting have been integrated for over 20 years at Sinclair. The new strategic process is designed to better align, assess, and prioritize the work of the College by linking budget, staffing, facility, equipment, and other resource allocations to the degree each supports the College's Strategic Plan, as well as the impact on objectives.
- 8P7      S      Sinclair's Strategic Plan components include a cluster of goals and objectives devoted to Organizational Development and Effectiveness with particular emphasis on human resource related issues to include training, performance management, organizational restructuring, and policy and procedure management.
- 8P7      S      Sinclair demonstrates its commitment to organizational learning with the creation of the position of Vice President of Organizational Development.
- 8P8      S      Metrics are established for all objectives and activities to evaluate and document progress and success. This is further supplemented by the AQIP action plan projects and the academic program review process.

- 8P8 O Each of the activities in the College's Strategic Plan has associated metrics that are determined as part of the Sinclair annual planning process, but those measures are not identified here.
- 8R1 S Sinclair has integrated several smaller divisional plans into the Strategic Plan allowing for a more focused approach to the College's goals and objectives, as well as increased accountability for the correlating activities.
- 8R1 O It is stated that "individual contributors now have a clearer understanding of their connection to the College goals." However, there are no metrics to support this anecdotal claim.
- 8R1 O The text addresses a general discussion of the improvement process and the types of results expected from that process rather than providing specific results of the College's improvement processes.
- 8R2 O No data is provided regarding satisfaction or actual performance improvement concerning the realignment. Nor are any projections for performance provided.
- 8R3 OO While it is noted that Sinclair benchmarks against CCSSE, the Ohio Board of Regents, the League for Innovation, and the Sinclair Office of Budget and Analysis, throughout this document benchmarks are rarely demonstrated with the exception of CCSSE.
- 8R4 S Results showing a decrease in enrollment KPIs generated a new Strategic Management Office, a Senior Director, and a Senior Vice President. This is a good example of results informing improvements to current processes.
- 8I1/8I2 S Continuous feedback and target setting is built into the College's strategic planning process. These are used as the basis for improving that process. Sinclair emphasizes continuous improvement methods to assist in resource allocation across the College with a focused effort to do so via the Operations Council.

## **AQIP CATEGORY 9: BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

*Building Collaborative Relationships* examines your institution's relationships – current and potential – to analyze how they contribute to the institution's accomplishing its mission. It examines your institution's processes and systems related to identification of key internal and external collaborative relationships; alignment of key collaborative relationships; relationship creation, prioritization, building; needs identification; internal relationships; measures; analysis of results; and efforts to continuously improve these areas.

**Here are the Key Critical Characteristics of Sinclair Community College that were identified by the Systems Appraisal Team as most relevant for its interpretation of its *Systems Portfolio* section covering Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships:**

***Item Critical Characteristic***

- O1b Sinclair has a 120-year history in the region and began meeting community needs in 1887 by educating area residents for jobs with area employers, though the curriculum today is greatly expanded.
- O1e In addition to the Montgomery County service area, Warren County in 2005 was designated by the OBOR as a primary service area for the College. As a result of this designation, it is estimated that enrollment will expand between 5,000 – 7,000 students in 25 years.
- O1g Montgomery County voters support Sinclair through a \$2.5M levy, allowing the lowest tuition in the state (\$45 per credit hour for in-district students), no debt burden, and unrestricted net assets worth \$86.3M.
- O2b Academic programs meet diverse needs and serve diverse populations. The comprehensive nature of Sinclair's academic mission is addressed by degree and certificate programs, continuing and lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities, and extensive collaborations within the community: specifically certificates, short-term certificates, and non-credit courses directed at employer-defined needs and community needs.
- O4 Partnerships include PK-12, US and international four-year universities, the greater Dayton community, and regional/national businesses/industries.

- O6b The campus facilities (in cooperation with the University of Dayton) include the AIM (Advanced Integrated Manufacturing) Center – a space with over 100 manufacturing labs providing workforce development and production development in partnership with area employers. The College’s investment in facilities and equipment has a market value of \$442 million.
- O6d Classes are held in 79 off-campus locations including two recent locations in Montgomery County and one in Warren County. Other locations include Miami Valley Research Park, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the Dayton VA Medical Center, and area high schools.
- O8a Key opportunities for Sinclair include improved fit with community need and improved student learning; enrollment growth by increasing outreach and access; improved student goal attainment and success; strengthening Sinclair’s workforce development efforts; continuing to demonstrate continuous improvement to support the strategic directions; and expanded enrollment in distance learning.

**Here are what the Systems Appraisal Team identified as Sinclair Community College’s most important strengths and opportunities for improvement relating to processes encompassed by Category 9, Building Collaborative Relationships.**

<i>Item</i>	<i>S/O</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9C1	S	Sinclair has over 250 collaborative relationships which are categorized into six groupings as part of the Strategic Focus—Priorities established by the Sinclair Board of Trustees.
9P1	S	Projects within the scope of Sinclair’s Strategic Plan contribute to creating, prioritizing, and building collaborative relationships. In addition, the Grants Office conducts a “goodness of fit” evaluation of potential partners.
9P2	S	Whenever a key collaborative relationship is created, Sinclair invests human resources – actually identifies a liaison – with the responsibility for overseeing the agreement, tracking progress, and keeping open the lines of communication.

- 9P3 S The emphasis on cross-functional team building in Sinclair's strategic planning process facilitates the creation and building of internal relationships.
- 9P4 S Sinclair tracks the outcomes of various measures on its collaborative relationships.
- 9P4 O No information is provided on what happens (if anything) in the process if a collaboration is not successful.
- 9R1/9R2 S Results reported for the College's key collaborative relationships listed in 9P1 are generally positive.
- OO Many of the Figures (9.3, 9.4, 9.7, 9.8) used in this section are unclear as to their content, and for Figure 9.9, there is no explanation for the drop in results from 2005 to 2006.
- 9I1 S Sinclair personnel who coordinate the College's key collaborative relationships are responsible for implementing a cycle of evaluating and improving the processes associated with those relationships.
- 9I2 S Based on results for their processes, those involved in Sinclair's collaborative relationships work together to determine targets for improvement.